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Item 1: Agenda

Monday, October 20, 2025

Held hybrid in 2-100 Council Chambers

5:00 PM - 8:00 PM

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

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

GSA SPEAKER:

Zain Patel in the Chair

GSA DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Laith Khatib

CLOSED SESSION:

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

Time	Item #	Page #	Title	Presenter(s)
5:00	-	1	Land Acknowledgement	Z. Patel,

				GSA Speaker
1 min	1		Approval of the Agenda for October 20, 2025 GSA Council	Z. Patel, GSA Speaker
1 min	2		Approval of the GSA Council Minutes of September 24, 2025 GSA Council	Z. Patel, GSA Speaker
2 min	3		Changes in GSA Council Membership	Z. Patel, GSA Speaker
2 min	4		Announcements A. Apply for Councillor Vacancies Here: a. Governance Committee (2 vacancies) b. GSA Board (3 vacancies) c. GSA Nominating Committee/Board (sits on both, 1 vacancy) d. Appeals & Complaints Board (1 vacancy)	
	5		<u>ELECTIONS</u> - None at this time	A. Belosokhov, NoC Chair
15 min 30 min	6		<u>PRESENTATION ITEMS</u> A. SEAP Survey Results Presentation a. Sarah Wolgemuth, Associate Vice President, Student Success & Experience (SSE), & Stephanie Dickie, Strategic Initiatives Advisor, Student Experience Action Plan B. Graduate Student Peer Support Program Presentation a. Lorelei Betke, HSE Strategy & Engagement Officer, HRHSE - Health Safety & Environment, & Julia Hu, Grad Research Assistantship, HRHSE - Health Safety & Environment	
30	7		<u>INFORMATION PIECES</u>	*See

			a. Outline of Issue b. Council Chair Line of Succession Policy Addition	
15 min	9		Question Period 1. Written Questions (May be submitted to the GSA Speaker before 4:00 PM on the day of the meeting) 2. Oral Questions	
	10		Adjournment	

***Report Legend**

NRS: No report submitted

NMS: No meeting scheduled

Item 2: GSA Council September 24 2025 Minutes

Wednesday, September 24, 2025

Held hybrid in 2-100 Council Chambers

5:00 PM - 8:00 PM

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

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GSA SPEAKER:

Zain Patel in the Chair

GSA DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Laith Khatib

CLOSED SESSION:

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

IN ATTENDANCE:

Council-Elected Officials:

- Chief Returning Officer: Wajid Ali
- GSA Senator: Hussain Alhussainy

Departmental Councillors:

1. Shivani Sonkar, AFNS
2. Laura Enekegho, Biochemistry

GSA Executives:

1. GSA President: Aashish Kumar
2. VP Academic: Chen Okafor
3. VP External: Niloufar Mir Fallah
4. VP Indigenous Relations: Tamara Dubé
5. VP Student Life: Hazel Kemuma
6. VP Student Services: Saad Arslan Iqbal

Councillors-At-Large:

1. Ashif Rahman
2. Mohamadali Tofigh
3. Rishabh Dagur
4. Amirreza Yasami
5. Jovi Krieger
6. Julianna Durham

Standing Committee Chairs & Vice-Chairs:

- Arseniy Belosokhov, NoC Chair
- Elsie Osei, ERC Chair

Guests:

1. Abigail Gallimore, EDIC Candidate
2. McAndy Kajubi, EDIC Candidate
3. Adrien Lam, EDIC Candidate
4. Precious Majekodunmi, EDIC Candidate
5. Nour Tormos, EDIC Candidate
6. Seth Peyton
7. Mahn Hei Yu

3. Gurparkash Singh, Biomedical Engineering
4. Nissi Djangmah, BGSA
5. Selin Simsek, Business MBA
6. Yufei Ren, Business PhD
7. Sophie Nguemo Medongoum, Campus Saint Jean Councillor
8. Shamsheer Ahmad, Chemistry
9. Vera Fiawornu, Communication Sciences & Disorders
10. Rose Rafiei, Dentistry
11. Emilia Hillyer, Drama
12. Nathaniel Morley, Earth & Atmospheric Sciences
13. Moe Fujiwara, East Asian Studies Councillor
14. Ajibola Adigun, Educational Policy Studies
15. Bart Romanek, History, Classics & Religion
16. Zoe Wagner, Human Ecology
17. Meredith Leary, IGSA
18. Tamara Semeria Maitret, Laboratory Medicine & Pathology
19. Jack McKoen, Mathematical & Statistical Sciences
20. Lillian Low, Medical Genetics
21. Junjun Yao, Modern Language & Cultural Studies
22. Vincent Yu, Library & Information Studies
23. Emma Heidebrecht, Neuroscience
24. Pooja Praveen Kumar, Obstetrics & Gynecology
25. Anastasia Roemer, Oncology
26. Thomas Hammond, Pharmacology
27. Ali Shalaby, Pharmacy & Pharmaceutical Sciences
28. Spencer Ahearn, Philosophy
29. Daniel Carleton, Physics

	30. Mohaddeseh Pakzamir, Physiology 31. Savannah Ribeiro, Political Sciences 32. Emily Ward, Psychiatry 33. Cheryl Pan, Psychology 34. Vi Tran, Public Health 35. Varsha Kesavan, Radiology & Diagnostic Imaging Councillor 36. Cassandra Cowan, Rehabilitation Sciences 37. Shea Giesbrecht, Renewable Resources 38. Juan Andrés Luchsinger Rivera, Resource Economics & Environmental Sociology 39. Celine Beaulieu, Sociology 40. Ivan Ma, Surgery Alternate Departmental Councillors: 1. Luke Nelson, Biological Sciences 2. Dana Villareal, Digital Humanities 3. Eran Driscoll, Earth & Atmospheric Sciences 4. Christa Engel, Education 5. Raj Somasundaram, Paediatrics 6. Micah Sollid, Occupational Therapy 7. Mark Wright, Oncology 8. Isaac Cantine, Ophthalmology
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Time	Item #	Title	Presenter(s)
5:02	-	Land Acknowledgement	Z. Patel, GSA Speaker
1 min	1	Approval of the Agenda for September 24, 2025 GSA Council Z. Patel, GSA Speaker, moved to remove the Closed Session portion of the agenda. D. Carleton moved. S. Ribeiro seconded. Motion PASSED. 28 votes for. 1 vote against.	Z. Patel, GSA Speaker

		Z. Patel, GSA Speaker, moved to add a Closed Session to the Presentation Item, as it deals with business matters of the GSA. D. Carleton moved. N. Morley seconded. Motion PASSED. 31 votes in favour. 1 vote against. Agenda approval: N. Morley moved. S. Ahearn seconded. Motion PASSED. 36 votes in favour.	
1 min	2	Approval of the GSA Council Minutes of August 18, 2025 GSA Council N. Morley moved. S. Ahearn seconded. Motion PASSED. 32 votes in favour. 2 votes against.	Z. Patel, GSA Speaker
2 min	3	Changes in GSA Council Membership Incoming: • June Yao, Modern Language & Cultural Studies Councillor • Jovi Krieger, Councillor-At-Large • Christa Engel, temporary Education GSA Councillor • Mahn Hei Yu, Linguistics Alternate Councillor • Anastasia Roemer, Oncology Councillor • Mark Wright, Oncology Alternate Councillor • Spencer Ahearn, Philosophy Councillor • Rose Rafiei, Dentistry Councillor • Emilia Hillyer, Drama Councillor • Yufei Ren, Business PhD Councillor • Eric Derksen, GSA Executive Director Outgoing: • Nathaniel Morley, Earth & Atmospheric Sciences • Raj Somasundaram, Paediatrics • Seth Peyton, Oncology • Cheryl Pan, Psychology	Z. Patel, GSA Speaker
2 min	4	Announcements A. Apply for Councillor Vacancies Here: - Governance Committee (2 vacancies) - GSA Board (3 vacancies) - GSA Nominating Committee/Board (sits on both, 1 vacancy) - Appeals & Complaints Board (1 vacancy)	
10	5	<u>ELECTIONS</u>	A.

min		A. GSA Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Committee (one vacancy): a. Six nominations b. Successful candidate: i. Nour Tormos	Belosokhov, NoC Chair
30 min	6	<u>PRESENTATION ITEMS</u> A. StudyWell Health & Dental Plan Presentation a. Cory Wright & Joshua Sankarlal • C. Wright introduced StudyWell as a relatively new organization in the postsecondary benefits space, affiliated with Ellement Consulting Group, which has extensive experience managing benefit programs for multi-employer and union-based plans. He explained that StudyWell provides a comprehensive range of services, including plan enrollment, claims adjudication and payment, consulting, and direct student support. This structure allows for an integrated approach, with data and reporting managed in-house rather than by an external insurer. • The presenters emphasized that the GSA Health and Dental Plan was closely matched to the previous plan, with some modest improvements—particularly in dental benefits for checkups and cleanings, which were areas identified as priorities by the GSA Executive. They noted, however, that some small differences might appear in specific coverage details (for example, particular dosages of prescription drugs or specialized items). In those cases, students can submit proof of prior coverage or receipts through the StudyWell website using a dedicated “previously paid claim” form so the coverage can be adjusted and honored moving forward. • A key point highlighted was that student fees for the plan have been reduced this year, which StudyWell and the GSA considered a positive development after several years of steady increases. The goal is to maintain a financially sustainable plan while improving student experience and accessibility. • J. Sankarlal detailed the operational and accessibility features of the plan: ○ StudyWell’s Edmonton-based call centre operates from 7:00AM-5:00PM local time, using dedicated phone lines specific to the GSA. When students call, staff immediately see GSA-specific information, ensuring accurate and efficient service.	

		○ All claims are processed and paid internally by StudyWell rather than outsourced to a third-party insurer. This allows faster resolution of student inquiries about claim status. ○ Each student association receives a custom, accessibility-compliant website (meeting global accessibility standards), ensuring compatibility with screen readers and other assistive technologies. ○ The StudyWell mobile app, available for Android and iOS, allows students to submit claims electronically, track their coverage balances in real time, and in many cases enable direct billing by providers, so students do not need to pay out of pocket. The app also shows a network of practitioners offering discounts. ● J. Sankarlal shared preliminary usage statistics from the first few weeks of the plan year: ● About 230 calls to the call centre, averaging 13 minutes per call (expected to decrease as students become familiar with the system). ● Around 1,814 inbound and 1,481 outbound emails, and 4,300 website visits since September 1 (with 1,400 in the past week). These high volumes were attributed to the start-of-term adjustment period with a new provider. ● C. Wright added that StudyWell is actively monitoring the enrollment and opt-out process, which involves frequent file exchanges with the University to keep student records current. Students who opted out might experience short delays before their refunds appear on Bear Tracks, as the university needs time to post updates after StudyWell transmits the files. ● Going forward, StudyWell plans to: ○ Review claims patterns and data to better understand student needs and spending trends. ○ Provide regular reports to the GSA to support evidence-based decisions about future plan improvements. ○ Identify ways to streamline processes like enrollment and opt-outs to enhance efficiency and reduce confusion for students. ● The presentation concluded with thanks from Council, and the meeting then moved into Closed Session for a Q&A period to	
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		address member concerns about the plan's implementation and reported issues.	
20 min		<u>CLOSED SESSION</u> N. Morley moved. S. Ahearn seconded. Motion PASSED. 34 votes in favour. 3 votes against. After the Presentation Item, GSA Council went into Closed Session for discussion of matters pertaining to the business interests of the GSA. N. Morley moved. S. Ribeiro seconded. Motion PASSED. 37 votes in favour. Moved out of Closed Session at 6:55PM.	
30 min	7	<u>INFORMATION PIECES</u> Reports: A. GSA President: Aashish Kumar a. A. Kumar reported that GSA Associate Director Cindy Roose has resigned, so we will be working to fill that vacancy in the coming weeks. b. A. Kumar reported that the GSA's cost of living survey is ongoing, with a participation incentive of Oilers game tickets. The survey will inform upcoming tuition fee consultations, which will be held after a joint Council and town hall meeting later in the fall. c. He emphasized that the new minimum funding level of \$25,000 for graduate students is only a first step, and that the GSA continues to advocate for higher funding. He outlined key advocacy areas: 1. Protecting external and internal scholarships from being clawed back from minimum funding. 2. Advancing the course-based Master's scholarship discussions with university administration. d. He addressed ongoing issues connected to the EDIC Working Group, noting that multiple individuals in that group have been subjects of current and previous but incomplete formal complaints to the ACB. A. Kumar stated that while the group was presented as a mechanism to address concerns, it has included people with prior misconduct allegations. He cautioned Council that the GSA	*See Legend

