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Item 1: Agenda

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, 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, |

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| | | | | GSA Speaker |
| 1 min | 1 | | Approval of the Agenda for September 24, 2025 GSA Council | Z. Patel, GSA Speaker |
| 1 min | 2 | | Approval of the GSA Council Minutes of August 18, 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) | |
| 10 min | 5 | | <u>ELECTIONS</u> A. GSA Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Committee: a. One vacancy b. Six nominations | A. Belosokhov, NoC Chair |
| 30 min | 6 | | <u>PRESENTATION ITEMS</u> A. StudyWell Health & Dental Plan Presentation a. Cory Wright & Joshua Sankarlal | |
| 30 min | 7 | | <u>INFORMATION PIECES</u> Reports: A. GSA President: Aashish Kumar B. Vice-President Academic: Chen Okafor C. Vice-President External: Niloufar Mir Fallah D. Vice-President Indigenous Relations: Tamara Dubé a. Strategic Work Plan Update E. Vice-President Student Life: Hazel Kemuma | *See Legend |

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| | | | <p>a. GSA Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Committee Report</p> <p>F. Vice-President Student Services: Saad Iqbal</p> <p>G. Associate Vice-President Labour: Nathan Lamarche</p> <p>a. GSA Labour Relations Committee</p> <p>H. GSA Senator: Hussain Alhussainy</p> <p>I. GSA Speaker: Zain Patel</p> <p>J. Chief and Deputy Returning Officers: Wajid Ali</p> <p>K. GSA Nominating Committee Chair: Arseniy Belosokhov</p> <p>L. GSA Elections and Referenda Committee Chair: Elsie Osei</p> <p>M. GSA Management</p> | <p>Currently suspended</p> <p>NRS</p> <p>NRS</p> <p>NRS</p> |
| 20 min | | | <u>CLOSED SESSION</u> | |
| 5 min | 8 | | <p><u>ACTION ITEMS:</u></p> <p>A. That GSA Council APPROVE the Governance Committee-Recommended Bylaw and Policy Revisions, Section K: Second Reading</p> <p>a. Outline of Issue</p> <p>b. Section K</p> | A. Kumar, GSA President |
| 10 min | | | <p>B. That GSA Council APPROVE the Governance Committee-Recommended Bylaw and Policy Revisions, Section J: First Reading</p> <p>a. Outline of Issue</p> <p>b. Section J</p> | |
| 45 min | | | <p>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.</p> <p>a. Outline of Issue</p> <p>b. A portion of the debate may occur in Closed Session</p> | Z. Patel, GSA Speaker |

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| 5 min | | | D. GSA VPIR-Recommended Policy Additions: Motion 1 | T. Dubé, GSA VPIR |
| 5 min | | | E. GSA VPIR-Recommended Policy Additions: Motion 2 | |
| 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 August 18 2025 Minutes

Monday, August 18, 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.

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

IN ATTENDANCE:

Council-Elected Officials:

- Chief Returning Officer: Wajid Ali

Departmental Councillors:

- Laura Enekegho, Biochemistry
- Fleur Issac, Biological Sciences

GSA Executives:

- GSA President: Aashish Kumar
- VP Academic: Chen Okafor
- VP Student Services: Saad Arslan Iqbal
- VP Student Life: Hazel Kemuma
- VP Indigenous Relations: Tamara Dubé
- VP External: Niloufar Mir Fallah

Councillors-At-Large:

1. Ashif Rahman
2. Anagha Devkota
3. Mohamadali Tofigh
4. Rishabh Dagur
5. Amirreza Yasami

Standing Committee Chairs & Vice-Chairs:

- Arseniy Belosokhov, NoC Chair

Guests:

- Jovi Krieger, CAL Candidate
- Izhan Khan, CAL Candidate
- Hafiz Muhammad Usman Shafique, CAL Candidate
- Bilal Asghar
- Jahanzaib

- Gurparkash Singh, Biomedical Engineering
- Nissi Djangmah, BGSA
- Selin Simsek, Business MBA
- Sophie Nguemo Medongoum, Campus Saint Jean Councillor
- Solomon Hussein, Cell Biology
- Ozge Akca Zengin, Chemical & Materials Engineering
- Shamsheer Ahmad, Chemistry
- Michelle Bey, Dentistry
- Moe Fujiwara, East Asian Studies Councillor
- Theo Folster, Education Councillor
- Ajibola Adigun, Educational Policy Studies
- Colin Hamnett, History, Classics & Religion
- Zoe Wagner, Human Ecology
- Meredith Leary, IGSA
- Jeff Akhagbosu, Internetworking (MINT)
- Dalia Cristerna Roman, Linguistics
- Lillian Low, Medical Genetics
- Emma Heidebrecht, Neuroscience
- Pooja Praveen Kumar, Obstetrics & Gynecology
- Seth Peyton, Oncology
- Toqa Abdelwahab, Ophthalmology
- Raj Somasundaram, Paediatrics
- Thomas Hammond, Pharmacology
- Daniel Carleton, Physics
- Mohaddeseh Pakzami, Physiology
- Savannah Ribeiro, Political Sciences
- Emily Ward, Psychiatry
- Vi Tran, Public Health
- Varsha Kesavan, Radiology & Diagnostic Imaging Councillor
- Cassandra Cowan, Rehabilitation Sciences
- Juan Andrés Luchsinger Rivera, Resource Economics & Environmental Sociology

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Celine Beaulieu, Sociology • Ivan Ma, Surgery <p>Alternate Departmental Councillors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Megane Beausejour, AFNS • Zeynep Oyku Ozturk, Educational Policy Studies • Joëlle Kasongo, Laboratory Medicine & Pathology • Vincent Yu, Library & Information Studies • Ahmed Abdelfattah, Pharmacy & Pharmaceutical Sciences • Angely Claire Suerte, Psychology |
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| Time | Item # | Title | Presenter(s) |
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| 5:09 | - | Land Acknowledgement | Z. Patel, GSA Speaker |
| 1 min | 1 | Approval of the Agenda for August 18, 2025 GSA Council Z. Patel asked to rearrange the order of the Action Items: Action Items B, C & D will be moved before Action Item A. H. Kemuma moved. C. Cowan seconded. 33 votes in favour. No votes against. Motion PASSED. | Z. Patel, GSA Speaker |
| 1 min | 2 | Approval of the GSA Council Minutes of July 16, 2025 GSA Council C. Cowan moved. A. Adigun seconded. 29 votes in favour. 1 vote against. Motion PASSED. | Z. Patel, GSA Speaker |
| 2 min | 3 | Changes in GSA Council Membership Incoming: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Varsha Kesavan, Radiology & Diagnostic Imaging Councillor • Moe Fujiwara, East Asian Studies Councillor • Theo Folster, Education Councillor | Z. Patel, GSA Speaker |

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| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sophie Nguemo Medongoum, Campus Saint Jean Councillor | |
| 2 min | 4 | Announcements | |
| 10 min | 5 | <p><u>ELECTIONS</u></p> <p>A. GSA Councillors-At-Large (2 vacancies):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Four nominations Successful candidates: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Jovi Krieger Izhan Khan | A. Belosokhov, NoC Chair |
| 30 min | 6 | <p><u>PRESENTATION ITEMS</u></p> <p>A. Disability Cultures & Graduate Student Life Presentation</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Dr. Carrie Smith, Vice-Provost Accessibility, Community & Belonging (ACB); Dr. Danielle Peers, Academic Lead, ACB; and Tim Ira, Portfolio Initiatives Manager presented this item <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The University has launched the Disability Cultures and Access (DCA) Initiative, a transformational, cross-institutional approach to remove systemic disability-related barriers and foster inclusive, accessible community life. There are three leadership components: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> DCA Coordinating Team – Vice-Provost’s office and Academic Lead Council for Disability Cultures and Access – students, staff, faculty representing diverse disabilities and intersectional perspectives DCA Strategic Collaborations Table – approximately 15 senior university leaders (AVPs and Vice-Provosts) with decision-making authority This initiative will shift from a reactive individual accommodations model to a proactive accessibility model: removing barriers at the design stage to reduce the need for repeated individual accommodations. “Disability cultures” refers to the diverse, generative ways of thinking and being that arise from shared experiences and values of disabled communities. New Resources and Projects: | C. Smith, T. Ira, D. Peers |

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| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DCA Hub (launched August 2025): Online database of resources for accessibility, accommodations, urgent supports (including accessible crisis lines), disability cultures, and campus services (health, mental health, library, transportation, recreation). • Equitable & Accessible Teaching and Learning Course: Asynchronous online course offering practical strategies for instructors to design more accessible syllabi, assessments, and learning environments. • Accessibility Enhancement Project: Introduction of the <i>Accommodate</i> software to streamline and improve accommodations processes. • Accessible Spaces Project: Collaboration across campus units to improve the built environment and develop creative solutions for accessible booking and navigation of campus spaces. • H. Kemuma, VP Student Life, asked regarding the services provided require payment. C. Smith stated that all services are previously established, but have been compiled in one place. D. Peers clarified that all services listed in the hub are free unless otherwise indicated; any potential fees are clearly noted. • S. Iqbal, VP Student Services, raised that there are no accessibility areas in main quad for wheelchair-based students and encouraged their consideration for areas that work for all students. He also raised that there is a student who cannot access a needed motorized wheelchair and has noted that they struggle to traverse campus through the winter. The GSA Health and Dental plan unfortunately cannot cover motorized wheelchairs, due to the minimum \$10,000 cost, and he is looking into options for the student. S. Iqbal noted that the GSA would be happy to collaborate on any necessary initiatives to help with these needs. C. Smith agreed and stated that wheelchair accessibility is a high priority long-term. C. Smith was enthusiastic to collaborate. D. Peers agreed, as a wheelchair-user themselves, and noted that they are looking into wheelchair benefits and potential financial aid. The presenters encouraged collaboration to explore solutions and noted recent improvements ensuring students on reduced course loads for disability reasons retain benefits. | |
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| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • S. Iqbal also raised an initiative for inclusive social spaces, involving providing outdoor seating (e.g. in the main quad) that accommodates wheelchair users alongside others. • S. Ribeiro, Political Sciences Councillor, asked why tenure allows professors to ignore accessibility accommodations. C. Smith replied that they are doing work across the board to enable accommodations through legal obligation education with professors and support with administration requirements. New policy and procedures are mandating training to improve the accommodation process. C. Smith agreed that there is an institutional requirement to accommodate, and encouraged S. Ribeiro to reach out to them to discuss further. D. Peers echoed this sentiment as someone who has had similar difficulties with accommodation, and repeated that their office is working stringently on this issue. The presenters acknowledged systemic issues, highlighted the new accommodations policy and training, the <i>Accommodate</i> system to hold instructors accountable, and ongoing collaboration with the Ombuds Office and Accessibility and Accommodations Office to reduce reliance on instructor goodwill. • C. Okafor, VP Academic, asked what interaction there is between ACB and the Office of Accommodations, as issues have been raised with him that he has been working to resolve. C. Smith explained that there is some overlap, but their mandates are different. The DCA team collaborates closely while focusing on broader systemic accessibility; the Office of the Dean of Students retains responsibility for individual student accommodations. They work in tandem. C. Smith noted that their unit was essential in the recent accommodation policy work. D. Peers noted that a significant issue is professor education. • C. Smith encouraged students to reach out to carrie.smith@ualberta.ca or vpacb@ualberta.ca with any questions and comments. | |
| 20 min | 7 | <p><u>CLOSED SESSION</u></p> <p>C. Cowan moved. T. Dube seconded. 26 votes in favour. 1 vote against.</p> <p>Motion PASSED.</p> | |

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| | | <p>Moved into Closed Session at 6:11PM.</p> <p>A. Kumar moved to move out of Closed Session. S. Ribeiro seconded. 20 votes in favour. No votes against.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Motion PASSED.</p> <p>Moved out of Closed Session at 6:51PM.</p> | |
| 1 hr | 8 | <p><u>ACTION ITEMS:</u></p> <p>B. That GSA Council APPROVE the Governance Committee-Recommended Bylaw and Policy Revisions, Section F: First Reading</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Outline of Issue: Section F b. Section F Revisions <p>A. Kumar moved. C. Cowan seconded.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● S. Iqbal, VP Student Services, gave context regarding these revisions: this policy formalizes current procedure for the public attending GSA Standing Committee meetings, to ensure institutional memory. ● A. Belosokhov, Nominating Committee Chair, noted that the Nominating Committee does not meet in-person or online - only doing its work via email. S. Iqbal replied that the policy still applies, as it is up to the Chair's discretion. A. Belosokhov requested adding a short clarifying rationale to the Section F policy text stating that the right to attend applies to <i>open committee meeting sessions</i> (not informal or ad hoc non-meeting activity), so presence does not automatically apply to committees that do not meet regularly (e.g., NoC specific). This rationale should be included in the policy rationale or accompanying explanatory memo. ● It was raised that as this is a policy addition, if passed, it will come into effect once certified by the GSA Speaker, as policy only requires one reading at Council. <p>27 votes in favour. 1 votes against. 1 abstention.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Motion PASSED.</p> | A. Kumar, GSA President |

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| | | <p>C. That GSA Council APPROVE the Governance Committee-Recommended Bylaw and Policy Revisions, Section J: First Reading</p> <p>c. Outline of Issue: Section J</p> <p>d. Section J Revisions</p> <p>C. Cowan moved. H. Kemuma seconded.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Z. Patel clarified that as this is a combined document, the policies would be passed and effective as of the day of certification, and the bylaws would require a second reading at Council. • It was noted that this referenda policy procedure has been taken from the SU's system. • A. Belosokhov, NoC Chair, asked how the change of definition of Referendum Asker would affect GSA-external services, like the CFB. S. Iqbal replied that graduate students have been required and will continue to be the Askers as per PSLA requirements. There is a gatekeeping process to ensure that graduate students approve of and benefit from the referenda question. A. Belosokhov approved of the explanation and these changes. • It was clarified that bylaw and policy change procedure is for changes to be suggested and approved by the relevant standing committee - Governance Committee and Elections & Referenda Committee in this instance - before it is forwarded and approved by the GSA Board, and forwarded to GSA Council. • S. Iqbal explained that the Campus Food Bank would be able to be a Referenda Asker due to the exception stipulation of being a critical service for graduate students and containing graduate students on their board. The main rationale is that referenda should not be perpetual, except in special circumstances, to allow for review and adjustment. This allows for considered financial decisions to meet changing needs. • S. Iqbal raised that in previous years, it was not clear which fees were mandatory and which could be opted out of - this policy lists portions of the referenda question that should be considered and put into the question for clarity. | |
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| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If a referendum question fails to renew, the referendum and fees will close at the original close date. The Asker will not be able to ask again for two years to elevate voter burnout for referendum questions. • S. Ribeiro raised that if a student group fails to re-register, members of the student group could be unable to apply again for a referendum due to the group's status. • H. Kemuma agreed with S. Ribeiro's question: group backing makes sense rather than an individually requested referendum. • M. Leary, IGSA Councillor, raised that they believe this specific policy doesn't match the Asker definition and can create future confusion, if the definition is not consistent. • S. Iqbal replied that interpretations of bylaws and policies have created recent confusion and agreed that it should be as clear as possible. • Z. Patel stated that his interpretation would be that a student group would be required beyond being a GSA member. • S. Iqbal raised on page 39, there is eligibility exemption policy that allows all GSA members to initiate a referendum without a requirement for a graduate student group. • The role of definitions and policy was debated. • S. Ribeiro raised a motion for referring this motion back to Governance Committee for clarity editing. <p>C. Cowan moved. C. Okafor seconded. 19 votes in favour. 1 vote against. Motion PASSED to be REFERRED BACK TO GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE.</p> <p>D. That GSA Council APPROVE the Governance Committee-Recommended Bylaw and Policy Revisions, Section K: First Reading</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> e. Outline of Issue: Section K f. Section K Revisions <p>C. Cowan moved. H. Kemuma seconded.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • S. Iqbal gave context to the policy revisions: | |
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| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Council will approve only the upcoming fiscal year budget; the three-year forecast will be received as information. ○ If Council does not approve an annual budget prior to the fiscal year start, the GSA continues to operate under the most recent approved annual budget (K.1.3). ○ Financial documents requiring signatures were expanded to include electronic disbursements/e-transfers (not only cheques and investment instructions). ○ Low-value disbursements (below \$600): the President & Executive Director will approve via email with an explanation provided by the Finance Manager, and approvals will be reported to the Board in the management report. Electronic transfers should be used where possible; cash payments are prohibited. ○ Confidential budget documents for BFC meetings must be password-protected when distributed. ○ The amendment to (former) K.5.2 was clarified: any recommended change to a budget line must first be discussed among the finance group (finance manager, President and Executive Director or their delegates); once consensus is reached, the finance group members shall support that proposal when presented to the Budget & Finance Committee (BFC). The amendment was accepted and added to the policy. The wording of consensus must be maintained only applies to the finance group, not the GSA Board or Standing Committees. To ensure clarity, the document was edited with the permission of the document-drafters to define 'finance team.' <p>To amend the motion: <i>"Any recommended change must be agreed amongst the Finance Team, which includes the Finance Manager, President, Executive Director or</i></p> | |
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| | | <p><i>delegate</i>, consensus must be reached and all Finance Team members shall support the decision prior to presentation to the BFC.”</p> <p>Motion to AMEND:</p> <p>C. Cowan moved. H. Kemuma seconded.</p> <p>16 votes in favour. No votes against.</p> <p>To approve the motion:</p> <p>22 votes in favour. No votes against.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Motion PASSED.</p> <p>A motion to defer the remaining four Action Items to the September Council meeting was raised, due to time constraints:</p> <p>A. Kumar moved. C. Cowan seconded.</p> <p>23 votes in favour. 2 votes against.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Motion PASSED.</p> <p>A. 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.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">a. Outline of Issue</p> <p>E. GSA VPIR-Recommended Policy Additions: Motion 1</p> <p>F. GSA VPIR-Recommended Policy Additions: Motion 2</p> <p>G. GSA VPIR-Recommended Policy Additions: Motion 3</p> | <p>Z. Patel, GSA Speaker</p> <p>T. Dubé, GSA VPIR</p> |
| 30 min | 9 | <p><u>INFORMATION PIECES</u></p> <p>Reports:</p> <p>A. GSA President: Aashish Kumar</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">a. A. Kumar noted that he has been working on provincial and federal advocacy this month, particularly for graduate student funding and mental health supports. Food insecurity was also a key priority on a federal</p> | <p>*See Legend</p> |

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| | | <p>level. This will be his starting point for advocating for federal grants.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> b. Increasing the GSSF has been A. Kumar's top priority this year. It has been challenging, but the work is ongoing. The GSSF proposal is attached, which details the importance of this funding. c. We need to update our incoming thresholds d. He has written a draft proposal for the exam reimbursement initiative. This idea rose from town halls, from students. A feedback form will be sent out to Councillors before the September meeting. Once we have a working model, it will be far easier to achieve further funding. He encouraged feedback on this proposal. <p>B. Vice-President Academic: Chen Okafor</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Graduate supervision workshop: he is consulting with graduate chairs and student representatives on useful information for students regarding supervisory relationships and student rights b. Walk-In Hours are 9:00AM-1:00PM to hear any and all academic-related issues c. Meeting with the university on minimum funding, which he hopes will be fruitful d. He encouraged students to email him at gsavpaca@ualberta.ca, specifically for input, questions or concerns regarding academic workshops <p>C. Vice-President Student Life: Hazel Kemuma</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. As submitted b. H. Kemuma encouraged student engagement in the upcoming events: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Orientation & Welcome Events: Final preparations are underway for GSA Info Fair Orientation and the Fall Welcome Week social events. H. Kemuma encouraged councillors to promote the schedule within their departments and to volunteer as event helpers if available. ii. Graduate Student Groups (GSGs): The annual GSG registration and ratification process is open. H. Kemuma reminded existing groups to submit renewal forms and invited councillors to | |
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| | | <p>share the information with students interested in starting new groups.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> iii. Events & Programming: Highlighted upcoming social and wellness activities for the fall term, including a graduate student mixer and mental-health awareness workshops co-hosted with the Peer Support Centre. iv. Feedback & Suggestions: H. Kemuma welcomed ideas for new community-building initiatives and invited councillors to email her with proposals that strengthen graduate student engagement. v. Speed-Friend Activities: opportunities to meet other students, particularly for new students joining vi. On Oct. 5th, we will be collaborating on a Mental Health Run, where merchandise and refreshments will be available. vii. A Truth & Reconciliation Walk is being held on Sept. 26, where we are collaborating with other campus groups for funding opportunities, particularly faculty of native studies, IGSA and our VPIR <p>D. Vice-President Student Services: Saad Iqbal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Sept. 1, we will be moving to a new Health & Dental provider, StudyWell by Ellement. We have reduced the plan cost by \$10. There will be changes in process. There will be many questions and clarification that we will work to resolve; we are running tabling sessions - the first being tomorrow, August 19th in SUB. The details will be shared in newsletters. We will also have a StudyWell representative in-office for the first week of September to help field questions and issues. b. S. Iqbal is working with Brandy Ellamil, GSA Strategic Communications Coordinator, regarding the GSA Handbook with all services and supports in one place. c. Leisure Access Program issue has been raised: the service is not offered to graduate students, so S. Iqbal and N. Mir Fallah will advocate for this service. | |
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| | | <p>d. He encouraged students to reach out to him at gsavpsse@ualberta.ca</p> <p>E. Vice-President External: Niloufar Mir Fallah</p> <p>a. As submitted</p> <p>F. Vice-President Indigenous Relations: Tamara Dubé</p> <p>a. As submitted</p> <p>b. She looks forward to announcing her initiatives in September Council</p> <p>G. Associate Vice-President Labour: Nathan Lamarche</p> <p>a. GSA Labour Relations Committee</p> <p>H. GSA Senator: Hussain Alhussainy</p> <p>I. GSA Speaker: Zain Patel</p> <p>J. Chief and Deputy Returning Officers: Wajid Ali</p> <p>K. GSA Nominating Committee Chair: Arseniy Belosokhov</p> <p>a. As submitted</p> <p>L. GSA Elections and Referenda Committee Chair: Elsie Osei</p> <p>M. GSA Management</p> <p>a. As submitted</p> | <p>Currently suspended</p> <p>NMS</p> <p>NRS</p> <p>NMS</p> <p>NMS</p> |
| 15 min | 10 | <p>Question Period</p> <p>1. Written Questions (May be submitted to the GSA Speaker before 4:00 PM on the day of the meeting)</p> <p>2. Oral Questions</p> | |
| | 11 | Adjournment 8:03PM | |

Item 5a: Nominees for GSA Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Committee Vacancy

GSA NOMINATING COMMITTEE (GSA NoC)

GSA EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION COMMITTEE (GSA EDIC) (ONE (1) POSITION FOR GSA MEMBERS): SIX (6) NOMINEES

Information regarding the position for one (1) GSA member was circulated via the GSA newsletter on August 15, 22 and 29 with a nomination deadline of Sept. 5 at 12:00 PM. Six (6) nominations were received and approved by the GSA Nominating Committee.

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

There will be an electronic vote held at the September 24 2025 GSA Council meeting.

If you and your alternate are unable to attend the GSA Council meeting and would like to cast an electronic vote for this position, you must contact the GSA Elections Coordinator (gsaca@ualberta.ca) BEFORE 3:00 PM on September 24 in order to cast your vote in advance of the GSA Council meeting.

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

- 1. Nour Tormos (Chemical & Materials Engineering)**
- 2. Sabita Paudel (Public Health)**
- 3. Precious Majekodunmi (Nursing)**
- 4. Adrien Lam (Surgery)**
- 5. McAndy Kajubi (Business)**
- 6. Abigail Gallimore (Education)**

Jurisdiction:

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

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

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

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

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

1. Nour Tormos (Chemical & Materials Engineering)

| |
|---|
| Statement of Interest |
| As a new student in Canada, I am reminded daily that this country is built on and upheld by diversity. Immigrants, international students, women, and queer people are what keeps this community engaged and ongoing. Our shared struggle has helped us grow, move forward, and build families, and I want to do my best to ensure that these individuals are represented and protected. As a hijabi woman and international student, I know how exhausting it is to navigate society and feel like you do not belong anywhere, so I hope to provide some comfort and guidance for people like me by serving on this committee. |
| Bio |
| Back home (Lebanon) where I did my undergraduate degree, I volunteered for three years in the Lebanese Red Cross (2021-2023) where I served as facilitator in the environmental program and the societal values program. I delivered awareness sessions to school students, assisted in blood drives, vaccination campaigns, and the organization of marathons. I ultimately served as president at the end of 2023 and managed a center of 60 volunteers. Simultaneously, I was involved with "All Girls Code", a Lebanese initiative aiming at empowering women in STEM. I became director in 2023 and organized over 6 in-person events including summer programs, hackathons, and trainings aimed at 200+ young girls, many of whom joined STEM fields in college thanks to our efforts. I did so by leading around 9 teams of volunteers and orchestrating the events from A to Z. Additionally, I served as secretary to the "Gender and Sexuality" club at my home institution in 2022-2023. I oversaw the administrative aspects of organizing private events for the community: from movie screenings, to resource sharing, awareness sessions and more. We managed to create a safe space for many new students while constantly promoting connections and ensuring safety. Lastly, I served as vice-president at my institution's "American Institute of Chemical Engineers"(AIChE) society in 2024-2025. Not only was I responsible for mentoring younger students and organizing educational events, but I also had the privilege of being co-chair to a large scientific conference held in June 2025, which brought together chemical engineering students from all Lebanon. |

My large involvement in initiatives and clubs during my undergraduate years made me significantly more capable of leading teams, exchanging ideas, and communicating effectively. As a fast learner who adapts and thrives quickly in new environments, I have always brought good energy and new ideas to my workspace. I've also had the chance to work directly with impacted communities (in the Lebanese Red Cross and the Gender and Sexuality Club) which taught me to always make my work centered around those I aim to help, who I also happen to have had common struggles with. Combined with my professional skills in engineering, specifically research, I find everything I do – mentoring, teaching, researching – to be centered around empathy and to require a lot of vulnerability and patience. As I navigate this new country alone, I hope to carry those same values around and to keep having the courage to make an impact. I believe that is exactly what a diversity committee needs.

2. Sabita Paudel (Public Health)

Statement of Interest

I would like to volunteer to serve on this committee because I believe it is a good opportunity to know about the campus, the fellow colleagues, network, know the culture and know about each other and along with that serve the committee which is doing a lot for the students. I believe that I will be able to advise on the matters of equity on policy making, strengthening the existing policy or reforms and serve those who have faced inequity.

Bio

Upcoming Member of Nepalese Scholars Association of University of Alberta

I have volunteered as information kiosk server in Edmonton heritage festival in 2025 where I got a chance to meet a lot of people, got to know about the city and the diversity of people here. I also volunteered as game assistant in my child's school play games and I was a kitchen helper volunteer in a BBQ dinner for parents and students where I served in the kitchen and I also got to know the fellow parents and about their kids.

I have about eight years of experience volunteering back home in elderly shelter where I coordinated health and dental camps, also coordinated donation activities. I was a guardian of this organization so I advised in the matters related to the improvement of shelter and also helped in some policy decisions. I volunteered in different protest and rallies for healthcare equity for in Nepal and also protested for justice for rape victims. I organized a solidarity program for Syrian war victims. I write blogs in newspapers on equity and inclusion issues of female such as property rights, cultural biases, etc.

I always have been an advocate of equity, inclusion and justice in the society. I respect diversity and multiculturalism. As a female born and raised in a patriarchal culture, I have always experienced inequity in my society. I can feel the suffocation to live in an unequal environment. I understand the perspectives and experiences of someone who goes through domination,

discrimination and injustice. I believe I am a good candidate for this role because I can advise for better policy reforms.

As a public health student in UoA, my thesis is on socio-cultural determinants of health so I will be pursuing courses on feminism, social justice which will be a value added on my experience.

I worked as an associate professor, research coordinator and medical education coordinator where my role was to train faculties, develop modules, guidelines, policy briefs so I am good in communication, presentation and policy design.

3. Precious Majekodunmi (Nursing)

Statement of Interest

I desire to volunteer on the GSA Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Committee to contribute meaningfully to creating initiatives that advance EDI at the University of Alberta. My goal is to help shape policies and programs that ensure every student feels welcomed, supported, and valued within the academic community. I intend to advocate for increased promotion of EDI principles across all graduate faculties, ensuring that awareness and engagement reach both students and faculty members. Additionally, I aim to collaborate on implementing more cultural events and awareness campaigns that celebrate diversity, foster inclusion, and create spaces for dialogue. By amplifying underrepresented voices and encouraging cross-cultural understanding, I hope to strengthen a campus environment where equity is embedded in both academic and social experiences. I desire to volunteer on the GSA Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Committee to contribute meaningfully to creating initiatives that advance EDI at the University of Alberta. My goal is to help shape policies and programs that ensure every student feels welcomed, supported, and valued within the academic community. I intend to advocate for increased promotion of EDI principles across all graduate faculties, ensuring that awareness and engagement reach both students and faculty members. Additionally, I aim to collaborate on implementing more cultural events and awareness campaigns that celebrate diversity, foster inclusion, and create spaces for dialogue. By amplifying underrepresented voices and encouraging cross-cultural understanding, I hope to strengthen a campus environment where equity is embedded in both academic and social experiences.

