



Graduate Students' Association
University of Alberta

GSA101



What is the GSA?

- ◆ The *Post-Secondary Learning Act (PSLA)* establishes GSA as a separate corporate entity from the University; seat on the Board of Governors; negotiates a Collective Agreement (represents all graduate students but also acts as a union for academically-employed graduate students)
- ◆ Represents graduate students to the University and government; different from FGSR



What is the GSA?

- ◆ Is student-led and professionally managed with its own lawyers, auditor, chartered accountant, management, and staff
- ◆ Established in 1959, and incorporated in the *PSLA* as of 1972, formerly housed in the North Power Plant and moved to Triffo Hall in February 2008, contributing \$188K to renovations
- ◆ Administers an operating budget of over \$1 million and negotiates for over \$960,000 in funding from the U of A, which is disbursed annually in grants, awards, and bursaries



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2023-2024 GSA Directly-Elected Officers

President

Bishoi Aziz, PhD Student, Medicine and Dentistry

VP Academic

Rija Kamran, PhD Student, Rehabilitation Science

VP External

Hamid Hassani, PhD Student, Physics

VP Student Life

Tiffany Kung, PhD Student, Psychology

VP Student Services

Haseeb Arshad, PhD Student, Electrical and Computer Engineering

Associate VP Labour

Muneeb Masood Raja, PhD Student, Electrical and Computer Engineering



GSA Directly-Elected Officers

- ◆ Each position is elected independently and Directly-Elected Officers are directly accountable to the graduate student body (via GSA Council) that elected them
- ◆ The President serves as the leader of the team but does not possess absolute authority to direct that team (see above)



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2022-2023 GSA Council-Elected Officers

Speaker

Farhan Khalid, Masters Student, Chemical and Materials Engineering

Deputy Speaker

Camila Rodrigues de Freitas, Masters Student, Agricultural, Food and Nutritional Science

Chief Returning Officer

Sophie Shi, Phd Student, Chemical and Materials Engineering

Deputy Chief Returning Officer

Vacant

Senator

Ola Mabrouk, PhD Student, Chemistry



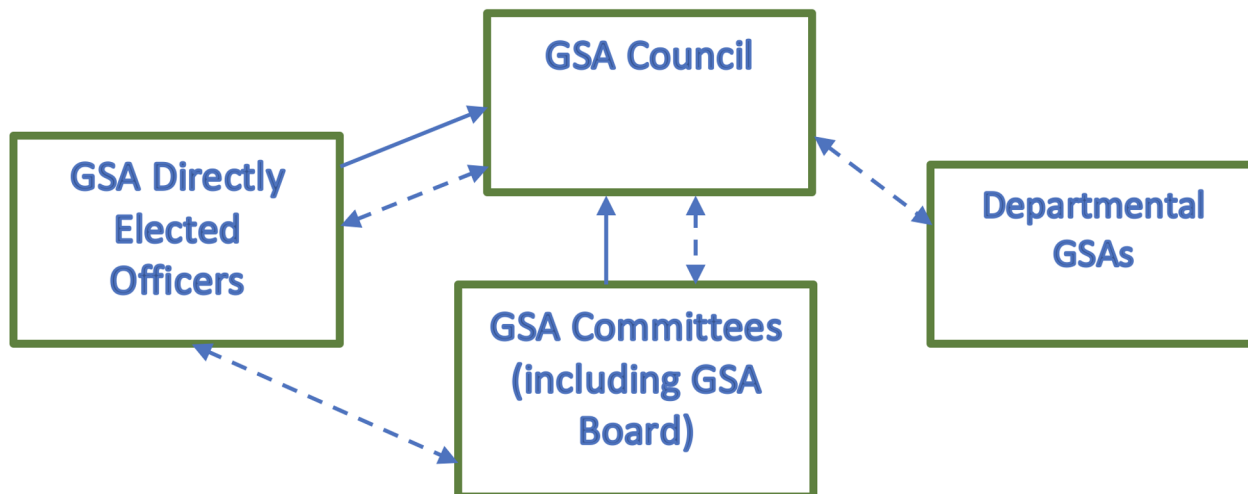
GSA Governance Structure

All graduate students are members of the GSA and, ultimately, all of the groups below are accountable to them

Legend:

— = *accountable to*

- - - = *works in concert with*





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GSA Standing Committees

The work of the GSA is supported by the efforts of a number of committees. There are two types of GSA committees:

Standing Committees – Standing Committees advise GSA Council and the GSA Board on policy relevant to their mandates, and have full authority to take actions set out within those mandates. Power is delegated to them by GSA Council (and they report back to GSA Council) and GSA Council elects their members.