		must continue holding all standing committees accountable and reaffirmed the President's fiduciary responsibility to ensure procedural integrity and student representation. e. A. Kumar detailed a meeting he had with Mohamed Sabek, the LRC Chief Steward, to determine if the LRC could appoint an interim AVP Labour as the current AVPL's suspension has continued for an extended period of time. A. Kumar attended an LRC meeting - the minutes of which are public - where he stated that the GSA cannot be involved in the appointment, the LRC would need to choose and vote an interim member to help deal with student/supervisor issues that are continuing to arise. f. He also noted that the LRC will be discussing arrangements for a labour union admin and determining where their funding shall be drawn from. It was discussed that C. Roose, the previous GSA AD, was working as admin for the labour portfolio, subsidizing union work from the GSA primary budget, rather than the labour budget. B. Vice-President Academic: Chen Okafor a. He encouraged graduate students to fill out and share widely the Cost of Living Survey, to help with consultations, as the results will inform tuition and fee advocacy. b. C. Okafor is hosting an Academic Supervisor Relationship Workshop on Oct. 3rd, designed to help students navigate conflicts or communication issues with supervisors and understand available recourse. c. C. Okafor updated Council on the Graduate Student Peer Support Program (GSPS), launched collaboratively with university partners. Training for peer supporters was recently completed, and the program would begin offering services in October. d. He has also attended several departmental orientations and continues consultations with the International Students' Association (ISA), alongside the VP Student Life, to improve communication and support systems for international graduate students. C. Vice-President External: Niloufar Mir Fallah a. As submitted b. She highlighted the Housing Survey, which was posted in the last two GSA Newsletters with a deadline of Sept. 26th.	
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		She noted that there is a \$100 grocery gift card as a raffle prize for submissions. The results from this survey will help inform advocacy priorities at the municipal level. c. She also highlighted the Leisure Access Program, which gives low-income Edmontonians free or discounted access to leisure and fitness centres. She noted the importance of affordable exercise for mental and physical health, as well as a sense of community within the city. Full-time graduate students are currently excluded, which is a concern, particularly as they may be low-income and already paying for mandatory recreation centre fees that give access to campus facilities (not city-wide). The city will be looking at this again in a broader review. D. Vice-President Indigenous Relations: Tamara Dubé a. T. Dubé reported attending and speaking at the University Commons grand opening and flag-raising ceremony, where Treaty 6 and Métis flags were permanently raised — the first time in the U of A's 119-year history. She shared that she spoke alongside the Lieutenant Governor, the university president, and Indigenous leaders, representing Indigenous graduate students. b. Her current priorities in this year's Strategic Work Plan include: ● Re-establishing the Indigenous Graduate Student Award, which has not been granted since 2022 or 2023. She is working with First Peoples' House and GSA staff to reactivate it, aiming for applications to open in December and to retroactively cover missed years by issuing multiple awards or increasing funding this cycle. ● Embedding Indigenous awareness in GSA onboarding, by collaborating with the Faculty of Native Studies, Dr. Florence Glanfield (UA Indigenous Relations), First Peoples' House, and the Indigenous GSA to design an orientation component or Blanket Exercise for future Councillors and executives. c. T. Dubé also referenced ongoing collaboration with other executives, the IGSA and Dr. Florence Glanfield, the UA Indigenous Relations, on Healing Circles and initiatives to	
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		strengthen relationships between the GSA and Indigenous student communities. d. Creation of an Indigenous Committee: this was a suggestion from Dr. Glanfield to make more space within the GSA for Indigenous voices. e. In the Truth & Reconciliation Day GSA Newsletter, T. Dubé noted the hybrid and off-campus events, to include Augustana- and Calgary-based students. f. T. Dubé, H. Kemuma and S. Iqbal are working on welcome baskets for Indigenous students as they begin their higher education journey. g. EDIC Working Group: this group includes T. Dubé, three EDIC members and two Indigenous students, N. Lamarche and B. Kucher. She provided a detailed explanation of the purpose and formation of the group, clarifying that it was created to provide a safe, informal space for dialogue between Indigenous and non-Indigenous members of the GSA following repeated harms and challenges faced by Indigenous executives in recent years. The group includes herself, former Indigenous executive B. Kucher, currently suspended AVPL N. Lamarche, three non-Indigenous EDIC members, and the President of the Indigenous GSA, with the goal of sharing experiences, identifying systemic issues, and developing recommendations to improve equity and safety within the GSA. She emphasized that the group is not acting against the GSA but is working toward healing, understanding, and reconciliation, expressing that while the work is emotionally taxing, she remains committed to creating a more respectful and culturally safe organization. h. The status of a GSA working group was debated, as there is no current policy around the creation of a working group. It was also raised that a GSA group or subcommittee should not include a currently suspended GSA member. The discussion around the EDIC Working Group focused on whether it was a formally recognized GSA body or an informal group of students. VP Student Life H. Kemuma, as EDIC Chair, explained that the group had been created during an EDIC meeting to provide a space for dialogue and recommendations on Indigenous student concerns, but that GSA bylaws only authorize subcommittees, not	
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		working groups. She therefore sought Council’s guidance on how to proceed. VP Indigenous Relations T. Dubé clarified that the group consisted of herself, former Indigenous executives, three elected EDIC members, and the President of the Indigenous GSA, emphasizing that it was meant as a safe and constructive forum, not as a challenge to GSA authority. i. Councillors A. Adigun, C. Cowan, and S. Ribeiro questioned the group’s legitimacy, noting that because it was being discussed in reports, it appeared to operate under the GSA’s name and could create legal or procedural confusion—especially since one participant was suspended and another had resigned from GSA office. A. Belosokhov, speaking in an administrative capacity, clarified that the GSA cannot formally recognize or sanction the working group under existing bylaws, as it falls outside the official committee structure. However, there was nothing preventing graduate students from meeting informally to discuss issues. The key distinction, he explained, is that any outcomes or recommendations from such meetings must be presented to Council as individual student input, not as actions or positions of the GSA or the EDIC. In conclusion, GSA Council did not recognize the EDIC Working Group as an official GSA entity. It was confirmed to be an informal group of graduate students meeting independently, without authority to act or speak on behalf of the GSA. j. An argument arose between T. Dubé and Elsie Osei, the ERC Chair. E. Osei expressed that T. Dubé is being unfair continuing to reference past conflicts surrounding her appointment as VP Indigenous Relations, stating that the ERC had already resolved those issues through proper Council procedures and that it was unfair for T. Dubé to repeatedly suggest she had been unwelcome in the role. E. Osei urged Dube to “move on,” acknowledging her passion and accomplishments but emphasizing that continually revisiting those events was unproductive. T. Dubé attempted to respond, explaining that her comments were not directed at the ERC specifically but were part of a broader effort to address ongoing harm and inequities affecting Indigenous leaders. T. Dubé expressed that she	
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		continues to experience scrutiny and emotional distress in her role. The Speaker eventually intervened to de-escalate the discussion and move the meeting forward. k. D. Carleton, Physics Councillor, asked regarding the AASUA strike - how will it affect graduate students and will information be sent out regarding it? A. Kumar confirmed clear information will be sent out; the executives have a meeting with T. Raivio tomorrow to discuss the effects on graduate students and how best to counteract them. If they do strike, it will be in the next two weeks. l. T. Dubé clarified with E. Osei that the unused VIPR stipend from before she took office still needs to be resolved, as the policy states that if no student is found to fill the vacancy, then the money goes toward FNMI students or initiatives. She appreciated the work that the ERC did to get T. Dubé into the VIPR role and invited E. Osei to the next Healing Circle. E. Vice-President Student Life: Hazel Kemuma a. H. Kemuma is in talks re the approval process for graduate student groups, as it makes sense that the GSA approves the graduate student group applications. We will report back to Council with the results of the discussions. b. H. Kemuma thanked Councillors for connecting new students with departmental contacts following GSA orientation and highlighted ongoing collaboration with the new CSJ Councillor, Sophie Nguemo Medongoum, to translate GSA orientation materials into French. c. She announced an upcoming Graduate Student–Alumni Networking Social to be held on October 17 in the Education atrium, requiring pre-registration to accommodate food and space. d. In her EDIC Chair report, H. Kemuma shared that the committee has experienced internal tensions and safety concerns. The VP Indigenous Relations had raised issues of harassment and a pay discrepancy, which was resolved following a staff transition. H. Kemuma also reported being excluded from an email thread involving former VP Student Life members, in which the removal of staff and H. Kemuma from her position as Chair was discussed. The EDIC Working Group was subsequently created by the Vice-Chair to	
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		address Indigenous student concerns. She requested Council's guidance on how to move forward while ensuring safety and compliance with governance requirements. e. H. Kemuma invited an Indigenous Knowledge Keeper, Orest, to the next few EDIC meetings, who was provided to us as a recommendation through Dr. Glanfield, UA VP Indigenous Relations. Her hope was to create a safe environment for dialogue, to have a reflection around trust, responsibility, and self care, which helped us move in a more constructive direction. She raised this to seek guidance from Council, respectfully requesting that if there are specific concerns and evidence that her actions actively or have previously harmed Indigenous students or constituted election misconduct that they be brought forward directly so she may learn, reflect and take corrective steps if needed. She stated her commitment to the students who entrusted her with this position. She welcomed constructive feedback to avoid repeating mistakes. Her hope is to restore trust, ensure that the EDIC fulfills its mandate and fosters an environment where all members feel included and safe, and she asked the Council for advice on how we might move forward in a way that is both safe and constructive for everyone involved. f. A. Adigun asked J. Krieger, a member of the EDIC and Councillor-At-Large, why it is important to start a Working Group outside of the EDIC. J. Krieger replied that the EDIC has been discussing this matter for about 2-3 months, a significant part of the EDIC that it would be important to meet outside of the GSA space to have a more informal conversation. It is not a committee; they will decide if they will apply to become a committee. A Working Group is not in the bylaws, nor prohibited by the bylaws. It is for coming up with ideas to deal with the situation, by the students directly affected and harmed, to have a safe space to discuss and come up with actionable policies to send to the EDIC, potentially the Board, and the Council. A. Adigun asked how it differs from the EDIC, which was created to tackle these issues. J. Krieger explained that the involved students did not feel safe discussing the issues within the	
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		EDIC, so it was felt necessary to have a safe space to discuss without suspicion. g. C. Cowan, Rehabilitation Medicine Councillor, asked whether the Working Group is working under the responsibility and authority of the GSA. If it's not under the GSA's authority, then why is it being reported? Why is a suspended member participating within a GSA group? It would be inappropriate to involve a suspended member from participating in a GSA Working Group. The previous Indigenous executive resigned during an ACB complaint against him, which was not resolved, so it would be potentially inappropriate to involve him. h. A. Belosokhov agreed and replied that an informal group would not need to be mentioned within reports. i. J. Krieger noted that they are not claiming to be part of the GSA's jurisdiction; it is an informal meeting. j. D. Carleton, Physics Councillor, noted that these discussions where blame or fault is implied, then perhaps a Closed Session should be required. Z. Patel agreed that many disputes have been publicly aired this year against our best interests. Councils of the past gave the EDIC a mandate to carry out their duty; Council has a fiduciary duty to hold their Committees accountable. F. Vice-President Student Services: Saad Iqbal a. S. Iqbal recommended graduate students with questions and issues regarding the GSA Health & Dental Plan to the uofa@studywellbenefits.ca email to collate all issues in one place (rather than multiple GSA contacts), and ensure that no cases are lost or misplaced. Please CC gsa.frontdesk@ualberta.ca, to ensure that follow-up can be tracked. If all else fails, then please reach out directly to S. Iqbal at gsavpsse@ualberta.ca b. The main details are in his report c. He began the initiative of holding Know Your Services tabling sessions to raise awareness of the new Health and Dental provider and answer questions, which the other executives also attend to learn and answer additional questions. d. He asked for Councillor held with feedback for supports related to Students Who Parent. Please reach out to him via	
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		gsavpsse@ualberta.ca as he wants feedback and input in parent-related services. e. He also asked for help from Councillors with the Health & Wellness Hub - he needs to formulate guidelines based on student and Councillor feedback. f. The AASUA and ATA (AB Teachers) strikes are under his portfolio with regards to parents and their childcare coverage if students' children are at home while they are at the university. He is in talks with FGPS regarding accommodations for student parents, such as working from home and potential coverage for up to 4 weeks, and will send out communications once details are finalized. A. Kumar is also meeting with AASUA executives to get their perspectives and guidance. g. We have been attending Info Marts held by various university departments. h. C. Engel, Education Councillor, works with the Student Success and Experience Officer (formerly the Dean of Students office) and organized the Students-Who-Parent online orientation event, which S. Iqbal attended and spoke to students about GSA resources. These online orientations are held once per semester for student parents. i. T. Dubé and S. Iqbal are working on a new initiative for welcome baskets for Indigenous students to celebrate the beginning of their academic journey, particularly recognizing the difficulties Indigenous students face systemically to enter higher education. T. Dubé and S. Iqbal will be working together on this initiative, with T. Dubé taking the lead. j. S. Iqbal and H. Kemuma are also planning a 'Welcome to the World' welcome basket for new parents to celebrate the new chapter of their lives. For both of these initiatives, we will be careful with costs and will be organized judiciously. k. He announced positive developments in childcare support - the GSA's partner childcare provider will offer a 50% discount for the first three months for graduate students, followed by an ongoing 15% discount.	
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		l. Graduate Student Peer Support Program: training is complete. It will begin in October onwards, so please take a look. m. We had our first meeting with Dr. Glanfield, UA VP Indigenous Relations, for an introductory session on how to hold and participate in a Healing Circle, with more planned. G. Associate Vice-President Labour: Nathan Lamarche (Currently Suspended) a. GSA Labour Relations Committee H. GSA Senator: Hussain Alhussainy a. GSA Senator H. Alhussainy apologized for not being able to submit his report in time for the agenda, due to personal reasons. b. He reported on his recent activities within the University of Alberta Senate, emphasizing his focus on representing graduate student interests and strengthening the relationship between the Senate and the GSA. He outlined his appointments to two Senate committees: the Honorary Degrees and Recognition Committee, which reviews nominations and selects outstanding honorary recipients, and the Student and Community Engagement Committee, a newly restructured body aimed at improving communication and collaboration with student groups. c. H. Alhussainy described his participation in the September 18-19 Senate preliminary sessions, which included presentations from university leadership on student services, accessibility, and financial challenges faced by graduate and international students. Discussions also touched on barriers for students with disabilities and the need for equitable working environments. He highlighted networking opportunities with senators who expressed interest in attending and supporting GSA events, and he invited councillors to share upcoming initiatives he could promote at the Senate level. d. He concluded by reaffirming his commitment to advocating for accessibility, equity, and funding priorities for graduate students and fostering stronger links between the GSA and the Senate. I. GSA Speaker: Zain Patel	
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		a. GSA Speaker Zain Patel concluded the meeting with reflective remarks rather than a formal report, addressing accountability, professionalism, and the need for organizational healing after a turbulent year for the GSA. He acknowledged that over the past six to eight months, the association had faced numerous public controversies, resignations, and allegations that had damaged trust between the Board, Council, and the broader graduate student community. Z. Patel referenced GSA history, noting that similar challenges once brought the organization close to collapse in 2010, and emphasized the importance of transparency and communication to prevent repeating that past. b. Ellen Schoeck, a former Executive Director, wrote a book regarding the GSA's history which includes references to a breakdown and office closure of the GSA in 2010. At the time, a former Speaker took on the responsibility of updating the bylaws and policies, and kept the Council in the loop as the GSA rebuilt. Z. Patel regretted being unable to keep the Council in the loop with recent developments, as he was uncertain what information was confidential. This year has been rough for the GSA, which has been publicly aired. Z. Patel has been with the Council for three years in different roles - this last year has been the most difficult and troubling. When issues arise, it would be preferable to discuss internally to informally resolve these issues, rather than making them public. This has deeply affected the reputation of the GSA, its staff and executives. The managers have tried to keep the organization afloat and it is very unfortunate that they have left under these circumstances. Council is to hold the GSA accountable, but it is also its responsibility to listen, discuss and ask questions. In the last six months, instead of asking questions, issues have been posted publicly. Allegations have been hidden behind harsh criticism and feedback. Accountability is not about forcing resignations. Is it criticism to be called fascists, enemies of the GSA, and calling for people to be expelled and deported? This is not accountability, it is deplorable. As we enter a new academic year, how can we move together mutually in a respectful	
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		and professional manner? Do not use names, side jabs, etc. It is not professional nor acceptable. Hold each other accountable in the right way. We can work through it together, but there are many relationships to be mended and work to be done. c. He admitted that he could have done more to keep Council informed amid recent crises and pledged to improve communication going forward. Z. Patel urged councillors to uphold accountability through constructive dialogue and respectful questioning, rather than personal attacks or inflammatory language. He stressed that criticism should remain professional and issue-focused, condemning recent instances where executives and staff had been subjected to harassment and verbal abuse disguised as “harsh feedback.” He encouraged Council to rebuild trust through collaboration, committee participation, and civil discourse, expressing hope that the GSA could move past division and restore a respectful, functional working environment. d. AK noted that we will be holding a Tuition Town Hall at one of our next Council meetings, moderated by Z. Patel or L. AlKhatib, where graduate students can ask questions. We may call a special Council session beforehand to discuss before the town hall itself. A. Kumar encouraged Councillors to invite their departments to attend to ask questions. J. GSA Chief Returning Officer: Wajid Ali a. No Report Submitted K. GSA Nominating Committee Chair: Arseniy Belosokhov a. As submitted b. He emphasized that we are experiencing Councillor shortages on Standing Committees. He particularly encouraged Councillors to apply for the Nominating Committee vacancy. L. GSA Elections and Referenda Committee Chair: Elsie Osei a. We have had several meetings with regards to realigning Bylaw and the VPIR Policy, in conjunction with the IGSA and the VPIR. The IGSA and T. Dubé will be giving their feedback in October. E. Osei asked for expediency as the bylaw and	
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		policy needs to be approved by ERC, GC, Board and the Council (two readings at Council for bylaw) before the General Election proceedings begin in February. M. GSA Management a. As submitted	
8		<u>ACTION ITEMS:</u> A. That GSA Council APPROVE the Governance Committee-Recommended Bylaw and Policy Revisions, Section K: Second Reading a. Outline of Issue b. Section K N. Morley moved. C. Cowan seconded. Motion PASSED. 28 votes in favour. 8 abstentions. B. That GSA Council APPROVE the Governance Committee-Recommended Bylaw and Policy Revisions, Section J: First Reading a. Outline of Issue b. Section J N. Morley moved. C. Cowan seconded. A. Kumar summarized that the changes Council recommended Governance Committee to make were completed re aligning definitions of Referenda Askers. Motion PASSED. 32 votes in favour. 5 abstentions. 1 vote against. C. That the GSA Council APPROVE the formation of an <i>ad hoc</i> committee and call for a third-party review of the University of Alberta Graduate Students' Association, subject to the "Terms of the Motion" outlined herein. a. Outline of Issue b. A portion of the debate may occur in Closed Session	A. Kumar, GSA President Z. Patel, GSA Speaker

		GSA Council ran out of time to deal with these action items, so they are automatically deferred until the October GSA Council meeting. D. GSA VPIR-Recommended Policy Additions: Motion 1 E. GSA VPIR-Recommended Policy Additions: Motion 2	T. Dubé, GSA VPIR
15 min	9	Question Period 1. Written Questions (May be submitted to the GSA Speaker before 4:00 PM on the day of the meeting) 2. Oral Questions	
	10	Adjournment S. Ribeiro moved a motion to extend the meeting by 15 minutes. N. Morley moved. C. Cowan seconded. Motion PASSED. 20 in favour, 3 against. Adjourned 8:33PM	

Item 7a: GSA President Report

**2025-2026 President
Report to GSA Council for the 20th October 2025 Meeting**

To: GSA Council
From: Aashish Kumar, President
Date: 16 October 2025

2025-2026 GSA President Meetings Attended (Aashish Kumar)

Please find below a list of meetings I attended between 20th September 2025 to 16th October 2025 (not inclusive of weekly GSA Board meetings). The meetings were accurate at the time of printing.

Date	Meeting
22 September 2025	UofA Organizational Values Development - GSA Feedback
22 September 2025	GFC (Attended first half)
22 September 2025	Meeting with LRC
23 September 2025	Meeting with a student
23 September 2025	Meeting with a student
23 September 2025	Meeting with a student
23 September 2025	Management Meeting
24 September 2025	FPC Meeting
24 September 2025	Meeting with a student
24 September 2025	DoS Student Mental Health Action Plan Launch/Wellness Cafe
24 September 2025	Meeting with a student
25 September 2025	Meeting with a student
25 September 2025	Meeting with a student
25 September 2025	Meeting with a student
26 September 2025	CASA September E-Plenary
26 September 2025	Meeting with a student
29 September 2025	Meeting with a student

29 September 2025	Meeting with a student
29 September 2025	Meeting with a student
30 September 2025	Meeting with a student
1 October 2025	Meeting with a student
2 October 2025	Meeting with a student
3 October 2025	In-Person: MNIF Joint Oversight Committee Meeting #1
3 October 2025	Academic Supervision Workshop/Q&A session
3 October 2025	Board Learning, Research and Student Experience Committee
6 October 2025	Meeting with a student
6 October 2025	Meeting with a student
6 October 2025	Meeting with a student
7 October 2025	VIRTUAL: Co-Sponsor Updates SEAP
7 October 2025	Zoom: University Strategic Plan Steering Committee
7 October 2025	Meeting with a student
7 October 2025	Meeting with a student
8 October 2025	Meeting with a student
8 October 2025	Meeting with a student
8 October 2025	FGPS Council
9 October 2025	Tracy Raivio, GSA President and VP Academic
9 October 2025	Meeting with a student
9 October 2025	Meeting with a student
9 October 2025	Board Finance and Property Committee (BFPC)
9 October 2025	Meeting with a student
9 October 2025	GSA X ISVS x Residence Thanksgiving Potluck
10 October 2025	Meeting with a student
10 October 2025	Informal Board Discussion on HnD
13 October 2025	UofT VP Academic and VP Academic
14 October 2025	Meeting with a student
14 October 2025	Meeting with a student
14 October 2025	Meeting with a student
15 October 2025	Tuition Budget Advisory Committee (TBAC)
15 October 2025	Meeting with a student
15 October 2025	Meeting with a student
16 October 2025	StudyWell/GSA

16 October 2025	Meeting with a student
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Dear Council Colleagues,

I would also like to acknowledge and celebrate the efforts of the entire GSA team and staff.