Bio

Canadian Black Nurses Alliance, University of Alberta Chapter Alumni Advisor

My previous volunteer experiences have centered on advancing equity, access, and community-building in diverse settings. At the Steadward Center, I supported programs for children living with disabilities, encouraging participation in physical activity and promoting inclusive recreation. I also contributed to the Pan-African Symposium at the University of Alberta as a scribe, while advocating for greater promotion of education about the Black experience and Black history.

Beyond these initiatives, I have taken on leadership roles that deepened my commitment to equity and advocacy. As President of the Canadian Black Nurses Alliance (CBNA) – UAlberta Chapter, I co-founded and coordinated initiatives that amplified Black student voices, fostered mentorship, and built partnerships across campus. In my role as Policy Committee Chair and Nursing Faculty Councillor on the University of Alberta Students' Council, I helped develop and review policies aimed at creating a more inclusive and responsive governance structure for students. These roles sharpened my ability to collaborate with stakeholders, address systemic challenges, and translate community concerns into actionable strategies.

Together, these experiences reflect my longstanding commitment to advancing equity, diversity, and inclusion across academic, social, and policy contexts. They have equipped me with the skills to advocate for structural change while also creating programming that celebrates cultural identity, builds community, and supports underrepresented students.

Hello,

I am a first-year student in the University of Alberta Master of Nursing program, deeply passionate about advancing equity and anti-racism in higher education. From 2022 to 2025, I served as President and Co-Founder of the Canadian Black Nurses Alliance (CBNA) – UAlberta Chapter, where I was dedicated to promoting anti-racism within nursing education and addressing incidents of discrimination. In this role, I led initiatives such as mentorship programs, Black History Month events, student panels, and cross-faculty collaborations that created dialogue, celebrated cultural diversity, and fostered a more inclusive academic environment. My impact included building partnerships with faculty and student groups, amplifying underrepresented voices, and contributing to institutional conversations on how to better support Black and racialized students. In addition, I served as the Nursing Councillor on the University of Alberta Students' Council and as Chair of the Policy Committee. These roles allowed me to advocate on behalf of students, review and shape university policies, and champion issues related to diversity and inclusion at the governance level. Through these experiences, I developed strong skills in advocacy, collaboration, and policy development, and learned how to translate student concerns into actionable change.

I believe these experiences uniquely position me to serve effectively as a member of the GSA Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Committee. I bring a proven track record of leadership, creativity, and advocacy, along with a commitment to fostering safe, supportive, and inclusive spaces for all students. As a committee member, I would contribute innovative ideas, elevate diverse perspectives, and work collaboratively to strengthen EDI initiatives across graduate programs at the University of Alberta.

4. Adrien Lam (Surgery)

Statement of Interest

I would like to serve on the GSA EDI Committee because the experience I had over time with EDI committees in the past is central to both my academic and leadership experiences. As the previous undergraduate representative on the Board, I've worked collaboratively with Dr. Smith (Vice President and Vice Provost Access Community and Belonging) to amplify student voices and highlight issues of representation and belonging in topics such as academics, food insecurity, and affordability. I've also served on the DBs EDI committee previously and believe that my experience could contribute to GSA EDI committee.

Bio

Previous Volunteer Experience:

Board of Governors (Undergraduate Representative) – advocated for student voices and EDI initiatives

Board of Governors (Students Union) - sat on APIRG, DFU Board, World University Services Board of Directors, Health and Dental Plan, Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation Committee

BrainWaves (President) – Provide childrens from grades 4-6 on neuroscience education through training volunteers for the program

Center for Autism Students Association (President) – organized workshops and awareness campaigns

VIDA (President & VP Marketing) – coordinated fundraising and medical mission trip to Guatemala

Campus Food Bank Support – supported food security initiatives for students and staff

SkillCity Institute (CSL Volunteer) – designed coding literacy programs for underserved youth

My experince as apart of the Board of Governors allowed me to observe APIRG and the Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation Committee while they implemented equity and inclusion principles in their decision-making processes. I have led various groups including BrainWaves and the Center for Autism Students Association and VIDA where I coordinated workshops and community outreach and projects. My leadership experience has shown me effective methods to connect with diverse groups while developing active listening skills and creating unity between people who share similar objectives. My academic experience combined with leadership experience and volunteer work makes me qualified to support the EDI Committee through my commitment to inclusive space development.

5. McAndy Kajubi (Business)

Statement of Interest

would like to serve on the GSA Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee because I have firsthand experience with the importance of feeling welcomed, supported, and represented in a community. Much of my work has been dedicated to advocating for minorities, and I want to bring that same commitment to the graduate student experience at the University of Alberta.

I founded McBern Tours & Travel, an inclusive tour company in East Africa, to create safe and welcoming spaces for travellers in regions where discrimination is often a reality. This

work, along with my community engagement through the McBern Foundation, taught me the power of collaboration, listening, and building communities where people feel they belong.

As an MBA student, I want to contribute more than my academic efforts. I want to help ensure that every graduate student feels valued, supported, and able to thrive—and serving on this committee is one way I can do that.

Bio

Through my volunteer work with Northern Lights Canada, I have had the opportunity to support 2SLGBTQI+ individuals navigating inland refugee claims and accessing settlement services. In this role, I provide guidance, resources, and encouragement to individuals seeking safety and stability, ensuring they are informed and supported throughout the process. This work has deepened my commitment to advancing equity and inclusion by amplifying the voices of marginalized individuals and contributing to systemic solutions that foster dignity, belonging, and opportunity for all.

My journey as both a leader and advocate is driven by a strong commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion. In 2013, I founded McBern Tours & Travel, an inclusive tour company in Uganda, with the goal of creating safe and welcoming spaces for LGBTQI+ individuals in a country where discrimination persists on a daily basis. Beyond tourism, this work has evolved into a platform for advocacy, ensuring that individuals marginalized due to their identity can access opportunities for dignity, safety, and belonging. Through partnerships, such as my membership in the International Gay and Lesbian Travel Association, I helped transform the landscape of 2SLGBTQI+ advocacy in the tourism sector, creating positive change and promoting inclusivity among other tour operators and hotel owners in Uganda.

Proceeds from the company were directed to the McBern Foundation, which I established to address the challenges faced by LGBTQI+ youth and the elderly. Through education, skills training, counselling, and healthcare, the Foundation provided options for individuals who had lost jobs or family support due to discrimination. These initiatives gave me firsthand experience in developing inclusive programs, engaging diverse stakeholders, and advocating for systemic change.

In 2020, I was forced to leave Uganda due to threats linked to my advocacy. Although this marked a turning point, it strengthened my determination to continue promoting equity and social justice in all areas where I engage. My goal remains to empower marginalized youth with the skills and independence they need to thrive, and to foster communities that celebrate diversity rather than excluding it.

As an MBA student at the University of Alberta, I view the GSA EDIC as an opportunity to leverage my lived experiences, leadership abilities, and strong dedication to inclusion in

shaping policies, services, and community engagement that make every graduate student feel welcome, represented, and supported.

See the link to one of my interviews with Roundtable Human Rights in Tourism, based in Germany.

<https://www.humanrights-in-tourism.net/news/interview-uganda-has-lost-its-rainbow-colours>

LinkedIn Profile <https://www.linkedin.com/in/michael-k-58144069/>

6. Abigail Gallimore (Education)

Statement of Interest

I would love to volunteer for this committee because I truly have a passion for creating inclusive spaces. As a first generation immigrant, I've spent years advocating for the rights and inclusion of everyone. I'd love to share my insights in a way that could make a difference in our university community. Additionally, I'd love the opportunity to engage with other like minded individuals, and learn from their perspectives and understanding.

Bio

Co, founder of Step Up AA: A youth-led nonprofit created to equip youth with the skills needed to combat racism. It was founded in 2020, and we are now registered as a nonprofit. Our current initiative is "Activate 3 to 5". An afterschool initiative created to address the gap of programming North side of Edmonton. You can learn more about Step Up by clicking our website: <http://www.stepupaa.org>.

Track and Field Coach: Became a head coach for a low income, predominantly racialized school. This is where Step Up's after school initiative stemmed from. I wanted to provide more opportunities than just track to these kids, so we applied for a grant to bring other sports and arts based opportunities to them.

Social Media Coordinator for BIPOC Healing and Wellness Centre: Created and organized posts for their social media. Spent a great deal of time researching ways to make therapy accessible for newcomer communities, and the way we can combat misconceptions of mental health in communities of colour.

I am passionate about advancing equity, diversity, and inclusion both through academia and community engagement. I am the co-founder of Step Up Anti-Racist Association, a non-profit that equips youth with the skills to challenge and dismantle racism. Through this work, I have facilitated workshops and conferences for youth, created resources addressing topics such as microaggressions, colourism, intersectionality, etc., and developed an afterschool initiative bringing programming to Northside racialized youth. I am also a member of the Evaluation Capacity Network's Decolonial Evaluation Learning Team.

Through this opportunity I have learned so much about Decolonial practices within evaluation and the ways in which we can be culturally affirming to Indigenous communities. I also serve as an Anti-racism Facilitator for Action for Healthy Communities. This allows me to create and facilitate presentations to schools when situations of racism occur. All of my jobs and volunteering opportunities have allowed me to grow in my understanding of equitable and culturally affirming practice. These are priceless teachings I intend to bring forth to the EDI Committee.

Item 7a: GSA President Reports

**2025-2026 President
Report to GSA Council for the 24th September 2025 Meeting**

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|-----------------------------------|
| To: GSA Council |
| From: Aashish Kumar, President |
| Date: 19 September 2025 |

2025-2026 GSA President Meetings Attended (Aashish Kumar)

Please find below a list of meetings I attended between 19th August 2025 to 19th September 2025 (not inclusive of weekly GSA Board meetings). The meetings were accurate at the time of printing.

| Date | Meeting |
|----------------|---|
| 19 August 2025 | Revisions to Student Group Event Approvals |
| 19 August 2025 | In-person Monthly Meeting: President Flanagan/Aashish Kumar |
| 19 August 2025 | BFPC and UAPTl's Planning, Development and Stakeholder |
| 20 August 2025 | H&D Plan Discussion |
| 20 August 2025 | GSA ED Interview Round 2 |
| 21 August 2025 | CSSH College Dean Selection |
| 21 August 2025 | Orientation with the Minister of Advanced Education |
| 22 August 2025 | Lister Dining Hall Soft Opening Luncheon |
| 25 August 2025 | ED Hiring Committee Meeting |
| 25 August 2025 | Dept. Chair/GSA President Introductory Meeting – East Asian Studies |
| 26 August 2025 | MBA Orientation Presentation |
| 27 August 2025 | FPC Committee Meeting |
| 27 August 2025 | Audit 2025 Discussion |
| 27 August 2025 | Gateway Interview HnD |
| 27 August 2025 | GSA ED Hiring Comm/GSAB Meeting |
| 28 August 2025 | In-person: Monthly Update - Isaac Van Dyne, Chief of Staff |
| 28 August 2025 | Pharmacology Orientation |

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|-------------------|---|
| 29 August 2025 | Occupational Therapy Orientation Presentation - Online |
| 29 August 2025 | Math & Stats Orientation |
| 29 August 2025 | Virtual - Aashish / Ravina |
| 29 August 2025 | Sociology Orientation |
| 2 September 2025 | Student Orientation Week: Pancake breakfast |
| 2 September 2025 | Melissa Padfield and Aashish Kumar GSA President |
| 2 September 2025 | GSA President/Executive Director Chat - Online |
| 3 September 2025 | GSA Fall 2025 Info Fair |
| 3 September 2025 | University Commons Opening & Flag Raising |
| 4 September 2025 | Physics Orientation Presentation |
| 4 September 2025 | Zoom: Engagement with Purpose Steering Committee |
| 5 September 2025 | (Zoom) GSA Experiential Learning Policy Consultation |
| 5 September 2025 | GSA/SU Monthly Board Liaison Chat |
| 8 September 2025 | GSA FGPS Caucus (Council Pre-Meeting) |
| 8 September 2025 | FPC Skilled Labour Working Group Meeting |
| 8 September 2025 | Surgery Departmental Orientation |
| 9 September 2025 | Co-Sponsor Updates SEAP |
| 10 September 2025 | Hi Finance Sponsorship Opportunity Discussion |
| 10 September 2025 | Tuition & Fees Orientation Session |
| 10 September 2025 | FGPS Council |
| 11 September 2025 | Global Campaign Initiative Focus Group Meeting |
| 15 September 2025 | In-person Monthly Meeting: President Flanagan/Aashish Kumar |
| 15 September 2025 | FPC Skilled Labour Working Group Meeting |
| 16 September 2025 | In-person: Monthly Update - Isaac Van Dyne, Chief of Staff |
| 16 September 2025 | Tuition Budget Advisory Committee (TBAC) - Meeting #1 |
| 16 September 2025 | GFC/GSA Goals Chat |
| 17 September 2025 | Meeting with Dr. Florance |
| 18 September 2025 | Teaching and Learning AI Committee |
| 18 September 2025 | In person: GSA President ~ Provost |
| 19 September 2025 | Cap 'n' Gown Ceremony |

Dear Council Colleagues,

I would also like to acknowledge and celebrate the efforts of the entire GSA team and staff who executed the Fall 2025 Info Fair, our first Social Hour (speed-friending), the “Know Your Services” campaign, and the CASA tabling sessions. Their dedication and hard work made these initiatives a huge success, providing graduate students with valuable resources, information, and opportunities to connect with the GSA and the wider campus community.

Between August 19 and September 19, 2025, I attended a range of meetings, events, and orientations representing graduate students at the University of Alberta. During this period, I engaged regularly with University Administration and Governance, meeting with President Flanagan, the Provost, and senior administrators to discuss graduate student priorities. I participated in governance and financial committees, including FPC, BFPC, UAPTI, and TBAC, ensuring that graduate student perspectives were represented in budgetary and strategic planning. I also contributed to institutional planning and innovation through the Global Campaign Initiative Focus Group, the Engagement with Purpose Steering Committee, and the Teaching and Learning AI Committee.

Way Forward: Minimum Funding Advocacy

In meetings with Melissa Padfield, Tracy, and Dr. Verna, I emphasized the GSA’s continued advocacy for stronger minimum funding structures for graduate students. While some departments have adopted funding models, our approach focuses on advancing a fairer, more transparent system that supports students without discouraging academic excellence.

Key principles guiding our advocacy are:

1. Student Retention of External Awards
 - o Students should keep at least the first \$2,000 CAD of any external award without a reduction in supervisor funding.
 - o This encourages students to apply for smaller scholarships and awards without fear of their funding being clawed back.
2. Separating TASHips from Minimum Funding
 - o Teaching Assistantships must be treated as additional work, not a substitute for base minimum funding.
 - o While some departments currently rely heavily on TA stipends, our long-term goal is to secure no-strings-attached baseline funding in departments that can afford it.
3. Sustainable, Equitable Funding Models
 - o Our vision is a structure where graduate students receive secure guaranteed funding that enables them to focus on their research and studies, with TASHips and other work opportunities available as supplemental income.

