



GSA Elected Officer Position Descriptions:

[GSA President](#)

[Vice-President Academic \(VP Aca\)](#)

[Vice-President External \(VP Ext\)](#)

[Vice-President Student Life \(VPSL\)](#)

[Vice-President Student Services \(VPSS\)](#)

[Vice-President Indigenous Relations \(VPIR\)](#)

[Associate Vice-President Labour \(AVPL\)](#)

[GSA Councillors-At-Large \(CAL\)](#)

Bylaw & Policy on these positions can be found [here](#), beginning on page 20. These descriptions are based on and reworded from the Bylaw and Policy.

#### **Eligibility:**

- Applicants must remain an active graduate student for the duration of the position's term (May 1st to April 30th of the following year).
- Candidates must attend the Elections All-Candidates Meeting and Forum events, otherwise they will be disqualified. Please see the [Elections Timeline](#) for details.
- Only Indigenous graduate students may apply for the Vice-President Indigenous Relations role.
- Only academically employed graduate students (or have been academically employed within the preceding academic year) may apply for the Associate Vice-President Labour position.
- Mandatory Weekly Executive Meetings: the GSA Executive Team meets every Wednesday from 10:00AM to 12:00PM to discuss GSA business and initiatives.
- Mandatory Monthly GSA Council Meetings: representatives from each graduate department meet monthly to discuss GSA business and initiatives. The GSA Executive Team reports to Council on the third Monday of each month from 5:00PM to 7:00PM.



## **GSA President**

The Visionary Leader of the GSA

As the chief executive of the Graduate Students' Association (GSA), the President is the leader of the organization, responsible for ensuring its long-term effectiveness, strategic direction, and leadership. The President steers the GSA toward success and ensures that graduate students' voices are heard both within the University and beyond.

Key Responsibilities:

- Overall leadership: The President guides the GSA's strategic goals, ensuring long-term effectiveness, and overseeing the organization's internal and external operations. This includes ensuring the GSA fulfills its legal functions under the Post-Secondary Learning Act.
- Official spokesperson: As the public face of the GSA, the President represents graduate students at university-wide events, on various committees, and to the external community.
- Key governance roles: The President chairs key GSA bodies, including the GSA Board (GSAB), Governance Committee, and Budget and Finance Committee. They're also a member of the University's governing body, the Board of Governors (BoG), ensuring graduate students' interests are always represented.
- Crisis management & succession planning: The President leads the designation of successors in the event of illness or other absences, ensuring the continuity of GSA leadership and operations.
- External advocacy: Along with the Vice-President External, the President plays a lead role in provincial and municipal advocacy, representing graduate students on groups like the Alberta Graduate Provincial Advocacy Council (ab-GPAC).
- Strategic planning: The President is deeply involved in developing the GSA's Strategic Work Plans, in collaboration with other Directly-Elected Officers (DEOs or Vice-Presidents), and ensures these plans align with the graduate student community's needs and aspirations.
- Team building & relationship development: Leading a cross-trained, dynamic team of DEOs and managers, the President fosters relationships with key University leaders, building a cohesive and effective leadership group to push forward the GSA's mission.



- Event oversight & university engagement: The President plays an active role in overseeing all GSA events and engaging with the university community, ensuring the GSA's representation in important research and review committees.
- Time commitment: The President typically works 30-40 hours a week, including evenings and weekends, with additional travel for advocacy and conferences. This role requires an exceptional work ethic and commitment to the graduate student community.

#### Key Duties:

- Chair GSA standing committees and external lobbying bodies.
- Serve on critical university committees, including the BoG and General Faculties Council.
- Handle the signing of major contracts and agreements after consultation with relevant stakeholders.
- Ensure strong financial oversight, working closely with the Executive Director (ED) on budget matters.
- Represent the GSA at provincial and national levels to advocate for graduate student needs.
- Work closely with other DEOs to maintain a balanced workload and cohesive leadership team.