For TBAC Recommendations:

- 1, Fund Course-based scholarships
- 2, Freeze tuition for thesis-biased programs
- 3, Scholarship retention up to \$2000
- 4, Invest in tuition fee transparency for new students

All my meetings were good. I did a lot of consultation and got a lot of feedback while also supported the other VPs in their various efforts.

I want to highlight that the GSA ACB has not yet resolved my complaint.

Thank you
Aashish

Item 7b: VP Academic Report

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

To: GSA Council
From: Chen Okafor
Date: Oct 15 th , 2025

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

Please find below a list of meetings I attended between September 18th to Oct 15th (not inclusive of weekly GSA Board meetings). The meetings were accurate at the time of printing.

Date	Meeting
September 18 th	Meeting with Tracy (FGPS)
September 19 th	Meeting with Remonia (Ombuds)
September 19 th	VP Academic Walk-In-Hours
September 19 th	Medicine Orientation Presentation
September 19 th	GFC Council Caucus
September 19 th	Meeting with U of T GSU VP Academics
September 22 nd	U of A Organizational Values Development – GSA Feedback
September 22 nd	Meeting with U of T GSU VP Academics
September 22 nd	GFC Meeting
September 24 th	People Strategy (Values) Steering Committee
September 24 th	U of A Graduate & Professional Studies Fair Tabling
September 25 th	GFC Programs Committee Meeting
September 25 th	Meeting with Tracy (FGPS)
September 25 th	Meeting with a Student
September 26 th	VP Academic Walk-In-Hours
September 26 th	Meeting with a Student
September 26 th	University Research Advisory Committee
September 29 th	GPST (Graduate Program Support Team)
September 29 th	GFC Ad Hoc Committee on Academic Governance
September 29 th	Meeting with U of T GSU VP Academics
October 2 nd	Standing Committee on Convocation

October 3 rd	MNIF Joint Oversight Committee Meeting
October 3 rd	Academic Supervision Q&A Workshop
October 6 th	Experiential Learning Council Meeting
October 6 th	Meeting with U of T GSU VP Academics
October 8 th	Meeting with Logan Mardhani-Bayne (Verna Yiu's Office)
October 8 th	GSA FGPS Caucus
October 8 th	GPS Council Meeting
October 8 th	Academic Planning Committee
October 9 th	Meeting with Tracy (FGPS)
October 10 th	VP Academic Walk-In Hours
October 10 th	Meeting with Christa Engel
October 13 th	U of A Survey Results (Meeting with U of T GSU VP Academics)
October 14 th	LMS of the Future Advisory Committee Meeting
October 15 th	IT Security Policy Discussion
October 15 th	Tuition Budget Advisory Committee

Dear Council Colleagues,

I hope you are having a wonderful week as we return to the cold weather. I am happy to report that the Academic Supervision Q&A Workshop on October 3rd was a success! We had about 30 students show up, and two associate deans from FGPS (Dr. Cagri Ayranci and Dr. Sujata Persad) along with Kumarie Achaibar-Morrison (Director of ISVS) were present to answer questions from graduate students. The workshop was initially scenario based, with the deans and ISVS Director addressing how they would each approach the specific scenarios. Please click on the link below for each scenario and helpful resources.

[updated slides](#)

We didn't have time to get through each scenario, however there was a lot of back and forth between the graduate students who attended and the panelists. The workshop concluded with a Q&A where graduate students got to ask any question related to the topic of academic supervision. All three panelists as well as the graduate students who attended expressed delight at my having held this workshop in the format that I did.

Besides hosting a workshop, I attended many meetings over the past month. I have highlighted some of those meetings below.

Meeting with Tracy (FGPS) (September 18th, 2025)

I met with Tracy to discuss my advocacy efforts on behalf of several graduate students. We met in order to have a productive working relationship moving forward.

Meeting with Remonia (Ombuds) (September 19th, 2025)

I met with Remonia from the Ombuds office to discuss my approach to advocacy on behalf of a student. We agreed on specific approaches in order to achieve the best outcome for the student.

Medicine Orientation Presentation (September 19th, 2025)

Niloufar Mirfallah (VP External) and I attended this orientation in the Clinical Sciences Building where we spoke to newly admitted graduate students in the medical field about the work of the GSA and its importance.

GFC Council Caucus (September 19th, 2025)

In this meeting which preceded the main GFC Council meeting we discussed the IT Security policy which will be making its way to the Board of Governors by December and the Fairness and Safety in Sport Policy which limits female participation in sports to those who have been determined to be “biologically female.” The former is on its way to approval by the end of the year, pending some changes, while the latter is a discussion item on the GFC’s agenda after having been approved by the Alberta government.

Meeting with U of T GSU VP Academics (September 19th, 2025)

I met with the VP Academics from the U of T to talk about the Graduate Student Bill of Rights which is an initiative that we are working on with the goal of empowering graduate students when it comes to academic supervision.

U of A Organizational Values Development – GSA Feedback (September 22nd, 2025)

Logan Mardhani-Bayne from Verna’s office and I discussed the proposed values of the university in the context of how students see themselves. He and his team will be presenting to Council about this same topic in November.

Meeting with U of T GSU VP Academics (September 22nd, 2025)

I again met with the VP Academics from U of T to talk about the Graduate Student Bill of Rights.

GFC Meeting (September 22nd, 2025)

In this meeting the IT Security Policy was considered for final passage, but it was ultimately decided that the policy would be revised further before coming back to the GFC for another vote. The Fairness in Safety and Sport Policy came as a discussion item and was severely criticized by some members of the GFC with the suggestion that the university do all that it can to resist the policy.

People Strategy (Values) Steering Committee (September 24th, 2025)

During this meeting we discussed the proposed values of the university, the values being curiosity, community, stewardship and impact.

U of A Graduate & Professional Studies Fair Tabling (September 24th, 2025)

I sat in Dinwoodie Lounge for about two hours meeting students and promoting the work of the GSA.

GFC Programs Committee Meeting (September 25th, 2025)

In this meeting we discussed curriculum management software for graduate and continuing education students. We also talked about the need to have truth and reconciliation in the calendar description of some programs, among other things.

University Research Advisory Committee (September 26th, 2025)

During this meeting (I left early) we discussed UAlberta research revenue, computer equipment procurement and the Indigenous Membership and Citizenship Conference which occurred in May 2025, among other things.

Graduate Program Support Team (GPST) (September 29th, 2025)

In this meeting we talked about the proposed online Graduate Certificate in Business Administration, the Graduate Certificate in AI + Health and the Graduate Certificate in Indigenous Laws. There was also a calendar change to the immunization regulation for the university.

GFC Ad Hoc Committee on Academic Governance (September 29th, 2025)

We talked about whether the committee can appoint an additional member, and also continued our deliberations on whether the size of the GFC impedes its proper functioning.

Standing Committee on Convocation (October 2nd, 2025)

We met to discuss our participation in the upcoming convocation ceremonies in November.

MNIF Joint Oversight Committee Meeting (October 3rd, 2025)

During this meeting we talked about the processes involved in getting the mandatory non instructional fees proposal approved.

Academic Supervision Q&A Workshop (October 3rd, 2025)

I hosted a Q&A workshop on academic supervision from the point of view of a graduate student. The panelists that participated in this were Dr. Cagri Ayranci from FGPS, Dr. Sujata Persad from FGPS and Kumarie Achaibar-Morrison from ISVS. This was a scenario-based workshop with a Q&A session at the very end.

Meeting with Logan Mardhani-Bayne (October 8th, 2025)

I met with Logan Mardhani-Bayne from Verna Yiu's office to talk about the values of the university and how students can become engaged in the process of defining what the university's values are.

GSA FGPS Caucus (October 8th, 2025)

In this brief FGPS caucus session we touched on deferral requests due to visa delays, the length of deferral per country and on whether or not the Certificate in Business Administration as presented adequately incorporates indigenous perspectives.

GPS Council (October 8th, 2025)

In this meeting we discussed the ongoing ATA teacher's strike which has left many university staff and students at home with their kids. We also covered the Slate platform for admissions, research related to minimum guaranteed funding and course-based scholarships awareness for students.

Academic Planning Committee (October 8th, 2025)

In this meeting Todd Gilchrist (Vice-President University Services, Operations and Finance) explained how the university must meet its performance targets, as not doing so would mean 40% of university funds are at risk.

Meeting with Christa Engel (October 10th, 2025)

I met with Christa Engel who is the President of the Education Graduate Students Association to discuss academic supervision.

LMS of the Future Advisory Committee Meeting (October 14th, 2025)

I was asked what the feedback I'm hearing is regarding Canvas as compared to eclass. I replied that I have heard grumblings and that it appears that quite a number of people do not like the new learning management software. The team provided me with a website and email address for support while one person suggested that some of the complaints may just be from people who are not used to the new system.

IT Security Policy Discussion (October 15th, 2025)

I asked Mark Humphries and Michael Spaling from IST questions about the forthcoming IT Security Policy as it relates to privacy for students and the clause that states criminal charges may be on the table for those who do not comply with the new policy.

Tuition Budget Advisory Committee (TBAC) (October 15th, 2025)

We discussed proposed exceptional tuition increases in some program areas and proposed payment plans that could be set up to assist students in the payment of their tuition.

Thanks for allowing me to deliver this report. Although I will not be present at the October 20th Council meeting, please reach out at gsa.vpacademic@ualberta.ca with any questions or concerns you may have.

Sincerely,
Chen Okafor
VP Academic (2025-26)

Item 7c: VP External Report

**2025-2026 Vice-President External
Report to GSA Council for the October 20, 2025 Meeting**

To: GSA Council
From: Niloufar Mirfallah
Date: October 20, 2025

2025-2026 GSA VP External Meetings Attended (Niloufar)

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

Date	Meeting
Sep,19	AB-GPAC Wrap-Up Discussion
Sep,19	Medicine Orientation Presentation
Sep,22	U of A Organizational Values Development – GSA Feedback
Sep,24	CASA GIRC Consultation (OP 8 & OP 21)
Sep,25	U of A GSA Recording
Sep,26	CASA September E-Plenary
Sep,29	CASA GAC Meeting
Oct,1	Cenovus Gift Announcement
Oct,8	ESA Meeting
Oct,14	Alberta Graduate Advocacy Group

AB-GPAC Wrap-Up Discussion

The GSA Executive Director and I met with the Executive Director of Athabasca University to coordinate the next steps for wrapping up AB-GPAC.

U of A Organizational Values Development – GSA Feedback

We collaborated with the Students' Union to record a message encouraging students to get involved in the upcoming municipal election.

CASA GIRC Consultation (OP 8 & OP 21)

I attended the CASA Operating Procedure 8 post-consultation meeting, which focused on amendments to the campaign initiation and management process. The discussion reviewed clearer criteria for annual

and mini campaign proposals, including issue identification, resource planning, membership expectations, and reporting requirements. Members also discussed the role of the National Advocacy Committee in overseeing campaign approvals and evaluations. Additionally, the letter of intent from SAMU (Students' Association of MacEwan University) to join CASA as an observer was reviewed, highlighting their strong advocacy background and interest in re-engaging with federal student advocacy initiatives

CASA GAC Meeting

During the GAC meeting, we discussed strategies to **elevate the voices of international graduate students** by advocating on key issues such as visa processing delays, access to permanent residency pathways, and culturally competent mental health supports. The committee also explored ways to **increase awareness among CASA members, students, policymakers, and the public** about the unique challenges faced by graduate students through targeted communications and outreach initiatives.

Cenovus Gift Announcement

I attended the **Cenovus Gift Announcement**, where Cenovus Energy announced a **\$2 million investment** to support collaborative programs between the **Alberta School of Business** and the **Faculty of Engineering**. The funding aims to enhance interdisciplinary learning, innovation, and industry partnerships that prepare students for leadership roles in the evolving energy sector.

ESA Meeting

I attended the **Edmonton Student Alliance (ESA)** meeting, where several key updates were discussed. The **ESA website** is now live, aiming to enhance the organization's public presence and media visibility, while also displaying advocacy priorities. A **contact list of member student associations** will be added soon.

The committee also discussed the **2025 Social Media Strategy**, emphasizing consistency and visibility through Instagram and the ESA website as the main platforms. Members agreed to focus on standardized templates and coordinated posting of ESA priorities and relevant municipal updates to encourage student engagement.

Additionally, an update was provided on the upcoming **ETS Transit Survey**, scheduled for launch in November. ETS plans to table at member campuses, with outreach materials to be distributed. Results from the earlier **housing survey** are expected to be shared next month.

Support for University of Alberta Proposal to Expand the Graduate Student Internship Program (GSIP)

The GSA has submitted a **letter of support to the Ministry of Advanced Education** endorsing the University of Alberta's proposal to expand the **Graduate Student Internship Program (GSIP)**. In the letter, we emphasized the urgent need for targeted provincial funding to provide more **structured, paid internship opportunities** for graduate students. The statement highlighted how expanding GSIP would strengthen Alberta's innovation ecosystem, enhance graduate employability, and ensure that the advanced skills developed at the University of Alberta contribute to the province's economic and social development.

Alberta Graduate Advocacy Group

We are continuing informal meetings with graduate student associations across Alberta to establish a provincial advocacy group for graduate students. In the meantime, the GSA-UofA signed on to the joint budget submission prepared by ASEC and CAUS, which highlights four key priorities: strengthening operational grant funding, modernizing mental health supports, digitizing part-time student aid, and funding food security.

Item 7d: VP Indigenous Relations Report

**2025-2026 Vice-President Indigenous Relations
Report to GSA Council for the October 20, 2025 Meeting**

To: GSA Council
From: Tamara Dubé
Date: October 15, 2025

2024-2025 GSA VP Indigenous Relations Meetings Attended (Tamara Dubé)

Please find below a list of meetings I attended between 18 September to 15 October 2025 (not inclusive of weekly GSA Board meetings). The meetings were accurate at the time of printing.

Date	Meeting
September 19	Canadian Alliance of Students Associations (CASA) – National Indigenous Advocacy Committee (NIAC)
September 19	Student
September 19	Dr. Florence Glanfield
September 20	Student
September 20	Student
September 24	Pre-Council
September 24	Council
September 25	Lacee - First Peoples' House (GSA Indigenous Awards)
September 26	Ravina - Vice-Provost and Dean of Students
September 26	Student
October 1	Orange Shirt Day - Augustana
October 2	Student
October 3	Christa Engel (Graduate Coordinator, Orientation & Transition Programs) & Saad (VPSS) (Planning for Indigenous Graduate Student Meet-Up & Welcome Baskets for Indigenous Students and New Parents)
October 7	Dr. Florence Glanfield
October 9	Student
October 9	Saad, VP Student Services
October 10	Orange Shirt Day Beading with Tashina Makokis (Rehab Med Students, Faculty, Staff – Augustana)
October 10	Student

October 14	Student
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**Most of my communications this month has been through Gmail and Google Chats.*

Priorities:

Indigenous Awards Development

Work continues towards the creation of two Indigenous Awards to be presented at the GSA Recognition Awards in March 2026. There was a previous award Indigenous Graduate Student Award (which is really a current award with little institutional memory and has not been offered or awarded in the last few years, however there is an agreement until 2027). The Indigenous Graduate Student Award has experienced hiccups in previous years, which I am trying to sort out. The Recognition for Truth and Reconciliation will be a new award. These awards aim to celebrate Indigenous excellence and acknowledge those advancing the University of Alberta's commitment to Truth and Reconciliation and the Indigenous Strategic Initiative: *Braiding Past, Present, and Future*.

The goal is for applications to open in early December 2025 alongside all other GSA award applications.

1. **Indigenous Graduate Student Award** — A \$750 (possibly being increased to \$1000) award recognizing one Indigenous graduate student annually who demonstrates leadership, academic achievement, and contributions to community.
2. **Recognition for Truth and Reconciliation** — A non-monetary recognition for a University of Alberta staff or faculty member (Indigenous or non-Indigenous) who has shown exceptional commitment to supporting Indigenous graduate students and advancing reconciliation within the campus community.

I am working collaboratively with First Peoples' House and the GSA Awards Selection Committee to finalize the award criteria, nomination process, and selection approach to ensure both awards are meaningful, accessible, and reflective of Indigenous values and priorities. It is also important that these awards are aligned with other GSA awards, and that the recipients are included in the GSA Recognition Awards event.

Indigenous Graduate Student Welcome

Discussions are taking place for an Indigenous Graduate Student Welcome, an event on North Campus that will warmly welcome new Indigenous graduate students beginning their studies in 2025. The gathering will celebrate community, connection, and belonging within the university environment. Each student will receive a personalized Welcome Basket featuring meaningful items that reflect Indigenous values, wellness, and student life. The event will include introductions, sharing, and opportunities to build relationships among students, faculty, and community members, fostering a supportive start to their academic journey.

This initiative is being developed in collaboration with University of Alberta's Orientation & Transition Programs (Christa Engel), First Peoples' House (Lacey Wuttunee), the Indigenous Graduate Students' Association (Meredith Leary), and the GSA Vice President Student Services (Saad Arslan Iqbal). Current planning efforts are focused on the creation and delivery of the Welcome Baskets, ensuring they are culturally meaningful and representative of the diverse Nations and identities of Indigenous graduate students at the University.

Revising the Onboard Process for GSA Roles and Committees

Work is underway to strengthen and Indigenize the onboarding process for all individuals holding positions within the Graduate Students' Association (GSA) this includes, but is not limited to Directly-Elected Officers (DEOs), Elections and Referenda Committee (ERC) members, the Chief Returning Officer (CRO), Speakers, Appeals and Complaints Board (ACB) members, other standing committee members, Departmental Council representatives, and staff.

The goal is to ensure onboarding reflects the GSA's commitment to Truth and Reconciliation, cultural safety, and ethical, informed partnerships. Proposed updates include integrating experiential learning opportunities, such as Blanket Exercises, and educational components, such as completion of the Indigenous Canada MOOC (Faculty of Native Studies) or equivalent learning. This will be built on in future years with the Vice President Indigenous Relations. The goal is to implement a foundation because there are some massive and harmful gaps.

This initiative is being developed collaboratively with the Indigenous Graduate Students' Association and the Faculty of Native Studies to ensure the onboarding framework is relational, respectful, and rooted in Indigenous perspectives and knowledge systems.

This work directly aligns with the Vice President Indigenous Relations portfolio priorities to advance reconciliation through systemic change, education, and capacity-building within GSA governance and leadership structures.

Review of ERC Changes to the Vice President Indigenous Relations Bylaw and Policies

The Indigenous Graduate Students' Association (IGSA) and I are currently reviewing the Elections and Referenda Committee's (ERC) proposed changes to the Vice President Indigenous Relations (VPIR) Bylaw and Policies. Together, we are preparing formal feedback and recommendations to ensure the revisions align with the intent of the role, uphold Indigenous representation and governance principles, and strengthen future implementation processes.

Indigenous Graduate Student Google Meet

Plans are underway to establish a monthly Google Meet for Indigenous graduate students alongside Indigenous Graduate Students' Association (Meredith Leary). The purpose of these virtual gatherings is to create opportunities for kinship, relationship building, and connection among Indigenous graduate students across various programs and faculties. Some possible ideas are to have a theme each week and make a craft virtually together (Bring Your Own Craft).

The initiative aims to:

- Foster a sense of community and belonging within the Indigenous graduate student population.
- Provide an informal space for peer support, sharing experiences, and collaboration.
- Encourage cross-program networking to strengthen interdisciplinary connections and mentorship opportunities.

The first meeting is currently in the planning stage, with the goal of establishing a regular monthly schedule moving forward.

Emergency Exit Door – Augustana Campus (Rehabilitation Medicine)

Discussions have been initiated regarding the potential conversion of the existing emergency exit door at the Augustana Campus into an accessible exit and entry point for graduate students. The intent is to improve accessibility and student access within the Rehabilitation Medicine area while ensuring compliance with campus safety regulations. This is in the hands of the university now.

Indigenous Graduate Student Support Experiences Study

Indigenous researchers Drs. Margaret Kovach, Shawn Wilson, Monty Montgomery, and PhD Candidate Lindsay DuPré consulted with Dr. Florence Glanfield (Vice-Provost, Indigenous Programming and Research), Dr. Tracy Raivio (Vice-Provost and Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies), and Dr. Ali Shiri (Vice Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies), and me as the Vice President, Indigenous Relations (GSA). Following these consultations, I shared information about the study with Indigenous graduate students to participate. There will be an opportunity for participants to get together on North Campus at the beginning of November.

Unpaid Vice President Indigenous Relations Stipend

The unpaid VPIR stipend from May 1, 2025, until July 16, 2025, that needs to be transferred to Indigenous Graduate Students' Association, has still not been resolved.

Item 7e: VP Student Life Report

2025-2026 Vice-President Student Life's Meetings Attended

Please find below a list of meetings I attended between September 18 and October 15 2025. The meetings were accurate at the time of printing.

Reports:

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

September 18	Media Calendar Review
September 18	Meeting with a student (EDIC Inquiry)
September 18	East Campus Commons Site Visit
September 18	Residence Advisory Committee Meeting
September 19	Meeting with students (with VPSSE)
September 19	Governance Committee Meeting
September 19	Speedfriending event with Friends Across Campus (FAC)
September 22	UofA Organizational Values Development
September 22	ISA/GSA Regular Meetings
September 22	GSA Volunteer Meet and Greet, and Orientation
September 24	DoS Student Mental Health Action Plan Launch
September 24	DOA Committee Meeting
September 24	GSA Board meeting
September 24	GSA Pre-Council and Council
September 25	FoPPS Orientation Q&A
September 26	GSA Special Board meeting
September 29	Collective of Black Student Leaders
October 1	GSA Board Meeting
October 2	GSA/AFNS/ALES Collaboration
October 3	MNIF Joint Oversight Committee Meeting
October 3	Campus Community and Recreation Bi-Monthly Meeting
October 3	World Day of Social Justice working group meeting
October 5	GSA/Hi Finance Meeting
October 5	Turkey Trot Run (CCR)
October 6	Meeting with Katherine Huising, VP Facilities & Operations
October 7	Co-Sponsor Updates SEAP
October 8	GSA/ISA Collaboration Meeting
October 9	GSA/ISVS/Residence Thanksgiving Potluck
October 10	Coalition for Action on Harm Reduction on Campus (formally CAHRD)

October 14	Council of Residence Association
October 15	Meeting with Carrie Smith and Tim Ira
October 15	GSA Board Meeting
October 15	Student Success and Experience Advisory Committee Meeting

Date: October 15th, 2025

From: Hazel Kemuma, Vice President (Student Life)

1. VP SL Report

Dear Council Members,

I hope we are all remaining afloat despite this being midterm period. Please take time to care for yourself and reach out to the available resources should you need them. The following is a report of the meetings I've attended since the last council meeting.

Speedfriending event with Friends Across Campus (FAC)

We successfully hosted the Speedfriending event, which brought together over 150 graduate students. The atmosphere was vibrant, with meaningful conversations and genuine connections taking place throughout the afternoon. Feedback from attendees was overwhelmingly positive, with many appreciating the opportunity to meet new people and build community early in the semester. I hope that the friendships and networks formed during the event will continue to grow and provide support as the term progresses and academic demands increase.

UofA Organizational Values Development

The GSA Board met with Logan from the Office of the Provost, who is helping lead the process to develop the University of Alberta's organizational values under the co-sponsorship of the Provost and the Vice-President (University Services, Operations, and Finance). He shared the progress made so far and invited our input and feedback on the draft values. It was encouraging to see the university's commitment to this initiative, and we look forward to seeing the finalized values and how they will shape the institution's culture and operations moving forward.

GSA Volunteer Meet and Greet, and Orientation

I met with our volunteers to welcome them to the GSA and provide an orientation on their pivotal role in supporting not only GSA events but also the broader success of the Association. Many of these volunteers have since contributed significantly to events such as the Thanksgiving Dinner, with more signing up for the upcoming Graduate Mixer. Their dedication and enthusiasm have been instrumental in the success of our initiatives, and I extend our sincere gratitude for their continued support.

GSA/Hi Finance Meeting

I met with a representative from HI Finance to discuss potential collaboration opportunities for this academic year. HI Finance is a university-based startup that supports students and recent graduates in

managing their finances through comprehensive services, including funding support, budgeting, tax guidance, and long-term savings strategies. They have expressed interest in sponsoring some of our upcoming events and potentially engaging with GSA Council in the new year to present their services and explore further partnership opportunities

Turkey Trot Run

The Turkey Trot Run was a highly successful collaborative event organized by Campus Community and Recreation in partnership with the GSA, Students' Union, and the Faculty of Kinesiology, Sport, and Recreation. We had an impressive turnout, with 280 participants in the 5 km run and 104 in the kids' 1 km run. Through registrations and donations, a total of **\$5,000** was raised in support of the Campus Food Bank. The event not only fostered community spirit but also contributed meaningfully to supporting students and families in need.

GSA/ISVS/Residence Thanksgiving Potluck

The Thanksgiving Potluck, co-hosted by the GSA, ISVS, and Residence Services, was a great success. We received around 130 RSVPs and welcomed close to 180 attendees, including graduate students, as well as international students. The event created a warm and inclusive space for students to celebrate Thanksgiving together, enjoy a shared meal, and connect in a welcoming and supportive environment.

Grad Mixer

Planning for the Graduate Student Mixer has been finalized, and we have received an overwhelming response with over 300 RSVPs from the graduate students, the alumni and guests from the University leadership. Due to the high turnout, we relocated the event to a larger venue to better accommodate attendees. I look forward to sharing a full update on its outcomes at the next meeting.

2. GSA Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Committee Report

The EDIC has not convened since the last Council meeting. As such, there are no new updates to report at this time. I will provide a comprehensive update at the subsequent Council meeting once the committee reconvenes and continues its regular discussions and initiatives.

Yours sincerely,

Hazel Kemuma.
VP Student Life.(2025-2026)

Item 7f: VP Student Services Report

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

To: GSA Council
From: Saad A. Iqbal
Date: October 17, 2025

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

Below is a list of meetings I attended between September 17, 2025 and October 16, 2025 (not including weekly GSA Board meetings). The meetings were accurate at the time of printing.

Date	Meeting
September 18	Know Your Services Tabling at Business Atrium
September 18	Meeting with Student (confidential)
September 19	Meeting with Students (confidential)
September 19	CFB Meeting with ED
September 19	Meeting with Katherine Huising
September 22	World Hello Day Programming Meeting
September 22	Meeting with Calgary Satellite Campus Representative
September 23	GSA/SU Meeting with Bredin Early Bird
September 23	Meeting with Chelsea Butler
September 23	Internal Meeting with GSA ED
September 24	Student Mental Health Action Plan Launch
September 25	Know Your Services Tabling at SUB
September 25	Meeting with CFB ED
September 26	Meeting with Student (confidential)
October 1	GSA/Studywell Weekly Updates

October 3	Welcome to Grad School Baskets for Indigenous Students (VPIR and Christa Engel)
October 3	GSA/CCR Bi-Monthly Meeting
October 5	Turkey Trot Event (CCR)
October 6	CFB Board Generative Discussion
October 8	GSA/Studywell Weekly Updates
October 9	CFB ED and Co-Chairs Meeting
October 9	GSA/ISVS/Residence Thanksgiving Dinner
October 10	Internal Meeting
October 15	Phone call Meeting with Student (confidential)
October 15	CFB Annual General Meeting
October 16	Meeting with Kevin Frieze
October 16	GSA/Studywell Weekly Updates
October 16	Meet & Grill Event at CSJ

Dear Members of the GSA Council,

I hope you're all doing well in your academic, professional, and personal pursuits. Below are the details of the meetings I have attended between September 17 and October 16, 2025:

Know Your Services Tabling Campaign

During this reporting period, I have held two tabling sessions, one at the Business Atrium and one at the SUB. I was also accompanied by other DEOs as per their availability. In these tabling sessions, we briefed graduate students about different services available to them through the GSA. Some of the information we have shared includes GSA bursaries and awards, Health and dental plan, childcare grants, parents' lounge, childminding services, GSAP, U-Pass, study spaces, etc.

Meeting with Calgary Satellite Campus Representative

I, along with Cindy and Grace, had a meeting with the Administrative Coordinator of the Faculty of Rehabilitative Medicine at the Calgary Campus. We discussed how the GSA can help the graduate students and whether there are any tailored support or advocacy efforts needed. Among other ideas, we also discussed potentially adding a Councillor seat in the GSA council. This has been shared with the Speaker, who will be taking steps to accommodate this addition.

Student Mental Health Action Plan Launch

I had a chance to speak at the launch of the Student Mental Health Action Plan. The launch was a successful event where campus partners gathered to celebrate this positive initiative. I was also accompanied by the President, Aashish and VP Student Life, Hazel. Following is a draft of my speech:
We at the Graduate Students Association welcome the launch of the Student Mental Health Action Plan. We acknowledge the efforts that went into the consultation process, including gathering feedback from students and community members, particularly from equity-denied and equity-deserving communities. To give some context, in one of our most recent surveys to gain insights into the mental health status of our graduate students, conducted in 2024, we found several areas of focus:

- *Increased funding for mental health resources*
- *Enhanced communication and awareness campaigns*
- *University support for the implementation of GSA peer support programs*
- *Flexible and inclusive services*
- *And regular feedback for continuous improvement*

One of the significant statistics we got from the survey is that 66% of those who responded were diagnosed with mental health issues AFTER starting graduate school. This suggests a strong link between academic pressures and mental health & well-being. Therefore, it is promising to see that our university

is taking a greater interest and focusing on providing the much-needed mental health resources to our students.

The SIX pillars for change, shaped by the consultations, are not only relevant but also timely.

All of the focus areas align with our own survey results and the feedback we regularly collect. Academic responsibilities, financial challenges, professional obligations, and parental duties all amount to significant pressures for students. The launch of the program is a promising step forward in ensuring that our students and other community members find the support network that can help them thrive in all areas of life.

In the end, I want to thank the collaborative efforts of the National Standard Engagement Team, the National Standard Working Group, the National Standard Steering Committee, and all members of the UofA community who made this launch a success.

THANK YOU!

GSA/Studywell Weekly Updates

Our weekly meetings with Studywell continue. We are closely monitoring the areas of concern and issues that have been identified by graduate students. We are working with Studywell representatives to resolve ongoing issues promptly. This is a high-priority area of focus, and soon, we will be organizing town halls or hybrid webinars where graduate students who need help with their questions or who want to share concerns will get a chance to share feedback. Details about these events will be shared as soon as the planning is done.

CFB Annual General Meeting

As the co-chair of the campus Food Bank, I addressed the Annual General Meeting, where we discussed and approved the agenda, meeting minutes from the previous AGM, the audit statement, and elected new members to the CFB board. This is a positive step for the CFB as new members on the Board will help the CFB expand its strategic planning and operational oversight, and will benefit from the experience of the overall board membership. The CFB ED, Yetayale, gave an overall presentation on the financial audit as well as an overview of how the CFB operates. The AGM had a good turnout with more than 30 attendees.

Meeting with Kevin Friese

In our meeting, Kevin and I discussed the upcoming Dose of Support program between October 16 and December 18, 2025, and the Influenza Flu Clinic running across campuses. You can find these details in the important notes section.

We also talked about the Hydroponics Farm project. Ravina Sanghera is currently working on finding possible space on campus to run the pilot program. Kevin and I also talked about organizing the Graduate Student Mental Health Photo Contest. I will be sharing details soon.

Meet & Grill Event at CSJ

The GSA Executives attended the meet and grill event held at the CSJ. Among the attendees were the VP Academic, Chen, the VP External, Niloufar, the VP Student Life, Hazel, and me. We were invited by *Sophie Nguemo Medongoum*, GSA CSJ Councillor. We

had a chance to meet with some of the graduate students, as well as Dr. Samira ElAtia, Associate Dean-Research, Graduate Studies and International, and other faculty members. Sophie, as the CSJ Councillor, will be bringing some perspectives from the CSJ for our council to focus on.

Important Notes:

1. The SSE is offering **Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST)** to our student communities. There are limited spots available for these dates: Nov 6-7, and Dec 11-Jan 1. Interested councillors can directly contact Kevin Frieze at frieze@ualberta.ca. Please note that if interested, you will have to attend both days together as shared above.
2. **The Dose of Support** program has started from October 16 and will continue till December 18. This is a great way to connect with a clinician from the SSE, with drop-in sessions typically lasting 20 minutes. Please see details [HERE](#).
3. **Influenza Flu Clinics:** Students in the North Campus can get free of cost influenza shots either from the health center or the main floor of the pharmacy. This is an intensive campaign running from October 20 to the end of November (you may still be able to get the shots outside of this period; please check). Please find details for booking appointments for North Campus, Augustana and CSJ [HERE](#).
4. The **Campus Food Bank** is organizing the **Trick or Treat Event** and is looking for volunteers for October 25 (11 a.m. to 5 p.m.). If you or anyone you know might be interested, please sign up using this [LINK](#).

Best Regards,

Saad Arslan Iqbal

GSA VP Student Services (2025-26)

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

Item 7k: GSA Nominating Committee Chair Report

**2025-2026 Nominating Committee Chair
Report to GSA Council for October 2025**

To: GSA Council

From: Arseniy Belosokhov

Date: October 16, 2025

Dear Council,

The Nominating Committee reports a continuing shortage of applications to the key positions listed since August.

We did not receive sufficient nominations for any of the vacancies reported on during the previous Council:

- 1 Councillor (GSAB/NoC) and 1 GSA member for the Nominating Committee
- 1 Councillor and 1 GSA member on the Appeals and Complaints Board (ACB);
- 2 Councillors on the GSA Governance Committee;
- 2 GSA members on the GSA Awards Selection Committee;
- 3 Councillors on the GSA Board;
- 1 GSA member for the position of GSA Deputy Returning Officer (DRO).

We urge councillors to be proactive and apply for Councillor-designated positions, and to advertise the existing vacancies available to general GSA members to your constituents and encourage them to apply. Feel free to direct them to the page with the current vacancies listed:

<https://gsa-ualberta.ca/get-involved/>

We were able to approve the received nominations for the NoC and FGPS Council. I was also able to meet with candidates for the GSA Labour Relations Committee over the interview, and I have set up an interview with the ACB candidate.

To sum up, the Nominating Committee works, but our function right now relies on your readiness to step in for the councillor-reserved positions and advertise positions in the GSA committees with vacancies among your constituents.

Sincerely,

Arseniy Belosokhov,
Nominating Committee Chair

Item 7m: GSA Management Report

**GSA Management
Report to GSA Council for October 20, 2025 Meeting**

To: GSA Council
From: Eric Derksen
Date: October 15, 2025

We are pleased to present to council the following management report from the GSA office.

The office supported a successful Academic Supervision Workshop (Oct 3) with FGPS and ISVS (25 attendees) and coordinated post-event communications and materials. The team assisted with Turkey Trot and Thanksgiving Potluck collaborations, engaging over 300 students and strengthening partnerships with CCR, Residence, and ISVS. We are also leading volunteer onboarding and engagement for upcoming October and November events. We finalized logistics for the Graduate Mixer with Alumni Relations (Oct 17).

We also distributed the Cost of Living Survey with 1000+ responses. The team updated the GSA website resources (Collective Bargaining section, Budget & Fess, etc.). The GSA Office is filling its Standing Committee vacancies. At the November's Council meeting, we will be holding the elections for the Nominating Committee, Elections & Referenda Committee, and the Appeals & Complaints Board. The GSA Awards Selection Committee has just opened its vacancies to general members, as has the GSA Labour Relations Committee for multiple positions. We are also working to fill two spots on the GFC's Graduate Program Support Team with GSA members. We are organizing a Tuition Town Hall with Melissa Padfield, which will be advertised once details are finalized.

Management has hired an excellent person in the role of Finance Manager and onboarding started last week and will continue. We are very thankful this role is filled. The role of Associate Director is currently in the process of being filled, and more information will be forthcoming shortly.

We continue to build relationships with GSA members and council members especially are invited to drop by to connect with us, even to meet, as our calendars allow. We are here to serve the GSA, the Council and support the important work of the council and committees.

Continuing the encouragement of Board member reporting practice, and indeed all committee reporting, it should be common practice to make reports as full and meaningful as possible to enable the business of Council, Board and committees to be as efficient and effective as possible. It would significantly add to our organizational effectiveness and professionalism if reports focused only on organizational, strategic, and operational work done by the Board, Committees, and staff, devoid of personal and interpersonal dynamics that distract from both operational and governance mandates.

It would behoove the council to have a firm grasp, or to regain its firm grasp, on its fiduciary responsibility to the government of Alberta through the Post Secondary Learning Act. To this end, its mandate is for effective governance, not for operational management. The Council is reminded of its responsibility for effective and professional self-governance including the responsibility for adequate and effective function in all its standing committees and other committees to which it has delegated some authority and responsibility. As such, it is the council's prerogative to request and require regular updates from each committee, and through such reports should assure itself that its governance mandate is being properly executed.

In summary, Council is the governance owner and steward of the GSA under the PSLA. It delegates some of its governance function to standing and other committees as it chooses, and has chosen to execute operations through a professional staff, managed by the Executive Director who directs such operations and is accountable to the Board, the senior administrative authority of the GSA as delegated by the GSA Council.

It should be the intention that professionalism, accountability, collegiality and appropriate transparency is practiced throughout the GSA. Failure to practice these standards, as evidenced by both experience and the historical record, results in costly expenditures, at times with extreme cost, in both human and financial capital.

Sincerely,

Eric Derksen
Executive Director

Management Update

GSAB Sept 24, 2025

To the Board:

The job assessment and job posting for the role of Assistant Director is being prepared. Alongside this review, staff support conversations are happening to gain a sense of potential design changes to facilitate work flow, job capacity, and both administrative and executive portfolio gaps. We are working with the bank and members of the former ab-GPAC for winding this down and gaining access for sitting funds to be redistributed to member organizations. A contract will go out this week for a Finance Manager and the start date will be Oct. 6, 2025 presuming we can come to agreeable terms. We are working with institutions to cancel and register signing authority for the Executive Director. We had a meeting with SFS who will continue to host and administer the GSA Emergency Bursary. We will sign a 5-year agreement and provide clearer criteria for disbursement. We will have a conversation later in the fall at the staff, BFC and Board levels about switching to Quickbooks from Sage for usability reasons. Work is beginning on the development of an HR/Employment Manual for the GSA which will connect with the Code of Conduct currently in consideration. We have reviewed a financial policy document for adoption and implementation by GSA.

A Code of Conduct document, encompassing all GSA elected officers, staff and volunteers, is in the works, to be reviewed by Governance Committee soon. We have many upcoming Standing Committee elections, as well as university council and faculty committee elections. The office is directing many student cases regarding the health and dental plan to the new provider and helping sort out exception cases. Cindy, Saad and Grace met with the Rehabilitation Medicine Coordinator at the Calgary Satellite Campus to discuss expanding our resources and events to their locations - plans are in the works. The GSA Nominating Committee is preparing to interview candidates for the remaining GSA Appeals & Complaints Board vacancies. Once approved, they'll be forwarded to GSA Council for the election in October's meeting. The GSA Elections & Referenda Committee is collaborating with the Indigenous GSA (IGSA) re updating our VP Indigenous Relations election policy, which, once approved, will go to Board and Council for approval. Departmental orientation presentations are wrapping up for the year (there is one left to attend on Thursday) and have been a success with the implementation of our new orientation video. We have recorded a French translation for our orientation video with our Campus Saint-Jean GSA Councillor, which will be edited together by Grace, and once approved, it will be used for presenting at the CSJ orientation in early October. There are 49 Academic Travel Grants pending, of which 19 require immediate approval. Preparations have been finalized for the September 19th Speedfriending Social Hour, and planning has begun for the October 17th Graduate and Alumni Mixer. Brandy held a Volunteer

Orientation, and is working with Tamara regarding an Indigenous Student Graduate Award with First Peoples' House.

Respectfully submitted,
Eric Derksen
Executive Director

Management Report to the GSA Board, October 1 2025

I am pleased to provide to the board the following board directed management report. I trust that as time progresses and I find both familiarity and footing for this new role, I will more accurately and adequately give you the information provided for me by the staff. In proper governance protocol, the board is eligible to request specific information from the staff concerning any portfolio issue, and should direct that query to me and I will acquire the needed information.

- **Engagement & Events:** Academic Supervision Q&A Workshop (Oct 3) — 38 RSVPs, logistics/catering in progress; supporting Turkey Trot (Oct 5) Thanksgiving Potluck with Residence & ISVS (Oct 9); planning underway for Oct 17 Social Hour: Graduate Mixer with Alumni Relations (186 RSVPs and comms live).
- **Strategic/Advocacy:** Cost of Living Survey has 900+ responses; quarterly updates for DEO priorities are almost due and reminder emails have been scheduled.
- There are 55 **ATG** in progress
 - There are also **5 student group event** grants in progress.
 - The audio that Sophie, our CSJ Councillor, sent me to redo the French narration for our orientation video wasn't of very good quality, so we are waiting to see if she wants to re-record or keep with what we currently have - will update you as necessary
 - We are finalizing the Council Summary to go out either today or tomorrow, after approvals
 - We have sent out the EDIC election results to the candidates and sent the onboarding information to the new member. Once she's signed her confidentiality form, I'll add her to all of the calendar invites.
 - We will get the Council minutes done tomorrow as it sounds like we're getting quite a few requests for them and under the circumstances care will be exercised in their completion
 - The AD has put me in touch with a NAIT Associate Director who runs their executive GSA elections, which involves an interview process into the election, which we think may be

prudent to incorporate into ours, particularly as we do interviews for our volunteer standing committees. I'll be booking a meeting with her when I'm back on the 8th.

From my management perspective I would make some general comments about effective governance for the council's consideration, about board policy and protocol (including standardized reporting format and parameters), the flow of accountability and responsibility between Council, standing committees, the Executive Director, and the staff. These should be encoded in the Board policies. A further articulation may be require about Board – Executive Director lines of accountability and reporting. I am sending an offer next week to a fine candidate for the Finance Manager Role and with some clarity on the LRC responsibilities, can finalize that posting.

Executive Director

Eric Derksen

Management Report to the GSA Board, October 8 2025

(Meeting was postponed due to lack of quorum and report was given on Oct. 15)

I am pleased to provide this update for the Board this week. I would ask you to carefully review the report and its observations.

1. Communications

- Special Bulletin re: ATA Strike released via email, website, and social media.
- Social Media
 - **Facebook**
 - 1. Reach: -43.4% (Sept 9 -Oct 7)
 - 2. Followers: -6 followers (current: 2052)
 - **Instagram**
 - 1. Reach: -26.5% (Sept 9 -Oct 7)
 - 2. Followers: +20 follower (current: 1684)
 - **Twitter/ X**
 - 1. Followers: - 2 follower (1269)

2. Events

- **Turkey Trot:** Attended last Sunday. Estimated turnout <200. Refreshments left over can be repurposed for future events.
- **Thanksgiving Potluck:** 130 RSVPs received. Currently 3 volunteer sign-ups.
- **Graduate Mixer with Alumni:** 253 RSVPs; 3 volunteer sign-ups so far. To contact ASSET to request additional volunteer support. Awaiting revised catering quote based on Aashish's direction.

3. Cost of Living Survey

- 1,018 responses collected to date.
- Awaiting direction from the President regarding data analysis and next steps.

4. Strategic Work Plan (SWP) Updates

- Reminder email sent to DEOs re: October 17 deadline for Q2 updates.
- Target publish date for Q2: October 24, with a midyear SWP Report to follow.

- 5. The office currently has 70 academic travel grants in process.

A. Administrative**1. ED Work from home – Fridays**

Counting over 80 meetings, formal and informal, over the first 17 days of work, there is a need to have focused time for organization, strategic planning, and to give concentrated, sustained attention to many things. The work-from-home day falls on the day when there is less on the calendar. In addition, from time to time, there will be a Please Do Not Disturb sign on the cubicle that allows me uninterrupted concentration.

2. Employee/HR manual

In conversation with staff, the HR or Employment manual, while more comprehensive than simply these things, will encode historical practices and essential items that are part of current office functioning but not formally documented. It is apparent that HR policies and office practices are being followed, but they are not formalized.

3. Email filtering

It would be helpful for the ED if emails requiring action could be noted as such. This would help triage all emails and ensure action items are not missed. If you have not heard back or require something in particular from the ED, please remind me or feel free to ask.

B. Operations

1. The contract will go out this week to the new Finance Manager. She will start the Tuesday after Thanksgiving. She will be in the office 2 ½ days, working toward another ½ day working from home.

2. Onboarding is very slow for the ED. There is no manual, no documentation, and each day presents its own tasks and responsibilities. The role, at the moment, feels extremely reactive and at best, somewhat tactical, but not at all strategic. If the Board feels things are being missed, please advise. An assessment of the Associate Director roles and responsibilities is being carried out with a view to a second role to relieve some work overload in the office. This is being structured to provide capacity and continuity for the management function in particular, and with a view to administrative management first and support secondarily.

3. Closed session – 2 items

C. Board and Governance

1. DEO/Management Reporting formats – Board and Council

I would recommend some simple DEO reporting changes for the Board and Council reports. In keeping with governance professionalism and to ensure effectiveness for the Board and for the Council at their respective levels of governance, the DEOs best serve these ends by focusing on specific portfolio concerns, SWP advances or issues, and restrict themselves to professionally established reporting formats. I would counsel the reports to avoid all reference to personal offences, real or perceived, and all and any interpersonal conflicts which should be internally and self-mediated. This will keep the Board meetings and Council meetings professional, effective, efficient and focused on the key responsibilities of governance. The council should concern itself only with governance. Second, DEOs should be encouraged to be as thorough and complete as possible in their Board reports to inform the board of ongoing projects and items of interest to the Board. Board members should read the reports of other members thoroughly, and Board input or opinion should be limited to perhaps 5 minutes per member. There will be times and occasions for special items that require more time, but this should not be the norm. If the report is more comprehensive, the meeting will be shorter. Awareness should come through the written report itself.

2. Council's Governance mandate.

Council must reacquire a strong sense of its overarching fiduciary responsibility, a provincial trust given by the PSLA for effective self-governance and the management of that governance. Council should be reminded and made aware that the success or failure of the GSA falls squarely on its shoulders, and Council alone will be held responsible for the condition and effectiveness of the GSA. Furthermore, it is the council's prerogative and responsibility to hold its standing committees to account, to make sure every standing committee is functioning effectively and reporting to the council in a timely and clear manner. If committees are not functioning, it is the Council's responsibility. Council functions at the governance level, not the administrative or operational level. Awareness of this will make its meetings more efficient, staying at the highest level of responsibility. It cannot lose sight of the forest for the individual trees. To this end, DEO professionalized reports will facilitate Council professionalism avoiding personal and interpersonal issues.

4. Board Policy

It should be embedded in Board Policy that Executive Director accountability is to the entire board: the entire board directs the Executive Director and not any one member, though it may address communications through one of its members (ie, the President most often but not necessarily). A second related item should articulate that the Board addresses staff management and responsibility through the Executive Director. Board members and Council Members do not ever have direct authority or influence over staff. This is a fundamental principle of policy governance. For example, any GSA member or Council member's complaints to ACB are spurious at best or vexatious at worst since the ACB has no mandate for such complaints against staff. This is properly indicated in the ACB mandate. Policy governance provides for safe and reliable means of governance, management and accountability. Board policy is a layer of organizational protection with safeguards, processes, and accountability directly stated.

Item 8a: GSA VPIR-Recommended Policy Additions, Motion 1

Outline of Issue: Motion 1

Motion 2 – Publicizing Councillor and Alternate Councillor Names on GSA Website

Whereas GSA Councillors and Alternate Councillors are elected or appointed representatives of graduate students in their respective departments;

Whereas while some departments identify their representatives, others do not, creating inconsistencies and reducing transparency;

Whereas public access to the names of all Councillors and Alternate Councillors strengthens accountability, allows graduate students to know their representatives, and facilitates communication;

Be it resolved that GSA Council direct staff to maintain and regularly update a public list on the GSA website showing the names and departments of **all** current Councillors and Alternate Councillors for **every** seat except for such instances when an individual does not provide consent;

Be it further resolved that this list be updated within two weeks of any change in representation and reviewed for accuracy at least once per academic term.

Item 8b: GSA VPIR-Recommended Policy Additions, Motion 2

Outline of Issue: Motion 2

Motion 3 – Hybrid Format for All Council and Committee Meetings

Whereas the GSA represents graduate students across multiple campuses, including Augustana, Calgary, and Campus Saint-Jean;

Whereas physical distance and travel requirements create barriers for graduate students on sister campuses to participate fully in GSA governance;

Whereas current vacancies in seats such as Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy, and Campus Saint-Jean Primary and Alternate Councillor positions highlight the need for improved accessibility;

Whereas hybrid meeting formats allow for equitable participation by enabling members to attend and contribute without being physically present;

Whereas the current Vice President Indigenous Relations is the first DEO to ever be located on a sister campus, and their process was made complicated by not being a student on North Campus;

Be it resolved that GSA Council require all Council and committee meetings to be offered in a hybrid format, providing both in-person and virtual attendance options;

Be it further resolved that staff ensure the necessary technology and procedures are in place to facilitate full participation and voting rights for remote attendees.

Item 8d: GSA GC-Recommended Bylaw & Policy Revisions, Section D

Outline of Issue**Recommended Changes to GSA Bylaw and Policy****Suggested Motion:**

That the GSA Council **APPROVE** the following GSA Bylaw & Policy Revisions, Section D

Background:

The following policy is suggested to ensure continued CRO changeover for maximum neutrality through elections.

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

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

GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section A.BYL.2.2

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

GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section F.BYL.1.3

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

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

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

Current Policy (Additions in red and deletions are strikethroughs)	Rationale
Term Limit for the Chief Returning Officer (CRO) D.POL.12.3 Restrictions for CRO and DRO D.POL.12.3.a The CRO and DRO may not hold any other representative position in the GSA. D.POL.12.3.b The CRO and DRO, as well as the “Speaker, Deputy Speaker, members of the GSA Nominating Committee, members of the GSA Appeals and Complaints Board, and members of the GSA Elections and Referenda Committee will remain neutral and not serve as a Campaign Volunteer for any candidate whatsoever” in an election (GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section I.POL.10.9) and “not serve as a Campaign Representative or Campaign Volunteer for any ‘Yes’ or ‘No’ campaign whatsoever” in a referendum (GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section J.POL.11.4). D.POL.12.3.c The CRO and DRO must not have run in the most recent GSA General Election and election of the AVPL and/or by-election or served as a Campaign Representative in the most recent referendum. D.POL.12.3.d The CRO and DRO must be fully willing and able to carry out the position and must be physically present in Edmonton or surrounding areas for the duration of any GSA General Election and election of the AVPL, by-election, and/or referendum.	

D.POL.12.3.e – The Chief Returning Officer (CRO) shall serve a one (1) year term commencing on 1 June and concluding on 31 May of the following year. D.POL.12.3.f – The CRO may serve up to two (2) one-year terms in total, which may be consecutive or non-consecutive. Under no circumstances may any individual serve more than two (2) terms as CRO. D.POL.12.3.g – The purpose of this restriction is to promote neutrality and independence in the oversight of elections; provide opportunities for broader participation by GSA members in governance roles; and to ensure no single individual holds prolonged influence over GSA electoral processes. D.POL.12.3.h – In the absence of a CRO and DRO, the Elections & Referenda Committee will delegate one of its members as an Acting CRO until the position is officially filled.	
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Item 8e: GSA LRC-Recommended Policy Change

Outline of Issue**Recommended Changes to GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section Q****Suggested Motion:**

That the GSA Council **APPROVE** the LRC-recommended revision of the definition of AEGS in GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section Q:

Motion to approve the following definition of Academically-Employed Graduate Student: "Academically-Employed Graduate Student" is defined as any graduate student covered under the terms of the Graduate Student Assistantship Collective Agreement as a graduate assistant, excluding STARE appointments."

Background:

This small modification to the definition aims to clarify and exclude short-term academically-related employment (STARE) from the scope. By making this change, we will eliminate any ambiguity, ensuring that the definition specifically includes only Graduate Research Assistants (GRAs), Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs), and Graduate Research Assistantship Fellowship (GRAF) holders as academically employed graduate students.

Previous Definition: "Academically-Employed Graduate Student" is defined as any graduate student covered under the terms of the Graduate Student Assistantship Collective Agreement."

Jurisdiction:

Alberta Labour Relations Code

Post Secondary Learning Act

GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section Q.POL.9.2.e

"Make recommendations to GSA Council with respect to GSA Bylaw and Policy on collective bargaining, following consultation with academically-employed graduate students."

GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section A.BYL.1.2

"These Bylaws ... may be amended by two two-thirds majority votes of Council held on seven calendar

days' notice of motion and no less than one week apart."

GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section A.BYL.2.2

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

GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section F.BYL.1.3

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

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

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

Current Policy (deletions are noted as strike throughs and changes/additions are noted in red font)	Rationale
Definitions "Academically-Employed Graduate Student" is defined as any graduate student covered under the terms of the Graduate Student Assistantship Collective Agreement as a graduate assistant, excluding STARE appointments.	This small modification to the definition aims to clarify and exclude short-term academically-related employment (STARE) from the scope. By making this change, we will eliminate any ambiguity, ensuring that the definition specifically includes only Graduate Research Assistants (GRAs), Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs), and Graduate Research Assistantship Fellowship (GRAF) holders as academically employed graduate students.

Item 8f: GSA Council Chair Line of Succession Policy Addition

Outline of Issue**Recommended Changes to GSA Bylaw and Policy****Suggested Motion:**

That the GSA Council **APPROVE** the following line of succession for Council Chair in the event of the Speaker's absence:

1. Deputy Speaker
2. Nominating Committee Chair
3. Nominating Committee Vice-Chair
4. CRO
5. DRO
6. In the absence of any of the above, the ED and President will consult with the NoC members for next steps.

Background:

To ensure the smooth and neutral operation of GSA Council, in the event of the Speaker's absence, the above line of succession is suggested.

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.”

GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section D.POL.4.3

“Elected Officers and candidates for elected office will abide by all GSA Bylaws, GSA Policies, and GSA Board (GSAB) Policies, including with respect to performance and conduct, conflict of interest, and conflict of commitment. Elected Officers cannot concurrently serve as executives in any other student group, student club, board, student association, departmental association, or any organization that may present a real or perceived conflict of interest. This ensures that elected officers can fully dedicate their time and efforts to the GSA without divided loyalties or potential biases. By preventing conflicts of interest, the GSA aims to maintain the highest standards of integrity, transparency, and fairness in its governance, thereby safeguarding the trust and confidence of its members. Any officer found in violation of this policy will be subject to disciplinary actions as outlined in the GSA Bylaws.”

GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section D.POL.4.6

“Elected Officers and candidates for elected office will have exceptional interpersonal and communication skills, proven critical thinking ability, ability to analyze policy, and ability to assess large amounts of governance information in order to determine when to bring forward the GSA’s stance on various issues to a University governing body, committee, or process.”