This advocacy remains a top priority for the GSA, and I will continue working with administration and faculty leadership to ensure meaningful progress this academic year.

I actively advocated for the continuation and sustenance of the course-based scholarship, which currently is guaranteed only for this year and the next. Through discussions with university administrators and relevant committees, I highlighted the importance of this scholarship in supporting graduate students financially and ensuring equitable access to academic opportunities. These efforts aim to secure its long-term continuation, providing stability and recognition for the contributions of course-based graduate students at the University of Alberta.

Commentary on EDIC Working Group

I would also like to provide commentary regarding the recently created EDIC working group. While this group has been presented as a way to address concerns, I must note that multiple individuals within the group have had several complaints filed against them through the Appeals and Complaints Board (ACB). Due to confidentiality, I cannot share details; however, it is important for Council to know that these individuals have actively caused harm to both previous and current DEOs.

As such, I believe that any recommendations emerging from this working group should be approached with caution. In my view, they are unlikely to be in the best interest of the GSA or its members, given the conflicts and harm already documented. I strongly encourage Council to consider whether the existence of this working group aligns with our bylaws, policies, and the GSA's commitment to fostering safe and constructive spaces.

The VPIR has submitted a request for retroactive payment of her stipend from May 1 to July 16, 2025, as well as a waiver of her Spring 2025 tuition. In her correspondence, she emphasized that she had been carrying out the duties of the role during this period and referred to GSA Policy D.POL.10.1.f.iii, which she interprets as requiring that the allocated salary funds either be paid to the VPIR or redirected to designated Indigenous student support funds.

It should also be noted that the VPIR has had limited attendance at Board and Governance Committee meetings. Grace has made significant efforts to adjust meeting times to accommodate her availability; however, scheduling has remained challenging due to the VPIR's academic commitments.

In terms of advocacy and policy discussions, I participated in consultations regarding student group event approvals, experiential learning policy, and health and dental plan review. I also engaged in sponsorship and co-sponsorship discussions to expand the support and resources available to graduate students. My role in graduate student representation extended to hiring and selection processes, where I served on the Executive Director hiring committee and interview panels, and participated in the CSSH College Dean Selection process.

I actively supported the graduate student community by attending numerous departmental orientations—including MBA, Pharmacology, Occupational Therapy, Math & Stats, Sociology, Surgery, and Physics—to welcome incoming students. Additionally, I represented the GSA at campus-wide events

such as the Fall 2025 Info Fair, Pancake Breakfast, University Commons Opening, and the Lister Dining Hall Soft Opening.

Finally, I engaged in collaborations and external relations by meeting with the Minister of Advanced Education and attending the Cap 'n' Gown Ceremony, strengthening the GSA's visibility at both provincial and institutional levels. I maintained regular monthly updates with Isaac Van Dyne, Chief of Staff, and other senior leaders to foster strong relationships, and worked with student associations, including the SU and ISA, to advance joint initiatives.

Thank you
Aashish

Item 7b: Vice-President Academic Report

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

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|------------------------------------|
| To: GSA Council |
| From: Chen Okafor |
| Date: Sept 17 th , 2025 |

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

Please find below a list of meetings I attended between August 14th to Sept 17th (not inclusive of weekly GSA Board meetings). The meetings were accurate at the time of printing.

| Date | Meeting |
|-------------------------|---|
| August 14 th | Meeting with Tracy from FGPS |
| August 14 th | CAG (Committee on Academic Governance) Summer Reading Meeting |
| August 14 th | Meeting with a Student |
| August 15 th | VP Academic Walk-In Hours |
| August 18 th | Meeting with a Student |
| August 18 th | Meeting with a Student |
| August 19 th | Meeting with U of T GSU |
| August 20 th | (G Meet) Minimum Funding Implementation Group |
| August 22 nd | VP Academic Walk-In Hours |
| August 22 nd | Lister Dining Hall Soft Opening Luncheon |
| August 22 nd | Special APC Meeting |
| August 22 nd | Workshops Discussion |
| August 25 th | Graduate Student Peer Support Training |
| August 25 th | Graduate Program Support Team |
| August 25 th | ISA/GSA Regular Meetings |
| August 26 th | Deputy Speaker/President/VP Academic Meeting |
| August 26 th | Meeting with a Student |
| August 26 th | Meeting with a Councillor |
| August 27 th | Rehab Science Orientation Presentation |
| August 27 th | Falling Walls Lab Edmonton |
| August 28 th | Meeting with a Student |

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| August 28 th | ISVS Infomart |
| August 28 th | Academic Fairness & Navigation Workshop Discussion |
| August 29 th | VP Academic Walk-In Hours |
| August 29 th | Chemistry Orientation |
| August 29 th | Sociology Orientation |
| September 2 nd | Advisory Working Group on International Student Thesis-Based Tuition Strategy |
| September 2 nd | Chemical & Materials Engineering Orientation |
| September 3 rd | GSA Fall 2025 Info Fair |
| September 4 th | Economics PhD Orientation |
| September 5 th | VP Academic Walk-In Hours |
| September 5 th | Experiential Learning Policy |
| September 5 th | UAGSA VP Academic/UBC VP University & Academic Affairs/U of T GSU VP Academic |
| September 8 th | GSA FGPS Caucus |
| September 8 th | GFC Executive Committee |
| September 8 th | GMeet: Graduate Student Peer Support Program Working Group |
| September 9 th | Meeting with a Student |
| September 10 th | Tuition and Fees Orientation Session (SU/GSA) |
| September 10 th | FGPS Council |
| September 10 th | APC Meeting |
| September 12 th | VP Academic Walk-In Hours |
| September 16 th | GFC/GSA Goals Chat |
| September 16 th | Meeting with a Student |
| September 16 th | Meeting with a Student |
| September 17 th | Healing Circle #1 |

Dear Council Colleagues,

Over the past month I have made much progress toward my goals, including finalizing a date for my Academic Supervision Q&A Workshop. My Academic Supervision Q&A Workshop will be held on Friday, October 3rd from 11 am to 1 pm in Triffo Hall (1-16). I have also started holding meetings with various Councillors of the GSA to discuss how to make Council function better. The past month has given me the opportunity to interact with new students at the departmental orientations and at the info fairs that I have been privileged to be a part of. I have also been able to attend an orientation on tuition and MNIF (mandatory non instructional fees). I know that as we begin the semester my sense of what I can accomplish in my role has only grown. Listed below are all the meetings pertinent to my portfolio that I have attended over the past month.

Meeting with Tracy from FGPS (August 14th, 2025)

During this meeting President Aashish Kumar and I discussed tying PhD minimum funding to CPI (consumer price index). We also brought up a student in dire financial straits being helped by our VP Student Services (Saad Iqbal). The student went on to receive \$5,000 in assistance from FGPS.

CAG (Committee on Academic Governance) Summer Reading Meeting (August 14th, 2025)

In this summer session of CAG, we had a conversation around whether or not shrinking the size of the GFC is a good way to increase its effectiveness. Many ideas were proposed such as GFC member surveys and taking away the zoom option for increased turnout. Some members, however, suggested that we not focus so much on the numbers but on who makes up those numbers.

Meeting with U of T GSU (August 19th, 2025)

I met virtually with the VP Academics for the Graduate Students' Union at the University of Toronto. He shared how he was able to convince his university to increase their minimum funding from \$18,000 to \$40,000 per year. Some ideas that he put forward on how to successfully campaign for increased minimum funding included using physical posters, putting pressure on administration officials, bottom-up bottom down petitioning, town halls and even a script read to the department chair by students in that department. We also discussed drafting a Graduate Student Bill of Rights together, which we have since begun working on.

G Meet (Minimum Funding Implementation Group) (August 20th, 2025)

In this meeting the full implementation date of September 1st, 2025 for PhD minimum funding was established. We also talked about how much funding those transferring from a Master's program to a PhD would get, with further conversations to follow.

Special APC Meeting (August 22nd, 2025)

For this meeting a proposal was put forward for the establishment of a Health Research Institute in the College of Health Sciences focused on health in a broad way.

Workshop Discussion (August 22nd, 2025)

I met with Brandy Ellamil, our Strategic Planning Coordinator and Initiatives Lead, to discuss the setup for my two workshops which I will be hosting on academic supervision and academic integrity. The Academic Supervision Q&A is scheduled for October 3rd, while the other workshop on academic integrity is slated for late January.

Graduate Student Peer Support Training (August 25th, 2025)

I conducted the icebreaker on this first day of training for the Graduate Student Peer Support program volunteers. The icebreaker activity began with me as I tossed a ball of yarn to a volunteer, who then had to state their name, background and something unique about themselves.

Graduate Program Support Team (August 25th, 2025)

In this meeting several certificate programs were proposed, namely; the Data Science and Artificial Intelligence Graduate Certificate and the Certificate in Policy Leadership. A new reinstatement policy for graduate programs was also put forward. Tuition waivers for Treaty 6 students was another topic of discussion.

ISA (International Students' Association) /GSA Regular Meetings (August 25th, 2025)

During this meeting with Hazel Kemuma (GSA VP Student Life) and Kingsley Igwilo from the ISA we talked about ways in which the GSA can collaborate with the ISA on such projects as my Academic Supervision Q&A and the International Day being hosted by Hazel.

Deputy Speaker/President/VP Academic Meeting (August 26th, 2025)

I met with Deputy Speaker Laith AlKhatib and President Aashish Kumar for a dialogue on how to effectively communicate one's ideas in a Council setting.

Rehab Science Orientation Presentation (August 27th, 2025)

I attended the Rehabilitation Science orientation (my very first one) in Corbett Hall where I spoke to new graduate students about the mission and purpose of the GSA.

Falling Walls Lab Edmonton (August 27th, 2025)

This was my first time ever attending a 3MT event. Participants had three minutes to share the crux of their thesis or research project that they were working on. The winner had the opportunity to travel to Germany to compete in the finals.

ISVS Infomart (August 28th, 2025)

I along with Hazel Kemuma (GSA Student Life) manned a table at University Commons where we handed out GSA merchandise and promoted the organization at large.

Academic Fairness & Navigation Workshop Discussion (August 28th, 2025)

I met with Nazanin Campbell from the Student Conduct & Accountability office to talk about the workshop I will be hosting in January dealing with academic integrity. We agreed the workshop will focus on ways graduate students can avoid getting themselves in situations where they are likely to be accused of academic misconduct.

Advisory Working Group on International Student Thesis-Based Tuition Strategy (September 2nd, 2025)

For this particular meeting I came to learn that the U of A provides more funding to thesis based graduate students than it collects in tuition revenue. This group is tasked with coming up with recommendations for international thesis-based master's students.

GSA Fall 2025 Info Fair (September 3rd, 2025)

I spoke extensively at this info fair about the services provided by the GSA, especially as it pertains to my own VP Academic portfolio, and also the ways in which graduate students can get more involved on campus by joining some of our GSA committees that have vacancies.

Experiential Learning Policy (September 5th, 2025)

Karsten Mundel (VP Learning Initiatives for the university) pitched me and Aashish Kumar on the new experiential learning proposal that he is trying to get through governance.

UAGSA VP Academic/UBC VP University & Academic Affairs/U of T GSU VP Academic (September 5th, 2025)

I met with the VP Academics from UBC and the U of T to discuss strategies for promoting an increase in minimum funding levels and also to talk about the Graduate Student Bill of Rights which is a joint project between us meant to enshrine the basic rights of graduate students into one document.

GSA FGPS Caucus (September 8th, 2025)

Much of the focus of this meeting which I chaired was on the language surrounding the proposed calendar change from readmission to reinstatement. We as a group had concerns about how much the new reinstatement process will cost and also on whether or not there is a length of time that precludes one from being reinstated. These concerns and more were addressed by Micah True from FGPS.

GFC Executive Meeting (September 8th, 2025)

During this meeting there was contention around the proposed 2026/2027 school academic schedule as it is and the new IT policy that will be making its way to the larger GFC for a vote.

GMeet: Graduate Student Peer Support Program Working Group (September 8th, 2025)

In this meeting the GSPS team and I agreed that there will be another presentation about the GSPS program in Council after it launches on October 1st.

Tuition and Fees Orientation Session (SU/GSA) (September 10th, 2025)

I attended this orientation session to meet some of the key stakeholders involved in determining what the tuition rates will be. Going forward I along with President Aashish Kumar will be coming up with a tuition proposal to present to the university.

FGPS Council (September 10th, 2025)

I was not able to stay the whole time, but from what I gleaned much of this council was an introductory session to what it means to sit on FGPS as a member.

APC (Academic Planning Committee) Meeting (September 10th, 2025)

This meeting covered many agenda items including the proposed IT policy making its way to the larger GFC and the Peter Lougheed Leadership College being established under the College of Social Sciences and Humanities (CSSH).

GFC/GSA Goals Chat (September 16th, 2025)

I engaged in collegial conversation with Kate Peters and Julie Zinken from University Governance along with President Aashish Kumar (GSA) regarding some of the initiatives that the GSA is currently spearheading.

Healing Circle #1 (September 17th, 2025)

I am grateful to Dr. Florence Glanfield for setting up this meeting where we as DEOs began learning how to engage with indigenous ways.

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

Sincerely,
Chen Okafor

VP Academic (2025-26)

Item 7c: Vice-President External Report

**2025-2026 Vice-President External
Report to GSA Council for the September 24, 2025 Meeting**

| |
|---------------------------|
| To: GSA Council |
| From: Niloufar Mirfallah |
| Date: September, 24, 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 |
|--------|--|
| Aug 15 | ED Hiring committee |
| Aug 18 | CASA Graduate Advisory Committee – Elections |
| Aug 18 | New to Council Orientation (In-Person) |
| Aug 20 | Special Alumni Council Meeting: University Values Consultation |
| Aug 20 | GSA ED Interview Round 2 |
| Aug 21 | Student Leader Orientation – Calgary Conference |
| Aug 22 | Lister Dining Hall Soft Opening Luncheon |
| Aug 22 | Advocacy for LAP Grad Students |
| Aug 25 | VPIR/VPExt One-On-One - Online |
| Aug 25 | ED Hiring Committee Meeting |
| Aug 26 | Provincial Advocacy Discussion |
| Aug 27 | ESA August meeting |
| Aug 28 | CEE Orientation |
| Aug 28 | Women's & Gender Studies Orientation |
| Aug 28 | ISVS InfoMart |
| Aug 29 | Chemistry Orientation |
| Aug 29 | History, Classics & Religion Orientation |
| Aug 29 | Public Health Orientation Presentation |
| Aug 29 | Indigenous Award Discussion |
| Sep 3 | University Commons Opening and Flag Raising Ceremony |
| Sep 5 | Business PhD Orientation |

| | |
|--------|---|
| Sep 5 | Philosophy Orientation |
| Sep 8 | CASA GAC Meeting |
| Sep 9 | Provincial Advocacy Team, Standing Meeting |
| Sep 9 | Sponsorship Opportunity Discussion |
| Sep 10 | Tuition & Fees Orientation Session |
| Sep 10 | Post-Secondary Education Task Force Meeting |
| Sep 10 | Meet the Community Event, Garneau School |
| Sep 11 | Career Committee Meeting |
| Sep 12 | ISEII Grant Adjudication |
| Sep 12 | MINT Orientation |
| Sep 15 | GSA Executive Dinner with the Chancellor |
| Sep 16 | CASA Tabling |
| Sep 17 | Healing Circle |

ED Hiring committee

We have completed our ED hiring process and are honored to introduce Eric Derksen as the new Executive Director of the GSA.

CASA Graduate Advisory Committee – Elections

elected as Chair of the Graduate Advisory Committee (GAC)

Key points from the meeting:

- The committee will explore opportunities and challenges in both course-based and research funding.
- Visa-processing delays continue to be a significant concern for graduate students.
- Career development remains a major priority, with student satisfaction surveys to help guide advocacy.
- A communications strategy will be developed to strengthen outreach.
- Planning is underway for the Graduate Forum, with a focus on engaging stakeholders and politicians.
- The committee will have an opportunity to contribute to a CASA submission on federal research funding.

New to Council Orientation (In-Person)

It was an introduction to the Alumni Council and its committees, providing members with the opportunity to get to know one another and share their initiatives for joining the committee.

Student Leader Orientation – Calgary Conference

The conference included sessions with the Minister of Advanced Education and covered key topics affecting graduate and post-secondary students in Alberta. Presentations and discussions focused on:

- Student supports, including mental health grants, disability support, and sexual and gender-based violence prevention.
- International education and the current state of student experiences.
- Tuition framework, student aid, and affordability.
- Indigenous education and opportunities for collaboration.
- Housing strategy and affordability initiatives.
- Worker benefits and compensation.
- Alberta Transfer System updates and student engagement opportunities.
- Apprenticeship education and skilled trades.

The event provided an overview of provincial priorities and opened space for student leaders to share concerns and engage with the government on these issues.

Lister Dining Hall Soft Opening Luncheon

In preparation for the return of student residents, Aramark hosted its annual Lister Dining Hall soft opening luncheon.

Advocacy for LAP Grad Students

Councillor Michael Janz has introduced a motion at Edmonton City Council to expand the City's **Leisure Access Program (LAP)** to include full-time students.

- **Current Situation:** LAP provides low-income Edmontonians free or reduced-cost access to recreation facilities and attractions across the city (e.g., pools, golf courses, the Muttart, the zoo). However, full-time students are currently excluded from eligibility.
- **Why This Matters:** The motion highlights that while City Council cannot lower tuition, rent, or textbook costs, it can improve student well-being by supporting affordable recreation opportunities. Access to recreation is critical for students' mental health, community connection, and overall well-being.
- **Equity Concern:** Students often pay mandatory athletic fees that only grant limited access to campus facilities, not the city-wide, family-friendly opportunities that LAP offers. This exclusion represents a missed opportunity to support both student health and long-term retention of student talent in Edmonton.
- **Broader Impact:** Beyond direct benefits to students, expanded access would promote civic pride and retention — when students enjoy the city and its amenities, they are more likely to remain after graduation.

My Involvement:

I sent a short statement on behalf of graduate students in support of this motion, emphasizing the importance of affordable recreation access for mental health and student retention in Edmonton.

Provincial Advocacy Discussion

We initiated a meeting with the University of Calgary, Athabasca University, and the University of Lethbridge to organize a group of graduate students for provincial advocacy, aiming to build a stronger voice across Alberta. This initiative is still ongoing.

Wrapping up abGPAC still is in the process.

ESA August meeting

The City of Edmonton has allocated **\$15 million** from the federal **\$192 million Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF)** to launch the *Downtown Student Housing Incentive*. This program will provide grants of up to **\$30,000 per unit** to encourage the development of affordable student housing in the downtown core. The goal is to address student housing shortages by creating below-market rental units with good access to campuses, transit, and amenities.

For more details, see:

- [Housing Accelerator Fund \(HAF\)](#)
- [Downtown Student Housing Incentive](#)

The **City of Edmonton** has launched a **Housing Survey** to gather feedback on housing affordability, availability, and related priorities. Graduate students are encouraged to participate and share their perspectives.

Survey link: [City of Edmonton Housing Survey](#)

Deadline: September 26, 2025, at 11:59 PM

The **Edmonton Student Alliance (ESA)** is still finalizing its **2025 Municipal Advocacy Priorities**, with ongoing work in the areas of **transit, housing, employment, affordability and quality of life, civic engagement, and newcomer support**.

ISVS InfoMart

I attended the **InfoMart** event on **Thursday, August 28**, which welcomed new international students to the University of Alberta community. The event highlighted resources, services, and opportunities available to support students as they transition into campus life.

Indigenous Award Discussion

As Chair of the Awards Committee, together with the Vice Chair (VPSS), I had a discussion with the VPIR regarding the activation of **Indigenous Graduate Student Awards** within the Awards Committee. This initiative is still in progress.

University Commons Opening and Flag Raising Ceremony

On September 3, the University of Alberta officially raised the Treaty 6 and Métis flags at the flag plaza outside University Commons. The ceremony, attended by Indigenous leaders, community members, students, faculty, and government representatives, marked an important step in recognizing the university's location on Treaty 6, 7, and 8 lands and the Métis homeland. The flags now fly alongside those of Canada and Alberta, symbolizing the university's commitment to reconciliation, the TRC Calls to Action, and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

CASA GAC Meeting

At the CASA GAC meeting, members discussed the funding challenges faced by both course-based and research-based graduate students. Course-based students often rely on scholarships or student loans, which are not interest-free in Alberta. Research-based students face systemic barriers to federal awards, with only a small percentage receiving funding, and they are not eligible for student loans. The committee highlighted the need for a centralized funding resource and explored potential solutions such as work-integrated learning programs like Mitacs. The Graduate Advisory Committee is working on updates to CASA's submission to the Standing Committee on Science and Research's study on the impact of criteria for awarding federal research funding.

Sponsorship Opportunity Discussion

We are currently negotiating with potential sponsors while continuing to search for and pursue additional opportunities.

Tuition & Fees Orientation Session

Executive leaders from the GSA and SU attended the tuition and fees orientation session in early September. Hosted by the Provost's Office, the session reviewed the Alberta Tuition Framework, the Tuition Budget Advisory Committee (TBAC), and the Joint Student/University Oversight Committee on Mandatory Non-Instructional Fees Agreement to help guide upcoming meetings.

Career Committee Meeting

As members of the Alumni Council Career Committee, we attended the first meeting, which focused on providing an overview of all Career Services programs, including the website and upcoming events, along with related action items.

ISEII Grant Adjudication

We are currently in the process of adjudicating the International Student Experience Innovation and Impact Grant.

CASA Tabling

We held a joint tabling event with the SU for CASA to introduce our federal advocacy priorities for post-secondary students and to engage with students about their concerns and expectations from CASA.

Healing Circle

All DEOs and IGSA attended a session with Dr. Florence Glanfield to learn about the history, meaning, and protocols of Healing Circles. The session provided guidance on Indigenous practices, intentions, and the importance of approaching such gatherings with respect and an open heart.

Item 7d: Vice-President Indigenous Relations Report

**2025-2026 Vice-President Indigenous Relations
Report to GSA Council for the September 24, 2025 Meeting**

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|-------------------------------------|
| To: GSA Council |
| From: Tamara Dubé |
| Date: Wednesday, September 17, 2025 |

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

Please find below a list of meetings I attended between 14 August to 17 September 2025 (not inclusive of weekly GSA Board meetings). The meetings were accurate at the time of printing.

| Date | Meeting |
|-----------|---|
| August 14 | Student |
| August 15 | ED Candidate Interview #2 |
| August 18 | Student |
| August 18 | GSA Pre-Council |
| August 18 | GSA Council |
| August 19 | Student |
| August 21 | Student |
| August 22 | Student |
| August 22 | Student |
| August 25 | Hazel, VP Student Life (EDIC Discussion) |
| August 25 | Niloufar, VP External (Introductions) |
| August 25 | ED Hiring Committee: Round 2 Deliberations |
| August 26 | Student |
| August 26 | Student |
| August 27 | EDIC Monthly Meeting |
| August 27 | VPIR Strategic Work Plan Preparation (Brandy) |
| August 27 | Tracy Raivio (Vice-Provost and Dean, GPS Faculty of Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies) & Sarah Wolgemuth (Associate Vice President, Student Experience, Student Services - Dean of Students Administration) |
| August 29 | Saad, VP Student Services & Niloufar, VP External (GSA Awards Selection Committee Chairs) |

| | |
|--------------|--|
| August 29 | Student |
| September 3 | University Commons Opening & Flag Raising Ceremony (Delivered a speech on behalf of student voice) |
| September 4 | Student |
| September 5 | EDIC Special Meeting with Orest Zwozdesky (Knowledge Keeper) |
| September 5 | Student |
| September 6 | Student |
| September 8 | Kris Fowler (Manager, Student Care, Student Services - Dean of Students) |
| September 8 | Student |
| September 10 | EDIC Indigenous Working Group (Nathan, Benjamin, Hero, Emma, and Jovi) |
| September 13 | Student |
| September 15 | Orest Zwozdesky (Knowledge Keeper) |
| September 15 | Carrie Smith (Vice-Provost of Access, Belonging, and Community) |
| September 15 | Indigenous Graduate Students' Association (Meredith & Alexis) |
| September 15 | Student |
| September 16 | Emuel Chan (Investigator, Vice-President Facilities & Operations) |
| September 16 | Student |
| September 17 | Dr. Florence Glanfield (Vice-Provost, Indigenous Programming & Research) with the Indigenous Graduate Students' Association (Meredith & Alexis) and Board |

Dear Council Colleagues,

I hope this report finds you well. This is my second report as Vice President Indigenous Relations with the Graduate Students' Association.

On September 3rd, I had the privilege of representing the student voice at the University Commons Opening & Flag Raising Ceremony. It was a meaningful opportunity to speak on behalf of Indigenous students and to highlight the importance of student voices in spaces of institutional change. This was truly a historic moment in the 119-year history of the University of Alberta. We are all treaty people.

Looking ahead, I plan to attend the National Indigenous Advisory Committee (NIAC) retreat with the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations (CASA) in Halifax, Nova Scotia at the beginning of October, representing the Graduate Students' Association of the University of Alberta.

The Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee (EDIC) has established a special meeting group to acknowledge the lived experiences of Indigenous leaders within the GSA. This group includes me, Benjamin Kuchner, Nathan Lamarche, Jovi Krieger, Hero Laird, and Emma Chambers. I selected three members from EDIC to join this work, and we recently held our first three-hour meeting. A second four-hour session is scheduled, with Meredith Leary from the Indigenous Graduate Students' Association

joining the discussion. We anticipate submitting a report with calls to action to EDIC in the coming months.

Beyond committee work, I continue to build relationships across the university and address issues impacting graduate students. I have already connected with several Indigenous and non-Indigenous graduate students, which has been incredible and reinforces the need for this role.

My current initiatives include:

- Reviewing, editing, and reinstating the GSA Indigenous Recognition Award and Bursary, and ensuring it is added back to the GSA website.
- Improving onboarding process for staff, executives, and councillors by incorporating learning about Indigenous Peoples, Histories, Treaties, etc.
- Facilitating an Indigenous graduate student community.
- Bringing Indigenous opportunities to our sister campuses (Campus Saint-Jean, Augustana, Calgary).
- Working alongside the Indigenous Graduate Students' Association and the Elections and Referendum Committee to correct the election process for the Vice President Indigenous Relations executive role to make it culturally safe and correct the bylaws & policies that contradicted each other earlier this year.
- Building meaningful, relationship-based connections across the university.

Finally, a reminder that Tuesday, September 30, 2025, marks the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. While this is a statutory holiday, I encourage you to use the day for learning, reflection, and growth. It exists to honour Survivors, families, and communities, and to strengthen our shared commitment to reconciliation. Please consider wearing orange as a visible sign of solidarity.

Warmest wishes,
Tamara

Item 7e: Vice-President Student Life Reports

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

*Please find below a list of meetings I attended between August 13 and September 17 2025 (**not inclusive of weekly GSA Board**). The meetings were accurate at the time of printing.*

Reports:

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

| | |
|-------------|--|
| August 14 | Meeting with Katherine Huising, VP Facilities & Operations |
| August 15 | Governance Council Monthly Meeting |
| August 15 | World Mental Health Day Walking Subgroup Meeting |
| August 15 | GSA ED Interview Round 2 |
| August 19 | Revisions to Student Group Event Approvals Discussion |
| August 20 | GSA ED Interview Round 2 |
| August 21 | Media Calendar Review |
| August 22 | Lister Dining Hall Soft Opening Luncheon |
| August 25 | ISA/GSA Regular Meetings |
| August 25 | ED Hiring Committee Meeting |
| August 27 | EDIC Monthly Meeting |
| August 27 | DOA Committee Meeting |
| August 27 | GSA ED Hiring Comm/GSAB Meeting |
| August 28 | ISVS InfoMart |
| August 28 | Linguistics Departmental Orientation Q&A |
| August 29 | Campus & Community Recreation & GSA Bi-Monthly Meeting |
| August 29 | History, Classics & Religion Orientation |
| August 29 | Public Health Orientation Presentation |
| August 29 | CSJ/GSA Collaborations |
| September 2 | Student group Collaboration Meeting |
| September 3 | GSA Fall 2025 Info Fair |
| September 3 | Bio Sci Orientation |
| September 5 | GSA EDIC Special Meeting |
| September 5 | Electrical/Computer Engineering Dept Orientation |
| September 8 | Meeting with Katherine Huising, VP Facilities & Operations |
| September 8 | Meeting with a Student |
| September 9 | Meeting with Carrie Smith |

| | |
|--------------|---|
| September 10 | Tuition & Fees Orientation Session |
| September 10 | Speech-Language Pathology (Master's) Orientation |
| September 10 | Meet the Community Event, Garneau School |
| September 12 | Paediatrics Orientation Presentation |
| September 12 | October Social Hour Collaboration Discussion (Alumni Relations) |
| September 15 | GSA/CSJ Collaboration |
| September 15 | Campus Services Meeting (Turkey/Thanksgiving Dinner) |
| September 16 | CoRA |

Date: September 17th, 2025

From: Hazel Kemuma, Vice President (Student Life)

1. VP SL Report

Dear Council Members,

It is my prayer that the start of the semester has been seamless for you and that despite the busyness of it all, you have proactively been taking time to recharge. Following is a report of the meetings I've attended since the last council meeting.

Meeting with Katherine and the Campus Services Team.

We had a successful move-in on North Campus with GSA representation from our VP Student Services. Katherine and her team have expressed appreciation for the continued collaboration with her team. Over these past couple of weeks, I have on behalf of a student who approached me, advocated for them for issues around their lease agreement on the university residence. A lot of the issues have been resolved but I'm still in negotiations for the unresolved ones.

Beyond this advocacy, the plans for the Turkey dinner are going well. It's now finalized that the thanksgiving dinner will be on the 9th of October and is open to graduate students staying in university residence only.

Revisions to Student Group Event Approvals Discussion

The President and I met with the team working on a possible new events approval process. We advocated that the group and events approval that pertain to graduate students should be done through the GSA as we represent graduate students and more often than not collaborate with the various graduate groups on campus to run events. The team is yet to get back to us concerning this arrangement and once we have a decision from them, we'll be sure to share it with the Council and GSA members.

Meeting with International Students' Association

Our VP Academic and I met the ISA VP Academic where we discussed a collaboration of the International Day celebration among other initiatives. We're exploring ways in which we can enrich the life of grad

students whether through events or workshop (academic) collaborations. As plans begin to take form, more will be shared with the Council.

ISVS InfoMart and GSA Fall 2025 Info Fair [Thank you to you Councillors!]

During an InfoMart organized by ISVS to share the resources on campus to all international students joining the UofA community, we as the GSA were given a chance to table. Our GSA info fair was also well attended by both domestic and international students. On both of these occasions, I had a chance to meet the amazing graduate students who have just started their journeys in grad school. Days following the events, I was able to connect some of you Councillors to the new students in your departments. As the semester goes on, I will be calling on more of you to extend assistance to the new grads as they reach out to me. To those that I have already connected with, thank you so much for warmly welcoming these students and diligently walking with them. The guidance and mentorship you have offered and continue to offer is greatly appreciated.

Truth and Reconciliation Walk

Following advice from our VP Indigenous Relations, we will no longer be holding the walk that was earlier scheduled for the 26th of this month. This was due to time constraints and conflicting commitments for that day. It was also advised that planning for this in the coming years should start in May for it to be meaningful and impactful.

Campus Saint-Jean Collaboration

With the immense support of the staff, CSJ Councillor, Sophie and I are working on a project for the students in CSJ. Teaser, it's all in French! I have had and continue to have fun working with her as we explore more ways in which we can involve students in CSJ and make them feel as part of the UofA community. These efforts have been extended to all our sister campuses with meetings set up with the team in Calgary and our VP Indigenous Relations being the liaison for Augustana campus.

Orientations

Being part of the departmental orientations allowed me to appreciate even more the diverse group of students that we have and more so the work that you as councillors do in connecting the greater student body to the GSA and forwarding their concerns, as they arise, so that we can all collectively advocate for them. If there is a concern, an event or a suggestion on how to improve things that your group has, please feel free to reach out to me through gsavpsi@ualberta.ca. I'll be more than happy to sit down with you and forge a way forward.

October Social Hour Collaboration Discussion

The October social hour will be in collaboration with Alumni Relations. Through their network, we will be inviting the UofA alumni with an intention of providing a platform for students to meet potential employers and/or mentors in a more relaxed setting. This will be taking place on the evening of 17th October and more details will be shared via our newsletter.

2. GSA Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Committee Report

This month, while the EDI Committee was able to carry out aspects of its mandate, we also faced significant challenges that I believe Council should be aware of.

Several members have expressed concerns about safety within the committee. Our VPIR, Tamara (who also serves as Vice Chair), shared that she had experienced harassment and noted a pay discrepancy. Upon review, I found that the discrepancy stemmed from a staff transition, and when raised with the President and Cindy (Associate Director), the matter was promptly resolved. Concerns regarding harassment remain unresolved, and I anticipate Tamara may wish to speak to this further.

Separately, I became aware of an email thread (which I was excluded from) that involved EDIC members, as well as Nathan Lamarche and Benjamin Kucher. Within this thread, discussions took place regarding the potential removal of staff, as well as my role as Chair of the EDIC. Allegations were raised that I represented a conflict of interest, that I am working against Indigenous students, and that I had engaged in election misconduct. I was deeply concerned to read these claims, which do not reflect my values or the work I do.

Following this, during the subsequent committee meeting, a working group was created. The Vice Chair selected members for this group, including three EDIC members, Nathan, Benjamin, and herself. The working group's stated purpose was to create a safe space for dialogue and to develop recommendations relating to Indigenous student concerns. I raised that our bylaws and policies (F.POL.2.8) provide for subcommittees but do not reference "working groups." While I advised caution regarding a potential violation of GSA Bylaw and Policy, the committee voted to proceed, citing the time it would take to establish a subcommittee.

For the following meeting, I invited an Indigenous knowledge keeper, Orest (through the support of Dr. Florence Glanfield, Vice Provost Indigenous Relations). My hope was to create a safer environment for dialogue, given the tensions from the previous meeting. Orest facilitated reflection on trust, responsibility, and self-care, which helped set a more constructive tone.

Dear members of Council, I share this report not only to provide an account of the challenges we are facing but also to seek guidance. The narratives surrounding these events have strained relationships at personal, professional, and advocacy levels. I respectfully request that, if there are specific concerns or evidence that my actions have harmed Indigenous students or constituted election misconduct, they be brought forward directly so I may learn, reflect, and take corrective steps if needed.

I recognize I am not a perfect Chair, but my commitment remains with the students who entrusted me with this responsibility as VP Student Life. If my actions have fallen short, I sincerely apologize and welcome constructive feedback to avoid repeating mistakes. My hope is to restore trust, ensure that EDIC fulfills its mandate, and foster an environment where all members feel included and safe.

As the Council originally established this committee, I ask for your advice on how we might move forward in a way that is both safe and constructive for everyone involved.

Yours sincerely,

Hazel Kemuma.

VP Student Life (2025-2026)

Item 7f: Vice-President Student Services Report

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

To: GSA Council

From: Saad A. Iqbal

Date: September 17, 2025

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

Below is a list of meetings I attended between August 13 and September 17, 2025 (not including weekly GSA Board meetings). The meetings were accurate at the time of printing.

| Date | Meeting |
|-----------|---|
| August 14 | Campus Food Bank ED and Co-Chairs Meeting |
| August 15 | GSA ED Interview |
| August 18 | Second Harvest/GSA Meeting (CFB) |
| August 19 | VPSSE Know Your Services Tabling at SUB |
| August 20 | Health and Dental Plan Discussion |
| August 20 | GSA/Studywell Weekly Meeting |
| August 20 | GSA ED Interview Round 2 |
| August 21 | VPSSE Know Your Services Discussion |
| August 21 | Meeting with Student (Confidential) |
| August 21 | Meeting with Kevin Friesse (student issue – confidential) |
| August 22 | Lister Dining Hall Soft Opening Luncheon |
| August 22 | Leisure Access Program (LAP) Advocacy Discussion |
| August 25 | ED Hiring Committee Follow-up Discussion |
| August 26 | Health and Dental Plan Discussion |
| August 27 | Campus Services (CS) Moving Day Volunteering |

| | |
|--------------|---|
| August 27 | GSA ED Hiring Committee Follow-up Meeting |
| August 28 | Psychology Department Orientation |
| August 28 | Campus Food Bank ED and Co-Chairs Meeting |
| August 28 | International Student and Visitor Services (ISVS) Info-Mart Tabling |
| August 29 | Campus & Community Recreation (CCR)/GSA Bi-Monthly Meeting |
| August 29 | Indigenous Award Discussion |
| September 3 | Earth and Atmospheric Sciences Department Orientation |
| September 3 | GSA Fall Info Fair |
| September 3 | GSA/Studywell Weekly Meeting |
| September 3 | Campus Food Bank (CFB) Co-Chairs and Treasurer Meeting |
| September 4 | GSA Audit Discussion |
| September 4 | Anthropology Department Orientation |
| September 5 | Meeting with Kevin Friese |
| September 8 | Students Who Parent Orientation |
| September 8 | Campus Food Bank (CFB) Board Meeting |
| September 9 | Meeting with Kevin Friese |
| September 10 | Tuition and Fees Orientation |
| September 10 | GSA/Studywell Weekly Meeting |
| September 10 | Garneau School Meet the Community Event |
| September 11 | Meeting with Student (Confidential) |
| September 12 | Art, Design, Drama and Music Departments Orientation |
| September 15 | Student Parent Working Group Meeting |
| September 15 | GSA Executives Dinner with the Chancellor |
| September 16 | U-Pass Meeting |
| September 17 | GSA/Studywell Weekly Meeting |
| September 17 | GSA/IGSA Meeting with Florence Glanfield (Initiating Healing Circles) |

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 August 13 and September 17, 2025:

GSA Health & Dental Plan

I would like to begin with the Health and Dental Plan as we are currently transitioning to Studywell. I understand that many graduate students are experiencing significant confusion and find it difficult to get answers to their questions. I want to emphasize that we are doing our best to consider all the challenges our members face. The GSA staff and I are holding weekly meetings with Studywell and sharing all concerns that have been raised. Switching to a new provider presents its own set of challenges. While we ensure students receive help and support, we also need to recognize that Studywell requires some time to understand our unique concerns and issues. To familiarize the Council with the new plan details, we have invited Studywell to present at today's session. Please take this opportunity to ask the representatives about the unique circumstances that you or your constituents might be facing. Moving forward, I will hold special townhalls and meetings with graduate students to listen to their concerns and explore potential solutions. Rest assured, we will do our best to address all issues in a constructive manner. Therefore, the feedback and suggestions from graduate students are extremely valuable.

One of the issues we are currently facing is improving how student concerns are addressed, as multiple GSA executives and staff members are receiving emails. This makes it difficult for us to respond promptly and effectively. If you encounter any issues with the plan, please send your inquiries to uofa@studywellbenefits.ca, copying gsa.frontdesk@ualberta.ca. If you do not receive a timely or satisfactory response, feel free to contact me at gsavpsse@ualberta.ca, preferably copying gsa.frontdesk@ualberta.ca.

Orientations and Know Your Services Campaign

At the start of the term, I, along with other DEOs, attended several orientation sessions in different departments. One issue I highlighted is that graduate students often do not become familiar with the supports and services offered by the GSA. Although we try to send regular updates and information through our weekly newsletter and social media, students often find it difficult to keep up with them. To address this, I am holding 'know your services' tabling sessions across campus to help graduate students learn about the available services and supports. Furthermore, council members can also assist and encourage students to become more familiar with the GSA grants, bursaries, awards, study spaces, parents' lounge, and other services. Your support is invaluable in this effort, as you also have access to

your constituents. I would also appreciate your sharing of ideas and feedback on how the GSA can help raise awareness about these services.

Info-marts and Supports for Student Parents

During this reporting period, I also attended two information sessions (Info-marts), one organized by the ISVS and the other by the GSA itself. We received a great response at both events. The GSA executives interacted with many new and returning students, providing information while also collecting feedback and suggestions. Some of the upcoming initiatives that you will see coming from the DEOs are based on this feedback. I also presented at the Students Who Parent Orientation, organized by the SSE, where I highlighted the support available to graduate students through the GSA, as well as other aspects of the GSA's operations.

Speaking of student parents, I will be co-presenting a new (exploratory) initiative which is under preparation and will be shared with the Council soon. Another positive development for student parents is that Bredin Early Bird will offer a 50% discount to graduate students in the first three months of registering their children, followed by a 15% discount thereafter. Details for this arrangement will be shared via the newsletter soon. Our VPSL, Hazel, VPE, Niloufar and I also attended a "Meet the Community" Event hosted by the Garneau School, where we spoke with graduate student parents whose children attend the school. We hope to have more collaborative sessions like this in the future. Our VPE, Niloufar, has also taken on the advocacy for the Leisure Access Program (LAP). Along with counterparts at the UASU, she will be advocating for graduate students' access to the Program. If the LAP is extended to post-secondary students, it will significantly benefit many families, providing them with additional access to leisure and recreation opportunities in the city.

Other Important Meetings

During the recent fees and tuition orientation, SU and GSA executives were briefed on the Alberta Tuition Framework, the Tuition Budget and Advisory Committee (TBAC), and the Joint Student/University Oversight Committee on the Mandatory Non-Instructional Fees Agreement. For graduate students, we also talked about streamlining the process for sharing offer letters and funding information. The GPS is already working on this and is trying to optimize the implementation process across the University. During my meetings with Kevin Friese, we discussed the Graduate Student Peer Support (GSPS) program. The training component is expected to be concluded by the end of this month, and the promotion will commence in October. We also discussed the next steps for the Hydroponics Farm project. We are still exploring space and funding opportunities. During our discussion, we also explored additional supports

for graduate students with reduced mobility. I am still exploring possible avenues and will share more details at a later time.

We also had a dinner hosted by the Chancellor, where the GSA executives shared ideas for the organizational growth, graduate student success and matters of mutual interest. Under the guidance of Dr. Florence Glanfield, the GSA and the IGSA attended an introductory session to start “healing Circles,” which are meant to be an ongoing, evolving process for us to move forward respectfully and meaningfully.

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: Oct 16-17, Nov 6-7, and Dec 11-Jan 1. Interested councillors can directly contact Kevin Friese at friese@ualberta.ca. Please note that if interested, you will have to attend both days together as shared above.

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 September 2025**

To: GSA Council

From: Arseniy Belosokhov

Date: September 17,
2025

We are beginning this semester with several important vacancies that need to be filled as soon as possible.

The Nominating Committee (NoC) is currently short two members, which is concerning and may eventually impede our smooth functioning. One vacancy is for a general GSA member, and the other is a joint GSA Board/NoC position open to Councillors or Alternate Councillors. We strongly encourage interested members to submit a nomination form through the GSA website.

In addition, the following vacancies remain open:

- 1 Councillor and 1 general GSA member on the Appeals and Complaints Board (ACB);
- 2 Councillors on the GSA Governance Committee;
- 1 GSA member on the GSA Elections and Referenda Committee;
- 3 Councillors on the GSA Board;
- 1 GSA member for the position of GSA Deputy Returning Officer (DRO).

We sincerely hope to receive nominations soon and look forward to working in our direct capacity to identify and recommend the most suitable candidates for these important roles.

Sincerely,

Arseniy Belosokhov,
Nominating Committee Chair

Item 7L: GSA Elections & Referenda Committee Chair Report

**GSA Elections and Referenda Committee
Report to the GSA Council for the 24th September 2025 Meeting**

To: GSA Council

From: Elsie Osei

Date: 17th September 2025

Dear GSA Council Colleagues,

This report summarizes the key discussions and preliminary suggestions arising from the recent Elections and Referenda Committee (ERC) meeting. The primary focus of the meeting was to review and propose amendments to the GSA Bylaws and electoral policies concerning the role of the Vice-President of Indigenous Relations (VPIR). The objective is to create a more streamlined, transparent, and fair electoral process to prevent a recurrence of the challenges encountered during the previous election cycle.