Ad Hoc Committees and Subcommittees – GSA Council may from time to time create ad hoc committees to address issues that are outside of the purview of the standing committees of the GSA. Likewise, the GSA Board and Standing Committees may, at their discretion, form sub-committees deemed relevant to the execution of their mandates.



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GSA Standing Committees

The GSA has the following Standing Committees:

- ◆ GSA Board
- ◆ GSA Appeals and Complaints Board
- ◆ GSA Awards Selection Committee
- ◆ GSA Budget and Finance Committee
- ◆ GSA Elections and Referenda Committee
- ◆ GSA Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee
- ◆ GSA Governance Committee
- ◆ GSA Labour Relations Committee
- ◆ GSA Nominating Committee



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GSA Staff and Administrative Professionals

- ◆ Executive Director, Lewie Moodley (BSc, MBA)
- ◆ Associate Director, Erika Heiberg (BA, MA)
- ◆ The GSA also has three full-time staff members and a chartered accountant and Financial Manager who work part-time



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GSA Staff

The GSA staff are represented by NASA and deal with aspects of the following:

- ◆ Support for graduate student groups
- ◆ Scheduling some 1,300 meetings a year for the Directly-Elected Officers
- ◆ Electing graduate students to over a cumulative 170+ GSA and University committees through the GSA Nominating Committee
- ◆ Processing some 1,000 grants, bursaries, and awards annually
- ◆ Addressing about phone, email, and in-person inquiries and advising requests at the GSA front desk each year
- ◆ Drafting and distributing 50-plus newsletters and bulletins each year
- ◆ Planning events and orientations
- ◆ Maintaining over 2,000 paper and electronic files



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GSA Advocacy to the University

- ◆ Seat on the Board of Governors and most Board of Governors standing committees
- ◆ Representation on General Faculties Council and the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research Council and their standing committees
- ◆ Representation on the Senate and Alumni Council
- ◆ Regular meetings with the Provost and Vice-President (Academic), the Dean of the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, and the Dean of Students
- ◆ Strategic meetings with the President and various Vice-Presidents



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GSA External Advocacy

In common with public interest groups and other student associations, the GSA is a non-partisan organization

◆ *What does that mean?*

- ◆ The GSA advocates on matters related to its mandate in the *PSLA*: to “provide for the administration of graduate student affairs at the university, including the development and management of graduate student committees, the development and enforcement of rules relating to graduate student affairs and the promotion of the general welfare of the graduate students consistent with the purposes of the university.” The GSA is also mandated to serve as “the official channel of communication between the graduate students of a university and the board.”



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GSA External Advocacy

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- ◆ *What does that look like in practice?*
 - ◆ The GSA does not involve itself, whether directly or indirectly, in supporting or opposing a political party or candidate for public office – it focuses, rather, on supporting or opposing issues related to post-secondary graduate education.
 - ◆ The GSA needs to represent the broad spectrum of views held by its members and needs to work in as cooperative a fashion as possible with government, regardless of party affiliation.



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GSA External Advocacy

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- ◆ *What does that look like in practice?*
 - ◆ The GSA has a mandate to focus on issues within the post-secondary sector that affect graduate students and it advocates on these issues regardless of the party affiliation of the government in power.
 - ◆ The GSA supports or opposes government actions related to post-secondary education but focuses on issues, not parties and ideologies.



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GSA External Advocacy

National Student Groups

- ◆ Canadian Alliance of Student Associations (CASA)
- ◆ Federal Graduate Student Societies Alliance (formed after GU15 and then ThinkGrad dissolved)
- ◆ Canadian Federation of Students (CFS)

Provincial Student Groups

- ◆ Alberta Graduate Provincial Advocacy Council (ab-GPAC)
- ◆ Alberta Students' Executive Council (ASEC) (undergrad)
- ◆ Council of Alberta University Students (CAUS) (undergrad)

Other Groups

- ◆ Edmonton Student Alliance (ESA)
- ◆ Public Interest Alberta (PIA)
- ◆ Canadian Association for Graduate Studies (CAGS)



GSA Services

- ◆ TDIMM Home and Auto Insurance
- ◆ GSA Health and Dental Plan
- ◆ U-PASS (Arc Card)
- ◆ Graduate Student Assistance Program (GSAP)
- ◆ Grants, Bursaries, and Awards
- ◆ Collective Agreement and Advice
- ◆ Graduate Student Ombudsperson
- ◆ Corporate membership with Kids and Company daycare
- ◆ Subsidies to the Academic Success Centre, the Career Centre, and the Campus Food Bank (founded by the GSA)