#### Required Skills & Qualifications:

- Leadership & communication: Exceptional interpersonal and communication skills, with the ability to inspire and manage diverse teams and represent the GSA confidently to the wider university and community.
- Critical thinking, policy analysis & good governance: Proven ability to analyze policy, navigate complex governance systems, and determine the best course of action on key issues affecting graduate students. A track record of fairness and a desire to maintain and improve governance systems should be a focus.
- Strategic planning: The ability to develop long-term strategies and effectively manage the execution of those plans.
- Crisis management: Experience in handling emergencies, including understanding leadership succession and ensuring continuity of operations in times of absence.



- Advocacy: A strong track record in provincial, national, or municipal advocacy, with the ability to influence key stakeholders and represent the GSA's interests externally.
- Work environment: The President must thrive in a fast-paced, collegial, and cooperative environment, working with a variety of stakeholders across the university and beyond.
- Experience: Prior experience with budgeting, negotiations, and governance—ideally at a university level—is highly advantageous.

Time commitment: Expect to dedicate 30–40 hours per week, including participation in meetings, event coordination, strategic planning, and travel for advocacy purposes. You'll need to balance the demands of meetings, correspondence, and leading key initiatives, all while maintaining strong relationships with internal and external partners.

Remuneration: Approximately \$40,000 per year

Other Benefits: Reimbursement for the U-Pass & the GSA Health and Dental plan; Reduced thesis fee for thesis-based students

This role is perfect for a dynamic, passionate leader who thrives in fast-paced environments and is committed to improving the graduate student experience. If you're looking to make a tangible impact on your campus community and beyond, this is the leadership opportunity for you!



## **Vice-President Academic (VP Aca)**

The Advocate for Graduate Students' Academic Success

The Vice-President Academic is the key representative for graduate students on all academic matters. Whether it's policy changes, academic appeals, or ensuring a high-quality learning environment, the VP Academic is the voice that ensures graduate students' academic needs are prioritized within the University.

### **Key Responsibilities:**

- **Academic advocacy:** The VP Academic is responsible for advocating on behalf of graduate students regarding academic issues, including curriculum, teaching, and academic policies. They represent graduate students on various committees and ensure that the graduate student perspective is always considered in decision-making processes.
- **Leadership on academic issues:** The VP Academic may be assigned by the President to lead specific initiatives, including those focused on international graduate students, ensuring all academic areas align with the needs and concerns of grad students.
- **Regular collaboration:** The VP Academic works closely with the President, Executive Director (ED), Executive Coordinator, and other Directly-Elected Officers (DEOs/VPs) to discuss issues, strategize, and ensure alignment with GSA goals. Expect regular weekly meetings to stay connected with the leadership team.
- **Time commitment:** The VP Academic position requires around 20–30 hours per week on average, which includes attending formal meetings, managing emails, participating in strategic problem-solving sessions, and assisting graduate students with academic issues.

### **Key Duties:**

- **Chairs & committees:** As the VP Academic, you'll chair key GSA committees like the FGPS Council Caucus and GFC Caucus. These positions give you a leading role in shaping academic policy and representing grad students in critical discussions.



- University committees: The VP Academic is an active member of numerous University committees that focus on academic issues, including:
  - FGPS Council, GFC (statutory member), GFC Executive Committee, GFC Programs Committee, GFC Council on Student Affairs, and many others!
  - Committees related to academic policy, graduate student attributes, teaching and learning, research policy, and graduate education quality measures.
- Academic policy leadership: You will have a hand in shaping and reviewing policies that affect graduate students' academic lives, from admissions to academic appeals to the integration of new teaching technologies.

#### Qualifications:

- Experience: While not required, experience in university governance and working with university administration is incredibly helpful. This role involves navigating complex academic structures and working with different stakeholders at various levels of the university.
- Skills: The VP Academic should be a strong communicator, an advocate for academic excellence, and skilled at working within a collaborative, fast-paced environment.

Time Commitment: 20-30 hours per week

Remuneration: Approximately \$33,000 per year

Other Benefits: Reimbursement for the U-Pass & the GSA Health and Dental plan; Reduced thesis fee for thesis-based students

The Vice-President Academic is a crucial role for any graduate student who's passionate about improving the academic experience for their peers. It's perfect for someone who loves working with diverse groups, making impactful decisions, and navigating the complexities of academic life to ensure that grad students thrive. If you're ready to make a difference in shaping the future of graduate education, this is the leadership opportunity for you!



## **Vice-President External (VP Ext)**

The Municipal, Provincial & Federal Advocate for Graduate Students

The Vice-President External (VP External) is the ultimate ambassador for graduate students, representing them outside of the university by leading external advocacy efforts at all levels of government. This role is ideal for someone who thrives on networking, building relationships, and advocating for graduate student needs. This role involves travel where you will hone your advocacy efforts with various levels of government!

### **Key Responsibilities:**

- **External Advocacy & Representation:** The VP External is responsible for advocating on behalf of graduate students with external organizations, government bodies, and advocacy groups. You'll work closely with the President to represent graduate students' interests on a municipal, provincial, and even national level.
- **Leadership on external initiatives:** The VP External may be called upon to lead key initiatives, including those focused on international graduate students, ensuring that their voices are heard in global conversations about education and policy.
- **Collaboration:** As a core member of the leadership team, the VP External works closely with the President, Executive Director (ED), Executive Coordinator, and other Directly-Elected Officers (DEOs) to ensure alignment with the GSA's goals and strategies. Weekly meetings keep you connected to the broader vision.
- **Time commitment:** Expect to spend 20–30 hours per week in this role, including evenings and weekends, with a focus on flexibility to attend external meetings and advocacy events. Travel is a required part of the VP External portfolio—along with the President, you'll be representing GSA at conferences and advocacy events that take you beyond campus!

### **Key Duties:**

- **Chairs & committees:** The VP External chairs the GSA Awards Selection Committee, recognizing and celebrating the achievements of the graduate student community.



- University committees: The VP External also plays a crucial role on committees such as the Alumni Council and other University engagement bodies, where you'll help build connections between the GSA and the broader University community.
- Advocacy & travel: Travel, travel, and more travel! Along with the President, the VP External leads the GSA's external advocacy efforts, representing graduate students at conferences, policy discussions, and advocacy events. This means frequent travel to destinations where you can network with like-minded leaders and advocate for key changes that impact graduate students. Whether it's attending national conferences, lobbying government officials, or participating in academic forums, the travel component of this role provides opportunities to grow your network and have a real impact.

#### Qualifications:

- External advocacy experience: While not required, previous experience in external advocacy or representation is a huge asset. The VP External needs to be confident in advocating for graduate student interests in a variety of external settings.
- Knowledge: You'll need to know how the levels of government work in the Canadian system and who best to advocate for graduate students.
- Skills: You'll need excellent communication, negotiation, and networking skills to build relationships with external groups and successfully represent the GSA's goals.

Time Commitment: 20-30 hours per week

Remuneration: Approximately \$33,000 per year

Other Benefits: Reimbursement for the U-Pass & the GSA Health and Dental plan; Reduced thesis fee for thesis-based students





## **Vice-President Student Life (VPSL)**

The Champion for Graduate Student Well-being and Engagement

The Vice-President Student Life (VPSL) is the heart of graduate student engagement and well-being. This role is all about ensuring that graduate students feel supported, connected, and empowered in all aspects of their campus life—whether it's through student groups, residences, or promoting a positive, inclusive campus culture. If you love building community, fostering inclusion, and working closely with diverse student groups, this is the role for you!

### **Key Responsibilities:**

- Graduate student life: The VPSL oversees and advocates for all matters related to graduate student life. From social events to student engagement, the VPSL is the go-to person for ensuring graduate students have a vibrant, supportive experience on campus.
- Student groups & engagement: The VPSL connects with and supports GSA Graduate Student Groups and other student organizations, helping them engage with the GSA and ensuring they're well-supported in their activities. You'll also be the key point of contact for managing risk and coordinating efforts with the Executive Director (ED).
- University Residences: The VPSL works closely with University residence teams to ensure that graduate students have access to appropriate housing and a comfortable living environment. This includes addressing any residence-related issues and advocating for improvements when necessary.
- Proactive outreach: Alongside other Directly-Elected Officers (DEOs) and the ED, the VPSL takes the lead on outreach initiatives to enhance graduate student engagement with the GSA, helping students feel more connected to the community.
- Support for other initiatives: The VPSL also works with the Vice-President Student Services (VPSS) on initiatives led by the Dean of Students and engages with the University administration on matters related to University conduct regulations.



- Time commitment: The VPSL position typically requires 20–30 hours per week, including evenings and weekends. This includes attending meetings, engaging with student groups, responding to emails, and participating in various outreach activities.

#### Key Duties:

- Chairs & committees: The VPSL chairs the GSA Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee and is a Vice-Chair of the GSA Governance Committee. You'll also serve on the GSA Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (FGPS) Council Caucus, ensuring that graduate student needs are reflected in University decisions.
- University committees: The VPSL sits on several important University committees, including:
  - General Faculties Council (GFC) Student Conduct Policy Committee
  - FGPS Council
  - Committees focused on equity, diversity, and inclusion, campus safety and security, and space and construction, including residences and social spaces.
- Collaboration: The VPSL works collaboratively with other members of the GSA team, student groups, and University administration to foster a supportive, inclusive, and engaging student experience for graduate students.

#### Qualifications:

- Relevant experience: Experience with residence matters, graduate student groups, and equity, diversity, and inclusion issues will set you up for success in this role.
- Skills: The VPSL needs to be a strong communicator, community-builder, and advocate who can collaborate effectively with diverse student groups and University stakeholders to make a positive impact on graduate student life.

Time Commitment: 20-30 hours per week

Remuneration: Approximately \$33,000 per year



Other Benefits: Reimbursement for the U-Pass & the GSA Health and Dental plan; Reduced thesis fee for thesis-based students

The Vice-President Student Life role is perfect for someone who is passionate about student engagement, community building, and ensuring a positive graduate student experience on campus. If you enjoy working with people, promoting inclusivity, and having a meaningful impact on students' lives, this is a great leadership opportunity for you!



## **Vice-President Student Services (VPSS)**

The Advocate for Graduate Student Well-being and Support

The Vice-President Student Services (VPSS) is the driving force behind ensuring graduate students have access to the essential services and supports they need to thrive academically and personally. If you're passionate about creating a strong support system for students and negotiating meaningful services and benefits, this role is your chance to make a real difference in the graduate student experience!

Key Responsibilities:

- **Financial oversight & support:** The VPSS is responsible for managing and overseeing the disbursement of important funds provided by the University to GSA members. These funds support initiatives like Academic Travel Grants, Emergency Bursaries, and Child Care Grants, directly helping students when they need it most.
- **Negotiating key programs:** The VPSS negotiates and manages essential programs such as the Graduate Student Assistance Program (GSAP) and the Graduate Student Support Fund, working closely with the University to ensure that these programs meet graduate students' needs.
- **Health & wellness:** The VPSS oversees critical services like the GSA Health and Dental Plan, GSAP, and the U-Pass program, ensuring that graduate students have access to affordable health care and transportation options that make life easier and more affordable.
- **Coordination with university services:** The VPSS works closely with the University's student services providers, such as athletics and recreation, career services, and academic support services, to ensure that these services are tailored to meet graduate students' specific needs. This includes ensuring that non-instructional mandatory fees are effectively allocated and used to provide relevant, timely services.
- **New services & negotiations:** In collaboration with the GSA Board, the VPSS is responsible for negotiating new fee-based services for graduate students and overseeing the implementation of these services.
- **Time Commitment:** The VPSS role involves approximately 20–30 hours per week, as you'll be working on various meetings, correspondence, and outreach efforts.



#### Key Duties:

- Chairs & committees: The VPSS serves as Vice-Chair of the GSA Awards Selection Committee and the GSA Budget and Finance Committee, playing a key role in decision-making processes related to funding and resource allocation.
- University committees: The VPSS is involved in a number of important University committees, including:
  - Committees related to the U-Pass and the Campus Food Bank.
  - Committees related to health and wellness, mental health, and physical activity and wellness.
  - Committees focused on University student services and athletics, ensuring graduate students' needs are heard and addressed.
- Collaborative advocacy: As VPSS, you'll have the opportunity to be involved in collaborative initiatives that affect graduate students' daily lives, including health, wellness, and student services.

#### Qualifications:

- Student services experience: Previous experience in student services or a related field is highly advantageous, as you'll need to understand the intricacies of student support systems to effectively represent graduate students' needs.

Time Commitment: 20-30 hours per week

Remuneration: Approximately \$33,000 per year

Other Benefits: Reimbursement for the U-Pass & the GSA Health and Dental plan; Reduced thesis fee for thesis-based students

The Vice-President Student Services (VPSS) role is perfect for someone who is committed to enhancing the well-being of graduate students and advocating for the services that make their academic and personal lives easier. If you're someone who enjoys managing important programs, working



collaboratively with University services, and ensuring students get the support they deserve, this is a great opportunity to make a lasting impact!



## **Vice-President Indigenous Relations (VPIR)**

The Advocate for Indigenous Graduate Students and Ally for Indigenous Communities

The Vice-President Indigenous Relations (VPIR) is a pivotal leadership position within the GSA, responsible for advocating for Indigenous graduate students both on-campus and within broader external spaces. If you are passionate about Indigenous issues, student advocacy, and building respectful relationships with Indigenous communities, this role provides a unique opportunity to be a strong voice for Indigenous students and help shape policies that support their academic and personal success.

### **Key Responsibilities:**

- **Advocacy for Indigenous graduate students:** The VPIR is responsible for advocating for the needs, interests, and rights of Indigenous graduate students, ensuring they have equitable access to academic, cultural, and financial support.
- **University engagement:** The VPIR works closely with University administration, faculty, and staff to ensure that Indigenous graduate students are adequately supported. This includes working on initiatives related to academic success, mental health and wellness, and addressing any barriers faced by Indigenous students in graduate education.
- **External advocacy and representation:** The VPIR plays an important role in external advocacy by representing Indigenous graduate students at a broader municipal, provincial, and national level, working with various Indigenous organizations, student bodies, and government entities to support policy changes that benefit Indigenous communities in higher education.
- **Cultural awareness & educational initiatives:** The VPIR leads efforts to increase cultural awareness on campus, fostering respectful, inclusive spaces for Indigenous students and communities. This includes advocating for initiatives that support Indigenous knowledge, cultural practices, and reconciliation within the University environment.
- **Consultation and collaboration:** The VPIR regularly consults with Indigenous student groups, leaders, and organizations, ensuring that the perspectives and concerns of Indigenous students are heard and addressed in GSA initiatives. Collaboration with the GSA Board is essential in



building inclusive strategies and programs that support the Indigenous graduate student experience.

#### Committees & Leadership Roles:

- University committees: The VPIR serves as a representative for Indigenous graduate students on relevant University committees that address issues such as academic support, student wellness, and equity, diversity, and inclusion. This ensures that Indigenous perspectives are integrated into University policies and services.
- GSA representation: The VPIR is a member of the GSA Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee and may serve on other committees related to student services, student conduct, and graduate student success.
- Cultural & outreach initiatives: The VPIR leads efforts to increase outreach to Indigenous communities, facilitating the creation of culturally relevant student services and programming that helps Indigenous graduate students thrive at the University.

#### Time Commitment:

- The VPIR role typically requires 20-30 hours per week, with a combination of meetings, consultations, and outreach. This includes attending formal and informal meetings, working on strategic initiatives, responding to emails, and participating in advocacy opportunities (travel may be involved, particularly for outreach or networking with external Indigenous organizations).
- As this role requires close involvement with Indigenous communities, there may be additional hours spent on community-building activities, attending cultural events, and engaging in reconciliation-focused initiatives.

#### Qualifications:

- Experience with Indigenous issues: A strong understanding of Indigenous cultures, worldviews, and the challenges faced by Indigenous graduate students is essential. Experience in Indigenous advocacy or community engagement is an asset.





- Relationship-building skills: The VPIR must have a demonstrated ability to build meaningful, respectful relationships with Indigenous students, communities, and organizations.
- Commitment to Reconciliation: A commitment to reconciliation, cultural awareness, and promoting Indigenous inclusion is a critical aspect of the role.
- Eligibility: The VPIR is open to Indigenous graduate students only.

Time Commitment: 20-30 hours per week

Remuneration: Approximately \$33,000 per year

Other Benefits: Reimbursement for the U-Pass & the GSA Health and Dental plan; Reduced thesis fee for thesis-based students

The Vice-President Indigenous Relations (VPIR) role offers an exciting opportunity for those committed to Indigenous advocacy, cultural inclusivity, and student leadership. If you are passionate about ensuring Indigenous graduate students feel seen, heard, and supported within both the University and the broader community, this is your chance to make a significant difference.



## **Associate Vice-President Labour (AVPL)**

The Advocate for Academically-Employed Graduate Students and Union Leadership

The Associate Vice-President Labour (AVPL) plays a crucial leadership role in advocating for academically-employed graduate students, leading the GSA's work as a union, and ensuring that their rights and interests are upheld. If you're passionate about labour rights, collective bargaining, and supporting your peers, this is an incredible opportunity to make a direct impact on graduate student employment conditions!

### **Key Responsibilities:**

- **Union leadership & Collective bargaining:** The AVPL is the chief negotiator for the Collective Agreement (CA) with the University, representing all academically employed graduate students. The AVPL also negotiates other labour-related issues, ensuring the CA is interpreted fairly and that the University adheres to its terms.
- **Dispute resolution & support:** The AVPL provides guidance to academically employed graduate students on issues related to the CA, helping resolve disputes informally where appropriate. This includes answering questions on compliance and assisting with grievance resolution.
- **Grievances & labour relations:** When disputes can't be resolved informally, the AVPL works closely with the GSA Labour Relations Committee (GSA LRC) and the Executive Director (ED) to address grievances in accordance with the CA, ensuring the rights of academically employed graduate students are protected.
- **Collaboration with the GSA LRC:** The AVPL collaborates with the GSA LRC on specific labour-related projects, shaping the GSA's approach to labour issues and ensuring that policies reflect the best interests of graduate students.

### **Committees & Leadership Roles:**

- **Chair & leader:** The AVPL chairs the GSA LRC and leads the GSA Negotiating Team, playing a pivotal role in collective bargaining and labour negotiations.



- University committees: The AVPL is a non-voting member of the GSA Budget and Finance Committee and participates in any University boards or committees related to workplace health and safety.

#### Time Commitment:

- The AVPL role requires 20–30 hours per week, including attending meetings, reading and responding to emails, travel for advocacy and conferences, and engaging in strategic discussions. It's a flexible role that allows for meaningful engagement with labour issues while balancing other GSA responsibilities.

#### Qualifications:

- Background in Labour or Law: A background in law, business, or labour issues is an advantage, as it equips you to navigate complex negotiations and workplace laws.
- Experience with Collective Bargaining: Previous experience on the GSA LRC or in collective bargaining is highly beneficial.
- Eligibility: The AVPL must be an academically-employed graduate student at the time of election or have been academically employed within the preceding academic year, ensuring direct knowledge of the graduate student experience.

Time Commitment: 20-30 hours per week

Remuneration: Approximately \$33,000 per year

Other Benefits: Reimbursement for the U-Pass & the GSA Health and Dental plan; Reduced thesis fee for thesis-based students

The Associate Vice-President Labour (AVPL) role is ideal for someone who is passionate about supporting the rights of graduate students, especially those in academic employment. If you're ready to lead collective bargaining efforts, manage labour relations, and advocate for fair workplace policies, this is the opportunity to make a lasting impact on your graduate student community.



## **GSA Councillors-At-Large (CAL)**

Why become a CAL?

- Representation of and advocacy for the betterment of graduate student experiences! Be a strong voice for your fellow students.
- Have your say and make a real difference in your university community.
- Gain some leadership, advocacy and volunteer experience, network with peers, and have a direct influence on the policies that affect the graduate student experience.

Position Description:

- Councillors-At-Large (CALs) are GSA members elected annually to sit on GSA Council as voting members - their terms run from May 1st to April 30th of the following year
- Their duties include attending all GSA Council meetings (once monthly - please see meeting list on our website here: <https://gsa-ualberta.ca/get-involved/governance/gsa-council/>) and lend their voice to Council to advocate for graduate students
- They are required to ensure that the GSA Office and GSA Council Speaker are kept up to date with their names, departmental addresses and contact information
- If a CAL cannot attend a meeting, they must let the GSA Office and Speaker know. If they do not do so and miss either two consecutive meetings or three in total without contacting the GSA, they may be replaced.