Background

The last VPIR election highlighted several ambiguities and procedural gaps within our existing governance documents. These issues created unforeseen complications that affected the timeline, fairness, and overall integrity of the electoral process. In response, the ERC has been tasked with conducting a thorough review and proposing concrete improvements to both the bylaws and policies.

Meeting Summary & Key Suggestions

The committee meeting was productive, with many members' consensus on the need for clarity, fairness, and proactive improvement of the electoral process. The following key suggestions were developed for streamlining the process:

1. General Election processes
2. Deadlines

3. Main election and byelections

The details of this change would be communicated to the council after the change has gone through the due process for approval.

Current Status: Consultation Phase with IGSA

The committee has moved into a crucial consultation phase with the Indigenous Graduate Student Association (IGSA).

- **Objective:** To solicit their feedback on our proposed suggestions and to incorporate their perspectives on how to best structure a fair process for all potential candidates, particularly Indigenous students who may consider running for the VPIR role.
- **Outcome Sought:** This proactive engagement aims to ensure the IGSA is not only consulted but is a collaborative partner in refining these policies. Their input is vital to creating inclusive bylaws that prevent the recurrence of past issues and foster a welcoming environment for all graduate students to participate in GSA governance.
- **Next Steps:** The ERC will consider and integrate feedback from the IGSA into a revised draft of the proposed By-Law amendments and policy documents. This final draft will then be prepared for formal presentation to the GSA Council for debate and approval.

The ERC is committed to strengthening the democratic foundations of the GSA by learning from past experiences. The suggestions outlined herein are designed to create a robust, clear, and equitable electoral framework for the VPIR position and all future elections. We will provide a further update following the conclusion of our consultation with the IGSA.

Sincerely,

Elsie Osei, Chair of the GSA ERC

Item 7m: GSA Management Report

**GSA Management
Report to GSA Council for September 24 2025 Meeting**

To: GSA Council
From: Eric Derksen
Date: September 24 2025

Dear Members of the GSA Council,

I hope this report finds you well. I am pleased to provide you with an update on the various initiatives and activities currently underway within the Graduate Students' Association. Given the recent start to my tenure, I will provide what is known and will develop this more as both communication and awareness increases. I will thank the staff and executive for their assistance in orientation in the few days I have been with the GSA, a process that will take some time.

We are engaged in a deep dive into GSSF spending - reconciling monthly invoices from UofA with actuals in GSA spending. Staff are initiating a presentation to Council from Student Group Services (SGS) to talk about their new student group registration platform, Rubric.

We are working with Aashish (President) and Saad (VPSS) to increase the GSSF commitment from the University. We provided data on GSSF spending (current and projected), highlighting gaps in current policy (low-income threshold, per-student funding values), and aligning the message to the University so they see the benefit in increasing the fund (U of A strategic priorities in equity, retention, graduate enrollment growth, student experience, and institutional reputation).

Introductions have been made between SGS and Hazel (VPSL). It is the department councillors' duty to inform their departmental student group about any changes that may impact the group.

We have provided the Chair of Awards Committee, Niloufar (VPEX), with an email template to communicate with the Awards Selection Committee about their mandate to review awards policy. Nominations open early December.

The Elections & Referenda Committee (ERC) is working in tandem with the Indigenous GSA (IGSA) to realign and improve our elections policy with regards to the Vice-President Indigenous Relations position in a way that is culturally respectful.

There is a responsive change in how Council Remuneration is disbursed. The GSA now offers EFT. Student group representatives must provide direct deposit details via a secure web portal. Funds are delayed this year due to the new disbursement system and loss of our Finance Manager.

We delivered Fall Orientation (Sept 3) with the Info Fair and Grad Essentials Workshop, and launched the GSA Orientation with Friends Across Campus.

We have worked with the VP Academic to plan the Academic Supervision Q&A workshop and held advocacy conversations around course-based Master's student financial support. There is also ongoing communication about the new Health and Dental Plan.

The hiring process for a part time Finance Manager is underway, and should be completed shortly. The annual audit work for the GSA 2024 - 2025 finances has begun with our Accountant, Seidy Louangxay, taking the lead in working with a local firm to provide the necessary materials.

The resignation of the Assistant Director will lead us into a role assessment and re-hire to ensure the staff is functioning at optimal capacity and coverage is ensured for all responsibilities.

Sincerely,

Eric Derksen

Executive Director

Management Report to the GSA Board, August 13 2025 (cancelled)

Management has been engaged with the following since the last report from August 6, 2025:

Strategic

- Management has been providing assistance to the LRC to ensure work continuity. A newsletter will go out today to replenish vacant seats on the committee and on the bargaining team.
- The new Health and Dental information will be rolled out soon. The website will go live toward the end of the month. Change of Coverage Period will run from September 2 - 26, 2025.
- Work on the annual audit should begin in late August, with the Accountant taking a lead role in organizing documents.
- The ED Hiring Committee is conducting second round interviews this week.
- With the departure of the Finance and HR Manager, The Acting ED has consulted with the Accountant and initiated the hiring process to find a new Finance Manager. This position will be part-time.

Operations

- GSA 101's and other training/onboarding is being conducted with the VPIR.
- Grants are open so the Grants Coordinator is processing 40 grants with a second approval date of Aug 26.
- Updating the GSA Student Group Liability form to reflect changes in FOIP and student behaviour policies.
- Collecting data from student groups for direct deposit for council remuneration via Good Grants and then e-transfer.
- Fall Orientation - venue layout finalized -- zones to be shared to all booths, Orientation video to be edited to remove info about subsidizing academic and career centre, RSVP for 20-min workshop shared; to collect and prepare orientation presentations and calendar invite.
- Planners will be available for pickup between August 13–15. Shirts being produced; estimate time of pick up between August 22-25, and pens being produced.
- Brandy will meet with VPIR on Aug 21 to finalize and plan out SWP priorities; to be presented during September Council and meet with VPSL re: social media calendar on Aug 21.
- Week of Aug 12 shared details about the new H&D plan.
- In consultation with the VPIR, Healing Circles with Dr. Glanfield are being organized.
- Departmental elections are wrapping up. FGPS, AFC and Science Faculty Council nomination calls are ongoing, with votes upcoming. Standing Committees have seen little interest recently, but this is likely due to being in the summer months.
- The ERC will be deliberating bylaw adjustments to allow for continued by-elections for the VPIR position.
- The GC will be having an extended session on Friday, August 15th to make significant changes to fix our bylaw and policy document.

- Grace is filling out the office calendar with departmental orientation requests and will be sending out the video upon its completion.

Social Media**Facebook**

Reach: +2.8k% (Aug 5-12)

Followers: -1 follower (current: 2050)

Instagram

Reach: +3.4k% (Aug 5-12)

Followers: +4 followers (current: 1591)

Twitter/ X

Followers: no change (1276)

Management Report to the GSA Board, August 20 2025

Management has been engaged with the following since the last report from August 13, 2025:

Strategic

- Management is providing assistance to the LRC to ensure work continuity. A newsletter will go out Wednesday to replenish vacant seats on the committee and on the bargaining team.
- The new Health and Dental information is being shared and the website is now live. Change of Coverage Period will run from September 2 - 26, 2025.
- Work on the annual audit has begun, with the Accountant taking a lead role in organizing documents.
- The ED Hiring Committee is in the final stages of selecting a candidate.
- Applications for a new Finance Manager will be reviewed over the next two weeks and interviews will commence shortly thereafter. This position is part-time.

Operations

- Working to finalize the orientation presentations. All departments have been sent the orientation video, so it should only be a case of pulling up the website now when we attend.
- Getting council docs sorted and letting candidates know results of the vote.
- Getting policy certification from Zain and posting onto the website from the Council approvals yesterday.
- NoC is voting on FGPS Council seats.
- Sorting out an EDIC poll for picking a new time.
- Orientation: a reminder email to all booths is scheduled to be sent by the end of week, orientation video finalized and uploaded on the GSA Website, and Grad Essentials Workshop finalized; presentations are collected. Organizing catering for the workshops.
- GSA merch - Planners & pens ready for orientation and shirts to be picked up by this week or next week.
- Communications: updating mailing list with new contact for Fall 2025.
- Prioritize comms for H&D and Orientation.

Social Media

Facebook

Reach: +106.6k% (Aug 12-19)

Followers: +4 follower (current: 2054)

Instagram

Reach: +46.7% (Aug 12-19)

Followers: +1 follower (current: 1592)

Twitter/ X

Followers: -2 followers (1274)

Management Report to the GSA Board, August 26 2025

Management has been engaged with the following since the last report from August 20, 2025:

Strategic

- Management continues to provide assistance to the LRC to ensure work continuity and replenishment of vacant positions. The positions will be advertised until filled.
- The new Health and Dental information is being shared, the website is live, and the app will be live on September 1, 2025. Change of Coverage Period will run from September 2 - 26, 2025.
- Work on the annual audit continues with the Accountant taking a lead role in organizing documents with support from the Acting ED.
- The ED Hiring Committee is in deliberations this week.
- Applications for a new Finance Manager are being reviewed now and interviews will commence by the second week of September. This position is part-time.
- Several orientations are scheduled over the next couple of weeks. They are going well and the video is very useful. Thanks to the staff who put this together!

Operations

- Orientation: events added to website event calendar; to be shared in a special bulletin and newsletter. Working with Seidy on door prizes for the orientation, send reminder email to DEOs about expectations from them during the info fair.
- Merchandise: GSA signage sharing cost with President and waiting for direction on swag contribution to Wellness Support.
- Communications: Special Bulletin scheduled for Change of Coverage period announcement and W1 of social media post already scheduled.
- Elections are wrapped up for the minute, though vacancies remain.
- Orientation presentations are organized, with a few requests still trickling in.
- Standing Committees are working on bylaw and policy updates: GC is reviewing the ACB policy that Council wanted edited for clarity; ERC is working on realigning the VPIR bylaw with policy; and EDIC is working on realigning its composition policy, as both the President and VPIR are listed as Vice-Chairs.

Social Media

Facebook

Reach: -52.8% (Aug 19-26)

Followers: +4 follower (current: 2058)

Instagram

Reach: +31.9% (Aug 19-26)

Followers: +12 follower (current: 1604)

Twitter/ X

Followers: -2 followers (1272)

Management Report to the GSA Board, September 3 2025

Management has been engaged with the following since the last report from August 26, 2025:

Strategic

- Management continues to provide assistance to the LRC to ensure work continuity and replenishment of vacant positions. The positions will be advertised until filled.
- A representative from Studywell will be at the GSA Office on Thursdays through September to assist students with their inquiries with the health and dental plan. The Change of Coverage Period runs until September 26, 2025.
- Work on the annual audit continues.
- Applications for a new Finance Manager are being reviewed and interviews will commence soon.
- Management is assisting with the annual audit.

Operations

- Significant rescheduling to accommodate DEO class calendars.
- Departmental orientation presentations are going well.
- The office is very busy with Health and Dental questions as the shift to StudyWell begins.
- For orientation - last minute preparations; to send reminder email before EOD to staff & DEOs on support needed + reminder emails to booth participants.
- Merch - ordered additional pens (as per Saad and Aashish's request for Wellness Support initiative)
- Engagement - W1 & W2 posts scheduled for social media. Promotion for the *Social Hour: Speed Friending with FAC* will start this week, to be added in the event calendar for this month.

Social Media

Facebook

Reach: +43.8% (Aug 26-Sept 2)

Followers: no change (current: 2058)

Instagram

Reach: -3.2% (Aug 26-Sept 2)

Followers: +16 follower (current: 1620)

Twitter/ X

Followers: no change (1272)

Management Report to the GSA Board, September 10 2025

Management has been engaged with the following since the last report from September 3, 2025:

Strategic

- Management continues to provide assistance to the LRC to ensure work continuity and replenishment of vacant positions. The positions will be advertised until filled.
- A representative from Studywell will be at the GSA Office on Thursdays through September to assist students with their inquiries with the health and dental plan. The Change of Coverage Period runs until September 26, 2025.
- We hope to schedule interviews for the Finance Manager position starting next week.
- Management is assisting with the annual audit.
- Management staff will assist with onboarding the new ED.

Operations

- There are 40 grants to process as of today.
- The office is directing many student cases regarding the health and dental plan to the new provider and helping sort out exception cases.
- A handful of committees are in the throes of e-votes to keep bylaw and policy approvals going through a busy start to the semester. Polls are planned or ongoing to reschedule some monthly meetings to ensure adequate attendance with new class schedules.
- Departmental orientations are going well, and talks are planned with satellite campuses with regards to expanding our resources and events to their locations.
- ACB interviews will be scheduled very soon, as we have three new candidates for the last general member vacancy.
- The NoC is currently voting on the candidacy of multiple committees to fill our last vacancies.
- SWP updates - VP Indigenous Relations: draft the priorities to be sent to Tamara; prep presentation for Sept council, VP Academic: prep comm/advertising materials for Oct 3 Q&A session on Academic Integrity, and VP External: send a list of possible sponsors.
- Orientation - waiting for door prizes to be delivered and will draw winners for the door prizes; to be announced via newsletter.
- Engagement - Social Hour: Speed Friending -- 115 RSVPs, October Social Hour - start planning a Mixer with Alumni Relations.

Social Media

Facebook

Reach: -18.3% (Sept 2-9)

Followers: no change (current: 2058)

Instagram

Reach: +75.6% (Sept 2-9)

Followers: +24 follower (current: 1644)

Twitter/ X

Followers: - 1 follower (1271)

Item 8a: Governance Committee-Recommended Bylaw and Policy Revisions, Section K

Outline of Issue

Suggested Motion:

That the GSA Council **APPROVE** the recommended changes to GSA Bylaw & Policy (Second Reading):

Recommended Changes to GSA Bylaw & Policy, Section K

Background:

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

Jurisdiction:

GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section A.BYL.1.2

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

GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section A.BYL.2.2

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

GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section F.BYL.1.3

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

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

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

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

Item 8b: Governance Committee-Recommended Bylaw and Policy Revisions, Section J

Outline of Issue**Suggested Motion:**

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

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

Implementing changes to our Referenda bylaws and policies, procedures and definitions to streamline and align with the PSLA and best practices. At the August 18 2025 meeting, GSA Council mandated Governance Committee to redefine and clarify the definitions within this document. Governance Committee edited and approved the document on September 10 2025 via e-vote. At their September 10 2025 meeting, the GSA Board approved the document.

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

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

GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section A.BYL.2.2

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

GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section F.BYL.1.3

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

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

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

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

| Current Policy (deletions are noted as strikethroughs and changes/additions are noted in red font) | Rationale |
|---|---|
| Referenda Policy | |
| J.POL.7.1.a Referenda Askers must be a registered GSA Member. Membership in an officially recognized graduate | This change aligns with the Post-Secondary Learning Act (PSLA) of Alberta, which mandates |

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| <p>student group stated in Section N: GSA Graduate Student Groups is required for referendum Askers. The Asker must provide evidence of their affiliation with a graduate student group when submitting a referendum request to the Chief Returning Officer (CRO).</p> <p>J.POL.7.1.b When submitting a referendum request to the Chief Returning Officer (CRO), the Asker must provide valid proof of their GSA membership, i.e., an enrollment certificate.</p> <p>J.POL.7.1.c The GSA Board shall have the authority to grant exemptions to the eligibility requirements stated in J.POL.7.1a, J.POL.7.1b.</p> <p>J.POL.7.1.d Requests for exemptions must be submitted in writing to the Board for consideration.</p> <p>J.POL.7.1.e The Board may consider exemptions based on, but not limited to, the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) The critical nature of the proposed referendum to the graduate student body b) The Asker's demonstrated understanding of the referendum process and its implications c) Extenuating circumstances that prevent the Asker from meeting the standard requirements. <p>J.POL.7.1.f The decision of the Board regarding exemptions shall be final and shall be communicated to the applicant in writing within a timeframe specified in the GSA's operational policies.</p> <p>J.POL.7.1.g The Board reserves the right to revoke an exemption if the circumstances under which it was granted change significantly.</p> | <p>that the GSA represents the interests of graduate students (PSLA, Section 93). As per Council's mandate to ensure definition consistency, a Referenda Asker is limited to GSA Members only.</p> <p>The eligibility exemption through the GSA Board opens the opportunity for all GSA members to initiate referenda, not just those affiliated with recognized graduate student groups.</p> <p>The inclusion of a board exemption clause provides necessary flexibility to address unforeseen circumstances or particularly critical issues. We need this approach to ensure the successful implementation of referenda such as the Campus Food Bank (CFB), which defy standard procedures but are crucial to the graduate student community.</p> <p>By clearly defining the Board's authority in granting exemptions and establishing criteria for such exemptions, the policy promotes transparency and accountability in GSA governance. This approach guarantees the exercise of flexibility within a structured and equitable framework.</p> |
| <p>J.POL.7.2.a A clearly worded referendum question will address the following criteria (if applicable): description of any dedicated on-going fee, amount of fee, how long a fee will be collected (in accordance with J.POL.6.4), effective date (when a fee will start being collected), end date (when the fee will stop being collected), procedure for</p> | <p>Voters should have an option to opt out of non-mandatory dedicated fees.</p> |

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| <p>changing a fee, whether the fee can be rescinded, opt-out mechanism, and an accountability mechanism for the money collected. The criteria above provided are non-exhaustive and additional criteria may be required to draft a clearly worded referendum question.</p> | |
| <p>J.POL.11</p> | |
| <p>J.POL.15 Referendum Duration and Renewal</p> <p>J.POL.15.1 Referenda approved by the GSA membership shall have a duration of three (3) years from the date of implementation.</p> <p>J.POL.15.2 To ensure continued funding and accountability, referendum askers must initiate a renewal process by the year that the current dedicated fee expires.</p> <p>J.POL.15.3 The renewal process shall involve:</p> <p>J.POL.15.3.a Submitting a detailed report to the GSA Board outlining the achievements, challenges, and financial management of the initiative during the first two years.</p> <p>J.POL.15.3.b Conducting a new referendum vote among the graduate student population.</p> <p>J.POL.15.4 The renewal referendum will be held during the GSA general election in the year of expiration.</p> <p>J.POL.15.5 The renewal referendum question must clearly state:</p> <p>J.POL.15.5.a The original purpose of the initiative.</p> | <p>This policy addition serves several important purposes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A referendum should not be perpetual unless there are extenuating circumstances. 2. It ensures that initiatives funded through referendum remain accountable to the graduate student population by requiring a renewal vote based on demonstrated performance. 3. The three-year initial term with a second-year renewal vote allows for adequate planning and implementation while also providing a timely opportunity for review and adjustment. 4. By requiring a detailed report and clear communication of achievements, the policy enables graduate students to make informed decisions about continuing support for initiatives. 5. The policy allows for adjustments to be proposed during the renewal process, ensuring that initiatives can evolve to meet changing needs. 6. This structure helps in maintaining financial stability by allowing initiatives to secure funding for subsequent years while also providing a |

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| <p>J.POL.15.5.b A summary of achievements and value added to graduate students' experience.</p> <p>J.POL.15.5.c The proposed continuation of the initiative for the subsequent years.</p> <p>J.POL.15.5.d Any proposed changes to funding or implementation, if applicable.</p> <p>J.POL.15.6 If the renewal referendum passes, the initiative will continue for the remainder of the original three-year term and an additional three years from that point.</p> <p>J.POL.15.7 If the renewal referendum fails, the initiative will conclude at the end of its original three-year term, with a one-year wind-down period to ensure orderly closure of operations.</p> <p>J.POL.15.8 If the renewal referendum fails, the Asker must wait a minimum of two (2) years before consideration by the CRO.</p> <p>J.POL.15.8 The GSA Board shall have the authority to establish specific procedures and timelines for the renewal process, ensuring they align with the GSA's broader governance and election policies.</p> | <p>mechanism for discontinuation if they no longer meet student needs.</p> <p>7. Regular renewal referenda keep the graduate student population engaged and informed about ongoing initiatives, fostering a culture of active participation in GSA affairs.</p> <p>8. The two-year wait period gives the Asker time to adjust their request, and it alleviates voter burnout of referenda questions.</p> |
| <p>J.POL.1516 Reporting</p> <p>J.POL.1516.1 The Chief Returning Officer (CRO) will draft a procedural report following each referendum. This report will outline major decisions, a summary of discussions and consultations with the GSA Elections and Referenda Committee (GSA ERC), processes, issues, and recommendations for any future referendum. This report</p> | <p>Clerical Change</p> |

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| will be provided to the next CRO and Deputy Returning Officer, the GSA ERC, the GSA Board, and GSA Council. | |
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Item 8c: GSA Third-Party Review

Suggested Motion

That the GSA Council **calls for a third-party review of the recent affairs of the University of Alberta Graduate Students' Association**, subject to the "Terms of the Motion" outlined herein.

Background (see Speaker's Letter from June 23 2025 Council Mailing)

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

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

I stress again my fear that, without this commitment to an unbiased review, the organization is potentially opening itself up to various liabilities such as lawsuits. Simply put, Council meetings

are public venues and associated materials are also public and available on the GSA website. Without a thorough and impartial investigation of claims made against specific individuals associated with the organization, sharing those claims publicly without them being in some way verified is a potential legal, financial, and reputational risk. Third-party reviews are not uncommon for student associations across Canada - this has happened to the University of Alberta GSA before. In 2009-10, the GSA contracted an external consultant following a series of allegations against DEOs, complaints by staff to NASA and staff resignations. Normally, the University of Alberta would not intervene in the affairs of the GSA, but the Provost at the time stepped in and met with the then-GSA President simply on an advisory capacity. As previously noted, after the President and Provost met, an external consultant was brought in to restore and rebuild the GSA. **I firmly believe an unbiased, neutral review of the organization and the various associated allegations will be necessary to pave a path forward for the organization in a fair manner.** Additionally, the PSLA is structured such that the University has a limited ability to intervene and assist the GSA, so we must take the initiative into our own hands and address the issues meaningfully and fairly.

As Speaker of the GSA, I am expected to remain neutral and unbiased in any and all affairs pertaining to the GSA and its governing Council. I take that responsibility seriously. **To this end, to resolve the matters that have been raised in an unbiased manner and to conduct a thorough investigation into the allegations being made, I suggest that a motion be moved and voted upon by the Council calling for a third-party review.**

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

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

Terms of the Motion

Scope of the Review

1. In passing this motion, the GSA Council agrees to call for a top-down and end-to-end unbiased, neutral, third-party review by an appropriate legal entity (ideally a legal firm, consulting company or independent consultant with a demonstrated understanding of the business, culture, and history of student associations within Alberta and Canada).
2. The review will encompass any and all affairs pertaining to the GSA in the last eight (8) to twelve (12) months, focusing on the controversies and allegations in recent months.
 - a. This should include, and is not limited to:
 - i. Council member and DEO safety in Council and other meetings
 - ii. Staff safety in the workplace and issues of workplace harassment
 - iii. Allegations of discrimination against indigenous students and international students
 - iv. Issues surrounding the VPIR election and allegations of election fraud
 - v. Issues surrounding the approval of the 2025-26 GSA annual budget
 - vi. Issues concerning the conduct of council members
 - vii. Allegations of privacy breaches and confidentiality breaches
 - viii. Circumstances surrounding the departure of any staff members, executives or volunteers in the last eight (8) to twelve (12) months
 - ix. Any operational missteps, however minor or major, that warrant further investigation.
 - x. As well as any other affairs deemed necessary to investigate by the GSA Council.
3. The review may also encompass GSA Bylaw and Policy to investigate gaps and loopholes in our governing documents as well as compliance with PSLA or LRC.

Review Committee Composition

1. Upon agreeing to calling for a third-party review, the GSA Council will agree to strike an *ad hoc* committee composed of three (3) to five (5) GSA Council members who are NOT Directly-Elected Officers (DEOs) or Council-Elected Officers (CEOs) or a member of a GSA standing committee and have not held such roles in the last twelve (12) months.
2. The *ad hoc* committee will be named the “Third-Party Review Committee” (TPRC)
3. Following the GSA Council meeting where this motion is approved, the Nominating Committee will circulate a call for nominations to GSA Council members to join the TPRC.
 - a. Members should understand that it may be a considerable investment of time for those that volunteer as the work will not be supported by staff resources other than funds from the GSA to cover the costs of the review.
4. At the next scheduled GSA Council meeting (or a Special Meeting if one is called), the GSA Council will vote and fill the TPRC.
5. Once filled, the GSA Council will officially mandate the TPRC to take charge of identifying an appropriate third party entity and serving as the liaison between the reviewer and GSA Council as the review is conducted.

Selection of the Third-Party Reviewer

1. The committee will be responsible for:
 - a. Engaging a third-party reviewer (ideally, as previously stated, a legal firm, consulting company or independent consultant with a demonstrated understanding of the business, culture, and history of student associations within Alberta and Canada),
 - b. Researching various appropriate entities
 - i. It is strongly recommended that the committee consult and ask for recommendations from local entities such as the University of Alberta Students' Union, the GSA's current auditor, the GSA's current legal

- representation, and the University of Alberta to streamline the process for selecting a legal or consulting firm or consultant.
- c. Developing a Request for Proposals (RFP) to circulate to candidate firms. The RFP will pose questions to the candidate firms
 - i. Could the reviewer conduct the review?
 - ii. How would the reviewer approach the review?
 - iii. How long could the review take?
 - iv. How much would the review cost?
 - v. Has the reviewer interacted with the GSA before? If so, how could they guarantee neutrality and impartiality throughout the review process?
 - vi. Any other questions deemed appropriate or necessary by the committee.
 - d. Ideally, the firm or consultant should not have had significant dealings with the GSA previously.
 - e. The committee will select and solicit proposals from **three (3) legal or consulting firms or independent consultants** wherein the proposal addresses the questions posed in the RFP.
2. Upon selection of three (3) third-party entities, the committee will circulate and present the proposals to the GSA Council. Candidates should be invited to present their proposal to the GSA Council if possible.
 3. **GSA Council will vote and select one (1) third-party reviewer to conduct the third-party review. Selection of the reviewer by GSA Council should ideally occur within one (1) month of forming the committee.**
 - a. In the same GSA Council meeting, the Council will agree to additional specific issues that merit a review. At the very minimum, the review must address any and all allegations made against and by the GSA in the last 8 to 12 months as previously stated under the Scope of the Review. Further issues may be included if the situation develops further between initial approval of this motion and selection of the reviewer.
 4. This process should occur without the support of GSA staff, DEOs or CEOs.
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Conducting the Review

1. Once the GSA Council selects a third-party reviewer, the committee will inform them and initiate the review process as soon as possible.
 2. Depending on the terms of the review outlined and agreed upon by the committee and third-party reviewer, involved parties may be bound to a confidentiality agreement or non-disclosure agreement.
 3. During the review process, the committee will serve as a liaison between the third-party reviewer and the GSA Council, and the committee may provide updates on the status of the review to the GSA Council, should the third-party reviewer permit it. The extent/scope of these updates will be at the discretion of the third-party reviewer.
 4. The review will entail any steps deemed necessary by the third-party reviewer. This can include and is not limited to reviewing publicly-made or available documents or recordings, reviewing meeting minutes and recordings of GSA Council, GSA Board or the Standing Committees where necessary, interviewing involved parties etc. Depending on the materials being viewed or the scope of the discussions in interviews, privacy and confidentiality must be respected by all parties given access to or who are privy to those materials.
 5. **Upon completion of the third-party review, the committee will invite the third-party reviewer to the next scheduled GSA Council meeting (or request a Special Meeting if necessary) to present the findings of the review and what recommendations to enact.**
 - a. A written document of the review will be circulated to GSA Council members at least five (5) working days prior to the meeting.
 - b. The GSA Council will be permitted to ask questions following the presentation. The presentation and question period MAY NOT occur in an *in camera* session (i.e. closed session).
 6. **GSA Council will be bound by the findings of the third-party review and embark on work to enact any recommendations therein.**
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7. Upon completion of the third-party review and its presentation to the GSA Council, if the TPRC was formed, it may be dissolved provided there are no pending actions or business.

Other Notes About The Review

1. The costs associated with the third-party review will be covered by the GSA's Legal Fund and Contingency Fund in compliance with GSA Bylaw and Policy and by the approval of GSA Council (in consultation with the GSA Budget and Finance Committee, the GSA Finance Team and accountant if necessary). As previously mentioned, GSA Council will have the opportunity to review the proposals and the proposal should include cost estimations.
2. **Under any circumstances, current or former GSA Officers (DEOs and CEOs), GSA Staff and GSA Council members who are NOT part of either committee MUST NOT intervene or interfere with any step of the review process (after selecting the members to sit on the TPRC) so as to preserve the unbiased, neutral nature of the third-party review.**
 - a. **Any breaches will be dealt with in accordance with GSA Bylaw and Policy and on the advice of the selected third-party entity.**

GSA Operations During and After the Review

1. The GSA will remain operational during the review.
2. The GSA Council and standing committees will be expected to fulfil their mandates during the review in accordance with GSA Bylaw and Policy.
3. The GSA will embark to enact any recommendations by the reviewer after the review is done.

Item 8d: 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 8e: 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.