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TDIMM Home and Auto Insurance

- ◆ As a member of the GSA, you can benefit from special privileges, including preferred group rates
- ◆ Home and car insurance may also be available for international students while in Canada
- ◆ For more details, visit melochemonnex.com/ualbertagsa or call (toll-free) 1-866-258-3036





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GSA Health and Dental Plan

- ◆ Including health, dental, and vision, travel insurance, diagnostic services, ambulance services, registered dietician services, and more
- ◆ Visit www.studentcare.ca for a complete list of benefits and details
- ◆ All full-time registered graduate students are automatically enrolled and part-time students can choose to opt-in only during a specific change-of-coverage period (partners and dependents can also enroll)
- ◆ Visit the office in SUB 6-14 (6th floor) or call (toll-free) 1-866-795-4430



STUDENTCARE

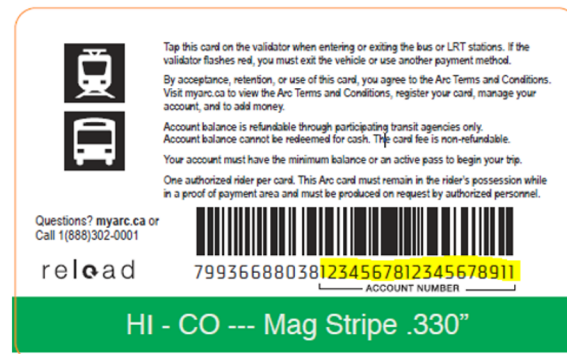


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U-Pass

- ◆ The Universal Pass for public transit during Fall Term, Winter Term, and Spring/Summer
- ◆ Via the Arc card (available through InfoLink)
- ◆ Unlimited access to regular Edmonton, Fort Saskatchewan, Leduc, Spruce Grove, St. Albert, and Strathcona County Transit Systems Automatically included in your non-instructional fees
- ◆ For each of 2022-2023 Fall, Winter, and Spring/Summer Terms, the cost is \$180
- ◆ www.upass.ualberta.ca





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Graduate Student Assistance Program

- ◆ First in Canada for grad students; same plan as faculty; supported financially in part by U of A
- ◆ Lifestyle and Specialty Counselling Services: legal advisory services, family mediation, etc
- ◆ Workplace Services: workplace advice line, cultural transition support, etc
- ◆ Career Counselling Services: career development, shift worker support services, etc
- ◆ Health Smart Coaching Services: nutrition, smoking cessation, 12 weeks to wellness, etc
- ◆ Many other additional services, visit www.homewoodhealth.com



GSA Grants and Bursaries

GSA Academic Travel Grants Summary

- ◆ Up to \$500 for Masters students during the degree program
- ◆ Up to \$1000 for Doctoral students during the degree program (max. \$500 per fiscal year (1 April to 31 March))

GSA Child Care Grants Summary

- ◆ For children under 18 years of age
- ◆ Max. \$1000 per child per fiscal year (1 April to 31 March)

www.gsa.ualberta.ca



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GSA Grants and Bursaries

GSA Emergency Bursaries Summary

- ◆ A non-repayable bursary of up to \$4000
- ◆ Complete the online application and then make an appointment with the Student Financial Services Office

GSA Graduate Student Group Grants Summary

- ◆ Funding for seminars, guest lectures, colloquia, start-up funds, and more

www.gsa.ualberta.ca



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Collective Agreement Governing Graduate Assistantships

Teaching Assistants, Principal Instructors, Research Assistants, and Research Assistantship Fellowships

- ◆ Minimum stipend rates
- ◆ Letters of Appointment
- ◆ Graduate student leave (eg parental leave)
- ◆ Assistantship Time Use Guideline template
- ◆ Health and safety
- ◆ Dispute resolution

Associate GSA VP Labour,
Muneed Masood Raja
gsa.vplabour@ualberta.ca

GSA Associate Director,
Erika Heiberg
gsaad@ualberta.ca



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Graduate Student Ombudsperson

- ◆ Negotiated by the GSA in 2010 from part-time to full-time
- ◆ For academic, discipline, supervisor concerns, or other University issues
- ◆ Contact gradomb@ualberta.ca or visit www.ombudservice.ualberta.ca



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Get Involved

- ◆ Vote in our General Election, run for office, get involved with your departmental graduate students' association, or serve on one of 170+ GSA or University committees
- ◆ Contact gsa.nomcomm@ualberta.ca for information on committee vacancies
- ◆ Visit us at www.gsa.ualberta.ca or 1-49 Triffo Hall
- ◆ Follow us on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram