

GSA Council Meeting AGENDA
Monday, January 14, 2013, 6 pm, **Telus 1-34**

A light, vegetarian DINNER will be served at 5:15 pm
Kristin Foster from Studentcare will present a Health & Dental 101 from 5:15- 6 pm

OPEN SESSION

1. Approval of the 14 January 2013 Agenda
2. Approval of the Minutes from the 10 December 2012 GSA Council meeting
Attachments:
Minutes from the 10 December 2012 GSA Council meeting
3. Changes in Council Membership
 - i. Introduction of new Councillors (*If you are new to Council, please let us know it is your first meeting*)
 - ii. Farewell to Departing Councillors (*If this is your last Council meeting, or if your last Council meeting is approaching, please let us know*)

**Attached
Numbered Pages**

2.0-2.14

Presentations and Councillor Announcements

4. Student perspectives on the future of the University of Alberta presentation.
President Ashlyn Bernier will introduce the speaker and present the item.
Guest: Mr. Doug Goss (Chair, Board of Governors). Confirmed.
Presentation will begin at 6:00pm.
5. University of Alberta FGSR restructuring.
President Ashlyn Bernier will introduce the speakers and present the item.
Guests: Dr. Martin Ferguson-Pell (Acting Provost and VP Academic), Dr. Mazi Shirvani (Dean of Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research), and Dr. Catherine Swindlehurst (Special Advisor to the Provost). Confirmed.
Presentation will begin at 6:30pm.
6. Studentcare presentation: Health & Dental Update
President Ashlyn Bernier will introduce the speaker and present the item.
Guest: Kristin Foster (Studentcare representative). Confirmed.
Presentation will begin at 7:00pm.
7. Councillor Announcements

Reports

Please note that all reports are normally sent to Council the Friday before the meeting to ensure that Councillors receive the most up to date information.

Prepared by CM Borstad

C:\Documents and Settings\Receptionist\My Documents\Google Drive\320 - Council\January 2013\GSA Council 14-Jan-2013 Meeting AGENDA.docx

8. President
 - i. President's Report **(to be distributed)**
 - ii. GSA Board **(to be distributed)**
 - iii. Budget and Finance Committee **(to be distributed)**
 - iv. Governance Committee **(to be distributed)**
 - v. Nominating Committee **(to be distributed)**

9. Vice-President Academic
 - i. Vice-President Academic's Report **(to be distributed)**

10. Vice-President Student Services
 - i. Vice-President Student Services' Report **(to be distributed)**
 - ii. Student Affairs Advisory Committee (joint chair: Vice-President Student Life) **(no meetings this reporting period)**

11. Vice-President Student Life
 - i. Vice-President Student Life's Report **(to be distributed)**
 - ii. Awards Selection Committee **(no meetings this reporting period)**

12. Vice-President Labour
 - i. Vice-President Labour's Report **(to be distributed)**
 - ii. Negotiating Committee **(to be distributed)**
 - iii. Labour Relations Committee **(to be distributed)**

13. Senator
 - i. Senator's Report **(to be distributed)**

14. Speaker
 - i. Speaker's Report **(to be distributed)**

15. Chief Returning Officer
 - i. Chief Returning Officer's Report **(to be distributed)**
 - ii. Elections and Referenda Committee **(to be distributed)**

16. GSA Management
 - i. Executive Director's Report **(to be distributed)**

Action Items, Elections, Appointments, Special Business

17. Update on the Strategic Work Plan: Cover Letter
Attachments:
Cover letter from President Ashlyn Bernier **(attached)**

17.0-17.2

18. Elections (**none at this time**)

Question Period

19. Written Questions

20. Oral Questions

Adjournment

GSA Council Meeting AGENDA
Monday, January 14, 2013, 6 pm, Telus 1-34

A light, vegetarian DINNER will be served at 5:00 pm
Kristin Foster from Studentcare will present a Health & Dental 101 from 5:15-6 pm

OPEN SESSION

1. Approval of the 14 January 2013 Agenda
2. Approval of the Minutes from the 10 December 2012 GSA Council meeting

Minutes from the 10 December 2012 GSA Council meeting were previously distributed with the First Mailing on 04 January 2013

3. Changes in Council Membership
 - i. Introduction of new Councillors (*If you are new to Council, please let us know it is your first meeting*)
 - ii. Farewell to Departing Councillors (*If this is your last Council meeting, or if your last Council meeting is approaching, please let us know*)

Presentations and Councillor Announcements

4. Student perspectives on the future of the University of Alberta
President Ashlyn Bernier will introduce the speaker and present the item.
Guest: Mr. Doug Goss (Chair, Board of Governors).
Presentation will begin after the 6:00pm roll call.
5. Studentcare presentation: Health & Dental update
President Ashlyn Bernier will introduce the speaker and present the item.
Guest: Kristin Foster (Studentcare representative).
Presentation will begin at approximately 6:30pm.
6. Councillor Announcements

Reports

Please note that all reports are normally sent to Council the Friday before the meeting to ensure that Councillors receive the most up to date information.

7. President
 - i. President's Report (**attached; oral report in closed session**)
 - ii. GSA Board (**attached**)
 - iii. Budget and Finance Committee (**attached**)
 - iv. Governance Committee (**no meetings this reporting period**)

**Attached
Numbered Pages**

7.0 – 7.1

7.2 - 7.3

7.4

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> v. Nominating Committee (attached) 	<p>7.5 - 7.6</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8. Vice-President Academic <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Vice-President Academic's Report (attached) 	<p>8.0</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9. Vice-President Student Services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Vice-President Student Services' Report (attached) ii. Student Affairs Advisory Committee (joint chair: Vice-President Student Life) (no meetings this reporting period) 	<p>9.0</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10. Vice-President Student Life <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Vice-President Student Life's Report (attached) ii. Awards Selection Committee (no meetings this reporting period) 	<p>10.0</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 11. Vice-President Labour <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Vice-President Labour's Report (attached) ii. Negotiating Committee (oral report in closed session) iii. Labour Relations Committee (no meetings this reporting period) 	<p>11.0</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 12. Senator <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Senator's Report (no report at this time) 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 13. Speaker <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Speaker's Report (no report at this time) 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 14. Chief Returning Officer <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Chief Returning Officer's Report (attached) ii. Elections and Referenda Committee (attached) 	<p>14.0 14.1 – 14.2</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 15. GSA Management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Executive Director's Report (attached) 	<p>15.0 – 15.1</p>

Action Items, Elections, Appointments, Special Business

- 16. Strategic Work Plan: Report from President Ashlyn Bernier
Letter from President Ashlyn Bernier **(previously distributed during First Mailing on 04 January 2013)**
- 17. Elections **(none at this time)**

Question Period

18. Written Questions (**none to date**)

19. Oral Questions

Adjournment

**Meeting Minutes
10 December 2012
GSA Council Meeting**

[Note: All materials referred to in these Minutes are stored in hard copy in the Official File, as well as electronically]

The meeting was called to order at 6:02 pm.

Approval of Agenda

1. Approval of the 10 December 2012 Agenda

Members had before them the 10 December 2012 Consolidated Agenda, which had been distributed on 07 December 2012.

The Agenda was approved by unanimous consent.

Approval of Minutes

2. Minutes

- i. **Minutes from the 19 November 2012 GSA Council meeting**
Members had before them the 19 November 2012 GSA Council Minutes, which had been distributed on 07 December 2012.

The Minutes were approved by unanimous consent.

Changes in Council Membership

3. Changes in Council Membership

- i. **Introduction of new Councillors**
This was the first meeting for two new Councillors: Economics and EAS.
- ii. **Farewell to departing Councillors**
None.

Presentations and Councillor Announcements

4. University of Alberta International: Individual Award Funding for Education Abroad and Introduction to UGo.

President Ashlyn Bernier introduced the guests, Kate Jennings (Director, Education Abroad) and Dr. Zhi Jones (Associate Director, Education Abroad), who then presented the item. No material was distributed in advance. A summary handout was provided (see copy appended).

During the presentation, Kate Jennings (Director, Education Abroad):

- Provided some background about the study abroad program. It had been brought to UAI's attention that graduate students may not be aware of funding opportunities. She subsequently met with GSA reps and was made aware that grad students are also not informed about UGo.
- Provided a snapshot of the types of programs offered. These programs offer a significant number of opportunities for students to travel outside of Canada via partner institutions, centrally- and student-led programs, and volunteer programs.
- UAI is fortunate to have centrally-administered funding which supports one out of every two students who apply. They are also running a number of new initiatives (E3 in Berlin, open to undergraduate and graduate students). UAI is also responsible for internships, which is usually how graduate students become involved with travel funding, especially with the Smithsonian Institution.

The floor was then turned over to Dr. Zhi Jones (Associate Director, Education Abroad) who discussed funding opportunities for graduate students:

- UAI has more than \$500,000 available in funding. There are three types of awards for which graduate students are eligible:
- The Education Abroad Individual Award with funding ranging from \$750-\$3700 based upon the program's duration and for a maximum of up to 8 months.
- Up to ten Endowed Awards, generally for undergraduate students, although graduate students can apply in order to participate in exchange programs or participate in a specific research program in Ireland.
- The Edmonton Consular Ball Scholarship for senior undergraduates and graduates conducting research projects in spring or summer. There are 3 awards valued at \$3000 and the application deadline is 14-January-2013. The major criteria include completion of at least one term of studies at the University of Alberta and a minimum GPA of 2.7.
- The deadline for applications for the German Academic Exchange Academy (DAAD) has passed but this program also offers study scholarships and research grants to graduate students.

- In addition to UAI, other travel funding sources include FGSR, SFAIC, UBEF, and the Government of Alberta. The UAI does not manage these awards but does link to the websites for these agencies.
- Students can also browse the Comprehensive Award Directory on the UAI website for these other funding options.
- Zhi Jones also talked about the UGo Off-campus Travel Registry. This provides assistance to those U of A students who are traveling abroad. Students register and store their information online with UAI which, in conjunction with Protective Services, offers assistance and protection during emergencies. The online registration takes only 3 to 5 minutes to complete.
- Dr. Zhi Jones encouraged GSA councillors to share this information with their fellow students.

Following the presentation, councillors asked a number of questions:

Billal Sultani (Laboratory Medicine and Pathology) asked: If you apply for a program and get accepted after your program is complete, would you be eligible to accept the award?

Kate Jennings (Director, Education Abroad) responded: This depends on your status and the type of award. In some situations, the award would more than likely be limited.

Nathan Andrews (VPA) asked: For the Consular Ball Scholarship, I know you ask for a specific project, but could this be part of an ongoing MA /PHD thesis?

Dr. Zhi Jones (Associate Director, Education Abroad) responded: It could be both.

Emine Hande Tuna (Philosophy): About some of the awards, as far as I know when you get the award and you go to Germany you still need to pay tuition at the University of Alberta. Do you offer funding or grants that cover tuition?

Dr. Zhi Jones (Associate Director, Education Abroad) responded: The DAAD funding is considered external, so students can apply for University of Alberta individual awards or for other sources of funding, as applicable.

Emine Hande Tuna (Philosophy) supplementary: What are the other applicable funding sources?

Dr. Zhi Jones (Associate Director, Education Abroad) responded: It depends on what you are doing. If you are staying for a full year, you could potentially get 8 months of funding from the U of A.

Kate Jennings (Director, Education Abroad): There is also the updated award directory and there are dozens of awards that may be applicable to this. It depends again on your research and what you would be doing in Germany. It's estimated that millions of dollars go unfunded because the awards do not get enough applicants. Do take a look if there are research areas that you could be pursuing.

Colin More (Physics) asked: Are there any strings attached to the UAI funding? Is the funding intended for conferences, courses, research?

Dr. Zhi Jones (Associate Director, Education Abroad) responded: There are some requirements but students are not required to provide receipts, so it's pretty flexible. It would be nice if you provided a student report upon your return, especially if your travel was successful.

Kate Jennings (Director, Education Abroad): External awards may have requirements but UAI does not.

Dr. Zhi Jones (Associate Director, Education Abroad) further responded: For individual awards, it is stipulated that students complete their program, especially in Spring/Summer, but I will need to get back to you on this.

There were no further questions.

5. PAW 101: Briefing and Update on Physical Activity and Wellness Centre (PAW).

President Ashlyn Bernier passed the introduction of the guests to Naseeb Adnan (VPSS). Naseeb introduced Ben Louie (University Architect), Doug Ramsey (External Architect with Group 2) and Kyle Braithwaite (Project Manager). They presented a briefing and update on PAW, approved by GSA referendum in 2010. The PAW centre is expected to be finished in 2014. It will provide graduate students with better and more modern fitness facilities and will also have a graduate student lounge. This project has been discussed for a long time and involves a steering committee with representation from the GSA, SU, Office of the Dean of Students, and the Faculty of Physical Education and Recreation, among others. No material was distributed in advance.

During the presentation, Kyle Braithwaite (Project Manager) noted:

- PAW has been in the works for a number of years and he has, for the past two years, been involved with working through governance issues, etc. His current role involves the construction of the centre, which has started recently. The

facility is slated to open in September 2014, after which some backfill renovation projects will be undertaken.

Doug Ramsey (External Architect with Group 2) provided an overview of the PAW building design via a Powerpoint presentation:

- PAW Centre will connect four buildings together, with the southeastern corner of 114 Street and 87 Avenue to act as a gateway in to campus. A concourse running between the Van Vliet building, University Hall, and out towards the Students' Union Building will link 87 Avenue and SUB together.
- He showed a number of artist renderings of the exterior, including glazed glass windows that allow individuals to see both out and in.
- He showed a couple of plans to orient Council to the building layout including the fitness centre, climbing walls, and concourse level and showed how these connect to the existing structures.
- Images were shown of what the climbing wall will look like inside "the cone" (a major feature of the centre). This feature will double the amount of climbing wall available for use.
- Adjacent to the Varsity gym are two locales that will serve as commercial space. The Students' Union is looking at leasing this space to vendors that will provide healthy food options. The other locale will be a community or teaching kitchen, although they are still working with the SU and GSA to identify its exact function.
- There will be a student lounge and GSA lounge space.
- Aim was to increase accessibility to the centre by making it barrier-free with many ramps connecting all the levels of the building.
- Living walls are planned for inside the concourse area, allowing for circulation space. The Varsity gym area will be opened up for intramural and class use, as the Varsity gym has moved to South Campus.
- 2 large multipurpose rooms were part of the diagram.

Kyle Braithwaite (Project Manager) spoke about sustainability elements for the PAW Centre:

- Aiming for Green Globe building efficiency status.
- He outlined a number of energy management program initiatives that may be included in the building, such as using renewable energy sources and heat recovery. Some of these initiatives may be used for demonstration and teaching programs.

The floor was then opened to questions.

Zhen Li (CAL) asked: How much will the sustainability options dent operating costs in the future?

Kyle Braithwaite (Project Manager) responded: The target is a 15-year payback. We look at the capital costs and the savings and then we will decide what to implement based on the preliminary reviews. We have shown that we are able to pursue a number of these initiatives and that, for example, fuel cell use will produce more energy than the building actually needs. The 15-year payback is looking quite well.

Roy Coulthard (Senator) asked: A question came up at the Senate about whether the climbing wall has the requirements to allow it to be used for climbing competitions.

Doug Ramsey (External Architect with Group 2) responded: Yes.

Evan Berry (Biochemistry) asked : A previous presentation stated that the PAW building would be targeting the LEED Silver qualifications. Are the Green Globe qualifications comparable to the LEEDs?

Kyle Braithwaite (Project Manager) responded: Yes, we are targeting four out of five globes with the Green Globe system, which borders the LEED Silver/Gold standards and elevates us. Our commitment to do this is shown with \$4-6 million in capital contributions.

Doug Ramsey (External Architect with Group 2) responded: LEED standards are really embedded in how firms and the University work. Lots of our specifications already have LEED Silver and Gold criteria built into them.

Ashlyn Bernier (President) asked: Some councillors may not be aware that the GSA and SU are financial partners in this project. Can you speak to this?

Kyle Braithwaite (Project Manager) responded: A \$30 million contribution was made on behalf of students. This works out to a \$29 fee per term. The 2014 opening date is critical to us as we have to turn the facility over to the trigger fee collection from students. The money is borrowed, so term fees will be collected to pay this debt.

Susan Cake (Sociology) asked: Did the considerations about building accessibility move beyond physical accessibility? Have you considered accessibility for transgendered individuals, for example?

Doug Ramsey (External Architect with Group 2) responded: We did, and part of the project will be phased once the main building is complete. When locker room development occurs there will be spaces provided for transgendered and other students.

Susan Cake (Sociology) supplementary: What about for people who are pregnant?

Doug Ramsey (External Architect with Group 2) responded: There will be family change rooms, and student needs were considered. We are building upon the facilities that are in place.

Nicole McLeod (Physical Education and Recreation) asked: I'm curious about the seeing-in and seeing-out with the windows. It seems fishbowl-like. Are all the rooms like this?

Doug Ramsey (External Architect with Group 2) responded: We went through a design process with the notion of having visibility as to what goes on inside the fitness centre. The glass wall is pulled back from street and there is a slope downwards so individuals would have to go right up to the glass wall to be able see through; this is one way we've mitigated it. One thing the Dean was particularly interested in was opening up physical education to the rest of campus. There was a lot of discussion relating to sensibilities and sensitivities once the building becomes an active centre. Many spaces will have frosted glass for coverage.

Kyle Braithwaite (Project Manager) responded: There will be also some machines and equipment with views out and others that are tucked away.

Jean-David Jutras (Oncology) asked: What is the size of the new centre relative to the current gym building?

Doug Ramsey (External Architect with Group 2) responded: The PAW fitness centre will be twice the size, about 24,000 sq. ft.

No further questions were asked.

6. Councillor Announcements

There was no material before members.

Ashlyn Bernier (President) announced that Nathan Andrews (VP Academic) passed his candidacy exam today, and she would also like to give a warm welcome to the newest member of the GSA staff, Courtney a.k.a. "Courts."

7. President

i. **President's Report:**

Members had before them a written report, which was distributed on 07 December 2012. In addition, Ashlyn Bernier (President) noted:

- In regards to the GSA Health and Dental Plan, there have been many questions and feedback regarding the change in providers, particularly the differences in formulary coverage between SunLife and Desjardins. The GSA has passed these concerns and complaints on to the manager at Studentcare, who has promptly and effectively dealt with them. Ashlyn asks the Council to continue to pass on comments to the elected officials and they will forward them on to Studentcare.
- At every GSA Council there will be an update about the proposed FGSR reorganization. Since last Council not much has changed from what we previously heard from Acting Provost and VP Academic Martin Ferguson-Pell and FGSR Dean Mazi Shirvani. An FGSR subcommittee with five graduate student representatives on it is looking at quality measures. We have been taking questions and concerns to this subcommittee and will continue to do so. Ashlyn encourages Council to send their concerns to the elected officials to pass on.
- With the Early Call for Talent, 13 people have expressed interest in running for a GSA position, which is a sign of health of the organization. GSA Executive Director Ellen Shoek has run a few GSA and Governance 101 sessions to provide background information. The official call will be sent out early in the new year.
- There have been ten meetings with various member of the University administration about the GSA's Strategic Work Plan 2012/13. The response has been positive and there will be a progress update in the new year.
- The GSA Budget and Finance Committee is meeting regularly and is continuing to prepare the next budget. Council will be kept informed.

ii. **GSA Board**

Members had before them a written report, which had been distributed on 07 December 2012. The report stood as submitted.

iii. **Budget and Finance Committee**

Members had before them a written report, which had been distributed on 07 December 2012. The report stood as submitted.

iv. Governance Committee

It was noted on the Agenda that no meetings were needed for the GSA Governance Committee that month.

v. Nominating Committee

Members had before them a written report, which had been distributed on 07 December 2012. The report stood as submitted.

8. Vice-President Academic

i. Vice-President Academic's Report

Members had before them a written report, which had been distributed on 07 December 2012.

In addition, Nathan Andrews (VP Academic) noted the following:

- In regards to changes to candidacy for doctoral students, nothing has been proposed yet and suggestions are going to the policy review committee of the FGSR. Questions and concerns will be taken to these meetings by the VPA, please email if you have any to suggest.
- Meetings with Dr. Naomi Krogman, Provost Fellow for Graduate Student and Post-doctoral Fellow Supervision, have involved much discussion about experiences, challenges, services, issues, etc. The VPA would like to have the Dr. Krogman come and talk to the Council meeting in February in order to solicit feedback for the report, which is due at the end of May.

9. Vice-President Student Services

i. Vice-President Student Services' Report

Members had before them a written report, which had been distributed on 07 December 2012.

In addition, Naseeb Adnan (VP Student Services) noted the following:

- UPASS: Last month we reached an agreement regarding UPASS prices with the City. Initially, the City had proposed a fee of \$170 per term, but agreed to fees of \$147.50 per term in Year 1, with an additional \$7.50 increase each year after that. We are currently waiting on approval of this agreement from all three city councils.
- Naseeb would like feedback from the SACIE International Graduate Student Committee and would like to know what priority information international graduate students would like to receive when considering applying to the University of Alberta. He asked to receive the feedback via email.

ii. Student Affairs Advisory Committee (joint chair: Vice-President Student Life)

It was noted on the Agenda that no meetings were needed for the Student Affairs Advisory Committee that month.

10. Vice-President Student Life

i. Vice-President Student Life's Report

Members had before them a written report, which had been distributed on 07 December 2012.

In addition, Huimin Zhong (VP Student Life) noted the following:

- Mental health programs: Graduate students have access to GSAP, which includes mental health counseling services and online diagnostic services that will help students determine what services they should try to access.
- The Student Group Granting Committee has received 38 applications from student groups. Huimin encourages graduate student groups who apply for these grants to keep in mind that there are two more deadlines for January and March. Students can also apply for GSA awards, the Green and Gold Professional Development Grants, and Student Engagement grants.

ii. Awards Selection Committee

Members were directed to Item 18.

11. Vice-President Labour

i. Vice-President Labour's Report

Members had before them a written report, which had been distributed on 07 December 2012. In addition, Brent Epperson (VP Labour) noted:

- Board Health Safety and Environment Committee: Brent presented about safety at the GSA and how we handle risk management. The BHSC members were impressed and provided a number of recommendations, which are being followed up.
- During a meeting with FGSR Dean Mazi Shirvani, the possibility of a GSA representative attending the Western Deans Conference in January 2013 in Victoria was discussed, with the FGSR offering funding for GSA attendees. The VPL is looking into this, as well as how many representatives would attend, but nothing has been confirmed so far. Dr. Shirvani emphasized that the importance of the GSA attending this conference.

- The VPL and FGSR Dean also discussed Collective Agreement and the labour issues in Engineering and across campus (including improving knowledge and dealing with enforcement).

**Brent Epperson (VP Labour) MOVED to combine Item 16 into Item 11.
Ashlyn Bernier (President) SECONDED.
CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**Brent Epperson (VP Labour) MOVED to move into CLOSED SESSION.
Ashlyn Bernier (President) SECONDED.
CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**Nathan Andrews (VP Academic) MOVED to move out of closed session.
Asif Siddiqui (CAL) SECONDED.
CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

ii. Negotiating Committee

Members were directed to Item 16. This item was discussed in CLOSED SESSION as part of Item 11.i.

iii. Labour Relations Committee

It was noted on the Agenda that no meetings were needed for the Labour Relations Committee that month.

12. Senator

i. Senator's Report

No report was required at that time. Roy attended the Senate Plenary on December 6 and 7, 2012 and complimented the excellent presentation about Senate history from GSA ED, Ellen Schoeck, noting that the GSA continues to make good friends. At the Plenary, Acting Provost and VP Academic Martin Ferguson-Pell had presented changes to FGSR similar to what Council heard last month. The Senate does remain interested in this issue.

13. Speaker

i. Speaker's Report

No report was required at this time.

14. Chief Returning Officer

i. Chief Returning Officer's Report

Members had before them a written report, which had been distributed on 07 December 2012. The report stood as submitted.

ii. **Elections and Referenda Committee**

It was noted on the Agenda that the Elections and Referenda Committee would be meeting shortly to review policy.

15. GSA Management

i. **Executive Director's Report**

Members had before them a written report, which had been distributed on 07 December 2012.

In addition, Ellen Schoeck (GSA Executive Director) noted the following:

- Budget building is occurring via the GSA BFC, with pieces in place to keep the GSA strong. There will be two dates for the Budget 101 presentation in January. Everyone is welcome, and these will provide good context for when the budget is presented in March.
- The ED also encourages the Councillors to check out the unit review of the University of British Columbia FGSR.

Action Items, Elections, Appointments, Special Business

16. Update on Collective Agreement Negotiations

Presented by Brent Epperson (VP Labour). This was merged with the VPL's report (see Item 11).

17. Proposed Revisions to AEGS Funding Programs

Presented by Naseeb Adnan (VP Student Services). **Naseeb Adnan (VP Student Services)**

MOVED that the GSA Council approve, on the recommendation of the GSA Board, proposed revisions to the *Grant Application Policy and Information*, as outlined in the attached documents, effective January 1, 2013. Nathan Andrews (VP Academic) SECONDED.

Naseeb Adnan (VP Student Services) spoke to the Motion: The GSA receives funding from UofA called AEGS and these funds are distributed in form of the Professional Development Grant (PDG), Child Care Subsidy (CCS), Emergency Bursary (EB), and student group grants (SGG). Feedback has led to proposing changes to the policies surrounding allocation of these funds. For example, changing PDG to a travel award rather than a grant, moving from a paper to an online application system, removing the requirement to submit receipts, and increasing the maximum allocation per student to provide 100% of the shortfall/application amount. Also, by

moving to an online system, we have the assurance that we will be able to move to direct deposit for all programs. For the CCS, applicants would no longer need to provide documentation of application for the Alberta child care subsidy and the maximum subsidy amount would increase from \$500 per child to \$1000 per child and the maximum cap would be removed. CCS is not being utilized most because of these requirements. The LG and SGG would be merged since most groups apply for both anyway and it will eliminate the need for two applications. Finally, for the EB, the major suggestion is to waive the maximum amount allocated under certain exceptional circumstances. According to feedback we have received, we sometimes may need to increase the amount allocated. The VPSS provided an example of an exceptional circumstance under which the maximum would be waived.

Floor opened to debate. No debate.

Vote: All in favour. CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Ellen Schoeck (GSA Executive Director) noted that GSA is receiving incredible support from the University in regards to this initiative.

18. GSA Awards: Proposed Changes to the Graduate Student Teaching Award and to the Graduate Student Teaching Assistant Awards

Presented by Huimin Zhong (VP Student Life). **Huimin Zhong (VP Student Life) MOVED that GSA Council approve the proposed revisions to the *Graduate Student Teaching Award* and the *Graduate Student Teaching Assistant Awards*, as outlined in the attached three-column document. Naseeb Adnan (VP Student Services) SECONDED.**

Huimin Zhong (VP Student Life) spoke to the Motion: A review of GSA awards was undertaken by the previous GSA VPSL, Hillary Sparkes. She recommended that the criteria for adjudication change from four to three, with the removal of the criterion about the number and diversity of courses a candidate teaches. The GSA does not want to penalize instructors because we feel that teaching quality does not depend on the number of courses an individual instructs. ASC and GSAB have no concerns and recommend these revisions to Council.

Floor opened to debate. No debate.

Vote: All in favour. CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

19. CLE Subcommittee on Attributes and Competencies Report Draft.

Prepared by K Biittner and C Thomas for GSA Council ## Jan 2012

Presented by Nathan Andrews (VP Academic). Members had before them a CLE SAC Report Draft (dated November 21, 2012), distributed for information only. In the last two reports, Nathan had noted that this draft report would be forthcoming. The report was well received at CLE but the question remains of what to do with it. There is no specific consensus regarding implementation. This subcommittee will continue to meet to finalize and will present the report to Administration.

20. Elections

None.

21. Special Business

None.

Question Period

22. Written Questions

Two written questions were received by email prior to the meeting:

These are some written questions that other graduate students in my faculty have about the restructuring of FGSR. Based on the discussion in last month's meeting, there are some questions that weren't addressed in enough detail:

Question 1: What is meant by "quality" and how will quality be determined for graduate students? Will graduate students be allowed input on these measures that will influence our current experience at the U of A?

Question 2: So is this changed intended to help those 20% who get jobs in academia land them, or for those 80% who get jobs outside of academia in the private sector in preparing them to land a job in the appropriate industry?

Ashlyn Bernier (President) responded to Question 1: We have an opportunity to be a part of the conversation regarding quality. There is a FGSR subcommittee looking at the development of these quality measures and that will be our platform. Graduate students have five out of 20 seats, which is slightly more than most representatives have on the FGSR Council as a whole. The committee is set but has not met yet. We will keep Council updated as the subcommittee

Prepared by K Biittner and C Thomas for GSA Council ## Jan 2012

progresses and we will also be inviting Acting Provost and VP Academic Martin Ferguson-Pell and FGSR Dean Mazi Shirvani back in January. That will be another opportunity to question them.

In response to Question 2, Ashlyn Bernier (President) remarked: It is difficult for the GSA to give answers to some of these questions even though there are a lot of questions. We can only provide the information we are given and we don't feel in a position at this point to answer this question. What we hope to do is take these questions and ask them when we have the opportunity. From what we understand, the reorganization is for the benefit of all students. We would like to suggest how councillors can be more involved in this discussion. They can come to the GFC as a guest and have their questions addressed through members of GFC (such as the GSA representatives). It has also been proposed to the senior administrators, FGSR Dean Mazi Shirvani, Acting Provost and VP Academic Martin Ferguson-Pell, and Special Advisor to the Provost Catherine Swindlehurst, that they host some town hall events for all stakeholders. They are looking at holding at least two or three town halls in the new year. Finally, keep asking us questions. Email them as we will have opportunities to ask these questions of the senior administrators.

23. Oral Questions

No questions.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:37pm.

**GSA President
Report to Council**

To: Council Colleagues
From: Ashlyn Bernier
Date: January 9, 2013

Dear Colleagues,

Happy New Year! I'm very much looking forward to 2013 – I will finally be graduating, wrapping up an excellent year at the GSA, doing some travelling, and finally getting a “grown-up” job! I wish you all success and happiness in the coming year.

Some key reflections and priorities since my last report:

- Just prior to the holiday break, the GSA elected officials concluded a few additional meetings regarding the GSA's 2012/2013 **Strategic Work Plan**. As you remember from my last report, since distributing the GSA's 2012/2013 SWP, we have met with several members of the University Administration to discuss common goals, and devise strategies to implement aspects of the plan of mutual interest. We look forward to continuing to work with FGSR Dean Shirvani and the Associate Deans on implementation of this plan.
- The GSA continues to work very closely with FGSR and Catherine Swindlehurst on the **proposed “reorganization” of FGSR**. As Dr. Swindlehurst undergoes an extensive consultation process, we will provide whatever input and assistance we can. This matter is a top priority for the GSA and we look forward to continue working with FGSR and the Provost's Office to ensure the best interests of the graduate students of this University are the driving force for this initiative.
- Along with our excellent Financial and Management teams, I have been working on **preparing our budget for 2013/2014**, along with a five-year business plan for the GSA. We believe the plan we have developed will solidify the GSA's financial position, and allow the GSA to continue to grow and develop into a robust and effective organization.
- **Online application for GSA grants** are nearly ready to go live. This represents a huge step for the GSA, and many hours of work from our IT, privacy, and communications teams.
- Since launching our **“early call for talent”** before the holiday break we have had several students interested in running for positions come forward. We have embarked on a series of social and training events with these students in order to give them a better sense of the roles, responsibilities, and rewards associated with holding a GSA elected official position. The GSA will be assembling an excellent team of elected officials for the coming year and continues to develop as a robust organization!

Until next time,

Sincerely,



The following is a list of meetings I attended between December 6, 2012 – January 9, 2013:

December 6	Meeting with university architect
December 6	Graduate student expectations meeting
December 10	GSA Budget and Finance Committee
December 10	GSA Council
December 11	Negotiations with Administration
December 12	Budget meeting
December 12	Governance meeting
December 12	Meeting with the Chair of the Board of Governors
December 13	Meeting with Dean FGSR
December 13	Meeting with VP University Relations
December 13	BoG Christmas Dinner
December 14	Board of Governors
December 14	AGC meeting
December 19	GSA Board
January 2	GSA Board
January 2	GSA Orientation
January 8	Meeting with SU VP External
January 8	Meeting with AVPr Academic
January 9	GSA Board
January 9	GFC Executive

**GSA Board
Report to Council**

To: Council Colleagues

From: Ellen Schoeck, Executive Director and Coordinator of the GSA Board; Heather Hogg, Director of Operations; and Courtney Thomas, Associate Director.

Date: January 09, 2013

The Board reports regularly to Council by listing its agenda items, motions/agreements, and main items of discussion. Motions of Agenda approval and approval of the Minutes are not included unless there were amendments made. Closed session items are not minuted. The President, Vice-Presidents, Director of Operations, Financial Manager, and we will be happy to answer any questions or provide more information at the Council meeting.

December 05, 2012 GSA Board Meeting

Main Agenda Items: Future of Post-Secondary Education in Alberta [now Ignite] Conference, Western Deans, Childcare Subsidy funds, labour issues, Skillsets, Student Success Centre, and AGC Bylaws.

Motions and Agreements:

AB **MOVED** that graduate students who applied and received a \$500/child CCS between April 1- December 31, 2012 receive a top up of \$500/child, and this is approved on the understanding that the proposed CCS policy reforms are approved by Council in December 2012 and are effective January 1, 2013 providing \$1,000/child for eligible applicants. Any remaining CCS balance as of March 31, 2013 will be rolled over to the next fiscal year. **Seconded** by NsA. **CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

December 12, 2012 GSA Board Meeting

Main Agenda Items: Studentcare survey, Studentcare change of coverage report, Skillsets, FGSR re-organization, and PAW Centre Financing.

Motions and Agreements:

Board members **AGREED** that the four Studentcare survey questions would focus on: percentage of income spent on housing; transit trip usage; sufficiency of funding package; and consequences of insufficient funding.

Board Members **AGREED** that Desjardins should make room for 100-day supplies for the students who complained and any students who might add complaints in future.

AB **MOVED** that the GSA Board **AGREE IN PRINCIPLE** to moving to a 20 year amortization period [for the PAW Centre], and that the GSA Board **AGREE IN PRINCIPLE** to locking in the interest rate associated with the loan acquired from the ACFA (Alberta Capital Finance Authority) needed to construct the PAW Centre. Seconded by NsA. **CARRIED.**

December 19, 2012 GSA Board Meeting

Main Agenda Items: President's visit to Waterloo and U of T, Addition to the GSA Strategic Work Plan, referendum process for organizations external to the GSA, end of year wrap-up, winter orientation, Studentcare survey, PAW Centre multipurpose rooms, APIRG presentation, and Collective Agreement re-write.

Motions and Agreements:

Board Members supported the addition to the GSA SWP and **AGREED** that a previously drafted letter to CASA would be sent and the GSA would continue to be mindful of the internal health of the organization and critical timing points.

AB **MOVED** that the GSA Board approve the document titled "Process for Organizations External to the GSA to Request a Referendum," with the suggested clarification of #5 and the insertion of a reference to existing policy in #6, effective immediately upon approval. NsA Seconded. **CARRIED**.

Board Members **AGREED** to hold an informal meeting on Jan 2 2013 to discuss potential survey questions arising from their portfolios.

Board Members **AGREED** to invite APIRG to February Council to introduce themselves and discuss their activities as an information piece only.

January 02, 2013 GSA Board Meeting

Main Agenda Items: Grants and fillable forms update, GSA SWP Update to Council, Studentcare survey, financial report timing, and SACIE graduate committee request.

Motions and Agreements:

AB **MOVED** that the AEGS grant application forms be placed online as is, and possible form revisions return to GSAB. Seconded by NsA. **CARRIED**.

Board Members **AGREED** that the survey questions would be rewritten with a two sentence introduction to the GSA and its services, Question #2 about UPass using the ETS trip definition and DP and NsA's suggestions, Question #5 with the same wording as the CGPSS survey, Question #6 as is, and Question #8 with a second part regarding additional supports.

Board Members **AGREED** that financial presentations to Council would be discussed at the next BFC meeting.

**GSA Budget and Finance Committee
Report to Council**

To: Council Colleagues
From: Ashlyn Bernier, President and Chair of BFC
Date: January 2, 2013

Dear Colleagues,

The GSA BFC met on December 10, 2012 to discuss several key elements of the upcoming budget, including the Strategic Initiatives Fund. At the January 16 and January 23 meetings, the GSA BFC will discuss Budget Principles and Policies and the 2013-2014 budget.

I would be happy to report further orally.

Respectfully,
Ashlyn Bernier, GSA President

**GSA Nominating Committee (NoC)
Report to Council**

To: Council Colleagues
From: Lacey Fleming, Vice-Chair of the NoC
Date: January 8, 2013

Dear Council Members,

This report from the GSA Nominating Committee is a summary of discussion/decisions the NoC has made since its last report together with a list of all vacancies filled.

The By-law governing the NoC is in Part VII, #11. Policy governing NoC begins on page 26 of the *GSA Policy Manual*.

As provided for in its terms of reference, the GSA Nominating Committee (NoC) has been conducting business via e-mail.

EARLY CALL FOR TALENT

According to the GSA Policy Manual, “the NoC will actively seek out potential candidates for all GSA Executive and Officer positions” (Nominating 6.4). ***The NoC has been very busy with early call for talent, which is a priority in the GSA Strategic Workplan for 2012-2013.*** Early call has received a significant response this year, with **13 students** expressing interest in the directly-elected officer positions!

On **November 6, 2012** the NoC sent out a call through the GSA Newsletter and the GSA Website to students interested in the directly-elected officer positions (GSA President, GSA VP Labour, GSA VP Academic, GSA VP Student Services, and GSA VP Student Life). A **second call** was sent on **January 3, 2013** to advertise these positions to any students just entering their graduate programs. **4 new students responded to this second early call bulletin.**

A detailed **training program** began in December 2012, and is continuing into January 2013. The program includes: individual meetings with the NoC Vice-Chair, Executive Director and interested students, tours of the GSA office, and sessions on: Governance 101, GSA 101, Strategic Plan 2012-2013, GSA Services, GSA Board and Consistent Messaging and Information Flow, and Budget 101 and Audit Basics.

We are also working to catch up with those students that were on vacation in December!

DELEGATES SELECTED BY THE GSA PRESIDENT

For external committees that call for the GSA President, a Vice-President or Delegate in their Terms of Reference, the GSA President, in consultation with the GSA Nominating Committee, is able to select delegates to serve on these committees. **No delegates have been selected since the last Council meeting.**

BODIES EXTERNAL TO THE GSA

As noted above, Council has delegated to the NoC the responsibility of filling positions on all committees external to the GSA. Normally, all vacancies are advertised. According to the Policy

Manual, “advertising may be waived in instances where, in the NoC’s view, it is urgent to fill a vacancy.”

1) Human Rights Lecture Selection Subcommittee

This subcommittee committee meets once a year to select the Human Rights Lectureships. One graduate student sits on this subcommittee. **Laura Sohnle (MBA)** was elected to serve on this committee.

2) Shell Enhanced Learning Fund Selection Committee

In consultation with the chair of the Shell Enhanced Learning Fund Selection Committee, they are interested in having **Joe Corrigan (PhD Educational Policy Studies)** serve a **second term** on this committee, to which he was first elected by the GSA NoC in December 2011. Joe will bring crucial institutional knowledge and continuity to the Shell Enhanced Learning Fund Selection process (which administers up to \$98,000 per year).

3) ONECard Student Advisory Group

Since she will be defending her dissertation in January 2013, Katie Waterhouse (PhD, Anthropology) has resigned as the graduate student at-large representative on the ONECard Student Advisory Group. Many thanks to Katie for her service on this advisory group since 2010! The GSA NoC has advertised for this vacancy and will elect another graduate student-at large representative shortly.

**GSA Vice-President Academic
Report to Council**

To: Council Colleagues

From: Ashlyn Bernier (President) on behalf of Nathan Andrews (VPAC)

Date: January 9, 2013

Dear Councillors,

With the support and cooperation of the other elected officials and with my approval, Nathan has spent most of the past month on a research trip in Ghana. Therefore, he has not attended many meetings since last Council, with the exceptions listed below. His time away coincided with a quiet period in terms of meetings and only one meeting required attendance by another elected official on Nathan's behalf.

The GSA hopes that his research has gone well and we look forward to hearing about his travels.

Sincerely,

Ashlyn Bernier, GSA President
on behalf of
Nathan Andrews, GSA VP Academic

The following is a list of meetings attended between December 6, 2012 – January 4, 2013:

December 10	GSA Council
December 11	Text-Matching Software Working Group
December 11	Negotiations meeting with Administration
December 12	Governance meeting
December 12	GSA Board

**Vice-President Student Services
Report to Council**

To: Council Colleagues
From: Naseeb Adnan, VP Student Services
Date: January 9, 2013

Dear Colleagues,

First, I would like to wish you all Happy New Year! I hope this will be a year of success and happiness for all of you.

In the last Council, I informed you about the **U Pass** negotiation results. The negotiated price was subject to approval of respective city councils. The good news is all three municipal councils - City of Edmonton, City of St. Albert, and Strathcona County approved the negotiated price that the associations and transit providers agreed on. Now the GSA, along with other student associations, is working with the transit authorities to finalize the terms and conditions of the contract, i.e., opt-outs, exemptions. The CRO and the GSA office have also started looking into referendum process to approve the U Pass contract.

In the fall 2012, the U Pass uptake rate was 96%, which was the same as last year. Winter distribution started last month and no significant concerns were received from students so far. In January, the Infolink booth will be open on Saturdays to accommodate distributions.

The GSA office was still receiving some concerns regarding the **health and dental plan** because of the change in provider from Sun Life to Desjardins. I forwarded them to the Director of Studentcare who dealt with the issues quickly. I would like to encourage Council to pass on any such concerns or comments to the GSA office and we can forward them to Studentcare.

I also attended a negotiation meeting, which will be discussed by VP Labour in detail.

Sincerely,

Naseeb Adnan

The following is a list of meetings I attended between December 6, 2012 – January 9, 2013:

December 6	PAW financing meeting
December 7	Transport Demand Management Study Committee
December 10	GSA Council
December 11	Negotiations meeting with Administration
December 12	GSA Board
December 19	GSA Board
December 20	U-Pass administration meeting
January 2	GSA Board

**GSA Vice-President Student Life
Report to Council**

To: Council Colleagues
From: Huimin Zhong, VP Student Life
Date: January 9, 2013

Dear Council Members,

A belated Happy New Year to all of you! I hope you had a wonderful holiday with some rest, and are ready for the new term! I had a great holiday enjoying skiing out-of-town. I would like to bring some items to your attention for this month.

The **Winter Term orientations** went well. Besides the GSA orientation on January 2nd, I also presented about the GSA at the UAI international student orientation on January 4th. We encourage all new students to participate in these orientations to get information about their studies, work, and life here. We would love to participate in more departmental orientations in order to talk to new graduate students. If you would like more information, you are always welcome to contact the GSA office.

Other than winter orientations, the GSA will also be participating in an upcoming activity organized by the Office of the Dean of Students called "**Take Back the Term.**" It is a one day re-orientation in February where students can get useful information once they have adjusted to graduate student life. Some new graduate students may encounter specific problems after they have started their program and this is a great opportunity for them to ask for information, advice, and to seek help. The GSA office will keep you informed of the details for this activity once they are available.

The **GSA Awards competition** is going to start soon! Any graduate student with remarkable teaching, research, and/or community service records is welcome to apply for these awards. All the application forms and detailed information about the competition will appear on the GSA website in the next while. Please be advised that interested graduate students should submit their applications as early as possible, since late or incomplete applications will not be considered.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the above items, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Huimin Zhong

The following is a list of meetings I attended between December 6, 2012 – January 4, 2013:

December 10	GSA Council
December 11	Negotiations Meeting with Administration
December 12	GSA Board
December 19	GSA Board
December 20	GFC Facilities Development Committee
January 2	GSA Board
January 4	UAI Orientation

**GSA Vice-President Labour
Report to Council**

To: Council Colleagues
From: Brent Epperson, VP Labour
Date: January 9, 2013

Dear Councillors,

During the last reporting period, I have been deeply involved in negotiations related to collective bargaining and labour issues. I will report orally on these in closed session.

Best regards,

Brent Epperson

The following is a list of meetings I attended between December 6 – Jan 9, 2012:

December 6	Conference Planning Meeting
December 6	Appeals Regulation Group
December 10	GSA Council
December 11	Labour Meeting
December 11	Negotiations Meeting with Administration
December 11	AGC Event
December 12	GSA Board
December 13	Meeting with Dean FGSR
December 13	BoG Christmas Dinner
December 14	AGC Meeting
December 14	AGC Meeting
December 18	Governance Stakeholder's Working Group
December 18	Labour Meeting
December 19	Collective Agreement Re-Write Meeting
December 19	GSA Board
December 20	Meeting with Student

**Chief Returning Officer
Report to Council**

To: Council Colleagues
From: Daniel Prins, Chief Returning Officer
Date: January 9, 2013

Dear Council Colleagues,

The 2013 election cycle is upon us. The Elections & Referenda Committee has met to discuss plans for the timeline for this year's election, as laid out in our policies and bylaws.

After tonight's Council Meeting, nominations will officially open and nomination packages will become available. A more complete timeline for this year's election will be available for any interested candidates. As well, the ERC is moving forward with at least one referendum question to be conducted in conjunction with this year's elections.

I am excited for the election cycle to officially begin, and confident that with the strong support of members of ERC and the GSA office staff, this year's election will run smoothly.

As always, feel free to contact me with any questions.

Best,

Daniel Prins, Chief Returning Officer

**Elections and Referenda Committee
Report to Council**

To: Council Colleagues
From: Daniel Prins, Chief Returning Officer
Date: January 10, 2013

Dear Council Colleagues,

At its January 3, 2013 meeting, the ERC main agenda items were:

- Elections bylaw and policy review.
- Proposed workplan for the 2013 General Election.
- Detailed review of the general nomination form for 2013, bio and resume form for 2013, Youtube election video waiver for 2013, and Nomination Information Packages for the Directly-Elected Officer positions (President, VP Labour, VP Academic, VP Student Services, and VP Student Life).
- Review of the electronic voting system.

Summary of Agreements from the **draft** January 3, 2013 ERC Meeting Minutes:

Members **AGREED** that any early or alternate exceptions for voting can be handled on a case by case basis at the discretion of the CRO.

Members **AGREED** 1 hour advanced notice electronically to the CRO with a sufficient reason will be adequate prior notification for missing the all-candidates meeting. **[Note, on January 9, 2013 the CRO amended this to read: "one hour advanced notice electronically to the CRO with a sufficient reason will be adequate prior notification for missing the all-candidates meeting. If any candidate misses the ACM due to exceptional circumstances, such as a last-minute emergency, any consequences may be waived at the discretion of the CRO."**

Members **AGREED** the CRO will draw names from a hat in the presence of a neutral witness to establish the random order of candidates.

Members **AGREED** in the event of a tie where the candidate to be eliminated is to be determined at random, the CRO will draw a name from a hat in the presence of two neutral witnesses. The name drawn from the hat will be the candidate that is eliminated **[note: the office has been asked to research this]**.

Members **AGREED** to make the following changes to the 2013 General Election Timeline: Polling will end February 28, 2013, will aim for unofficial results between February 28 and March 1, 2013, the deadline to release official results will be March 7th, 2013, and results will be reported to the March GSA Council.

Members **AGREED** to add on the general nomination form the option for students to declare whether they have an individual acting as an official agent.

Members **AGREED** to add to the waiver that the videos may be shown at a GSA Council meeting.

14.2

Members **AGREED** to have the nomination form read “I (printed name) (signature) have informed my supervisor I am running for office and they are aware of the time commitment.

Members **AGREED** to add to the nomination form a statement for candidates to sign that will read “by signing below, I am attesting to the fact that I am in good academic standing.”

Best,

Daniel Prins, Chief Returning Officer

**GSA Executive Director
Report to Council**

To: GSA Council
From: Ellen Schoeck, Executive Director
Date: January 10, 2013

A Viable and Robust GSA [Note that this report was discussed at the January 8, 2013 GSAB]

Dear All,

My original contract with the GSA states that “Schoeck’s immediate focus is to be a change-agent to turn the GSA around, and to establish processes across all sectors of the GSA’s operation to ensure that it is a viable and robust organization over time.”

Looking Back

June-October 2010: Triage and Risk Assessment

I began with the GSA as a consultant in June 2010, when the University was considering letting GSA dissolve. In this timeframe, the name of the game was triage and risk assessment: three VPs trespassed from the building; GM resigned; all staff left or leaving; GSA close to an unfair labour practice suit. I reported fully to Council in summer 2010. In October I started as Executive Director.

October 2010-May 2012: Recovery and Rebuilding

Three interim VPs were “hired” and later successfully ran for office. Staff positions were benchmarked and filled. The then President and Speaker embarked on elimination from bylaw and policy of the most antiquated and risky policies. I proposed a Nominating Committee (including an ‘early call for talent’) and a Strategic Plan. We established a filing system and shared drive, hired full-time IT, and geared HR to advance the Plan. The President and VPs excelled in their positions and focused on advocacy, leaving operations to the ED, to whom staff/managers reported; ie the functions of elected officials, management and staff were finally clear. For a while, I was your only manager, until I hired Heather Hogg.

The first modern budget was passed under then President Roy Coulthard’s team, with the first of three planned fee increases passed unanimously by Council; the second followed in 2012. The AEGS CA was renegotiated. An accountant and financial manager were hired. There was an intense focus on re-building relationships and resurrecting the GSA’s reputation. Human Resources and Financial Services were enlisted as partners. Heather and I renegotiated the staff Collective Agreement with NASA.

May 2012-present: Rebuilding Infrastructure and Excelling in Advocacy and Service

The five current directly-elected officials took office in May 2012 for a complete turnover of five while the GSA was still rebuilding. Optimally, there would have been a complete rebuild before operations so intensified. But by all measures the GSA is now in excellent shape. This is reflected not only in your report to Council on progress with the SWP, but also by a talented, dedicated and cross-trained staff; the number of committees grad students now serve on (from 40 to 170+), the number of grad students coming forward in the early call (12 so far); excellent 360 degree relationships; good governance; good office culture; and the bench strength afforded by Heather, Courtney, Shirley and Dorte.

Looking Forward

Attached are what I see as the “pillars” on which a viable and robust GSA stands. Most are in place. In this next year the GSA should “gel.” Vigilance is the watchword to ensure no backsliding.

Ellen

TEN PILLARS: Foundations of an Excellent, Stable GSA and where we stand

1. **PSLA OBSERVANCE:** govern/manage the GSA; advocate and represent; negotiate CA with BoG; understand your fiduciary duty; the welfare of grad students always uppermost. SOLID FOR 2.5YEARS.
2. **LEADERSHIP AT ALL LEVELS:** committed, trained, supported; seek out the talent. BE VIGILANT.
3. **STRATEGIC WORK PLAN:** rolling roadmap driven by human/financial resources; vision and mission key. SOLID FOR 2.5 YEARS.
4. **SOUND GOVERNANCE:** Bylaw as backbone, Policy as muscle, practice that is nimble; Council, Board, NoC, and key committees all geared to the Plan. MAJOR WORK TO COME ON BYLAW/POLICY TO MODERNIZE AND STREAMLINE.
5. **CORPORATE INFRASTRUCTURE:** insurance, IT, HR, legal, Triffo lease, liability, risk; plus major services including GSAP, PAW, UPass. GOOD, NEEDS TWEAKING.
6. **COMPLIANCE:** observe the laws that govern you, from PSLA to PIPPA; know your MOUs; respect the third-party info sharing and confidentiality agreement. GOOD, BUT A COUPLE FINAL PUSHES NEEDED.
7. **HUMAN RESOURCES:** value your people, as they make the GSA enterprise work daily. GOOD BUT CONTINUED WORK NEEDED ON SOME ESSENTIALS, INCLUDING SOME HOT-SPOT STRESSES.
8. **FINANCIAL RESOURCES:** harness to the SWP (including vision and mission); shepherd grad fees well. THE LAST OF THE FEE INCREASES WILL BE IN THE 2013-14 BUDGET; RENEGOTIATED AGREEMENT WITH FINANCIAL SERVICES RE FEE PAYMENT SCHEDULE NEEDED.
9. **REPUTATION:** it is made like a clamshell: thin layer by thin layer, and easily broken. BE VIGILANT.
10. **RELATIONSHIPS:** the glue, safety net, and ignition; both trustful and watchful. BE VIGILANT.

Overall, we are in very good shape.

Ellen Schoeck

GSA Council 14 Jan 2013

ITEM 17- Update on the Strategic Work Plan: Cover Letter

Dear GSA Council,

As you may recall, **the GSA Council received the GSA's 2012/2013 Strategic Work Plan at its October 15, 2012 meeting.** This Plan (which is available online for your review at <http://www.gsa.ualberta.ca/~media/gsa/AboutTheGSA/GSAstrategicPlan201213ForCirculationOct2012.pdf>) was prepared by me along with my fellow elected officials and GSA Management to direct our efforts and identify areas where we can work with others in the University community.

The 2012-2013 SWP provides us at the GSA with **a planning document for this year and into the future in an effort to not only work towards achieving our vision but that of the University of Alberta as well.** It is meant to align closely with the University of Alberta's guiding documents - Dare to Discover, Dare to Deliver, and the 2012 Comprehensive Institutional Plan, while at the same time pursuing the GSA's 'agenda'.

Since releasing the GSA SWP, the GSA elected officials have met with several members of the University Administration to discuss common goals, and devise strategies to implement aspects of the plan of mutual interest. As we arrive in the home stretch of our terms as elected officials, I would like to offer you **an update concerning the GSA's progress in pursuing the strategic goals outlined in the GSA 2012/2013 SWP.**

MARKET MODIFIERS AND FGSR REORGANIZATION

Two major issues, **the potential introduction of a market modifier and the proposed reorganization of FGSR, have kept the GSA elected officials extremely busy this past fall** and caused us to temporarily redirect our efforts in order to tackle these important matters. These two matters have been my top priorities as GSA President. I am happy to report that **discussion of market modifiers for this year has ceased and that the GSA continues to work very closely with FGSR and Catherine Swindlehurst on the proposed reorganization of FGSR.** We have recruited over 20 students to participate in focus groups for Dr. Swindlehurst and have filled our seats on the FGSR Quality Measures working group with qualified and engaged students. **This matter continues as a top priority for the GSA** and we look forward to continue working with FGSR and the Provost's Office to ensure the best interests of the graduate students of this University are the driving force behind this initiative.

COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT

A key strategic goal for the GSA is **the negotiation of "a fair collective agreement that supports graduate students who are employed by the University"** (GSA SWP 2012/2013) and this process is well underway. You will continue to be updated by the GSA VP Labour frequently concerning the progress of this issue. We are also **developing strategies concerning education and enforcement of the Agreement.** The VP Labour has put a commendable amount of work into the collective agreement negotiation process, as have the members of the GSA Labour Relations Committee (chaired by the VP Labour).

FUNDING

Another strategic goal was continued involvement in the Graduate Student Funding Task Force, which was struck in 2011. However, the work of this task force stalled and so we have, in consultation with Phyllis Clark, VP Finance and Administration, struck terms of reference for a new committee, **the Graduate Student Tuition and Funding Data Committee, which will meet to gather information regarding graduate student support.** As GSA President I will be serving as co-chair of this committee.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

We are also continuing research into various **professional development programs** which may benefit graduate students at the U of A. The VP Academic has worked throughout his term on the Attributes and Competencies subcommittee,

which is working on important issues of professional development.

RESETTLEMENT BURSARY

We are investigating the potential of advocating for a **resettlement bursary for international graduate students**.

RECOGNITION AND RELIEF

We are working closely with the University and FGSR to **develop policies surrounding the recognition and relief of GSA elected officials** to ensure that future involvement in graduate student government will be a viable and attractive option for students.

ON-CAMPUS HOUSING AND RENT INCREASES

The VP Student Life has been hard at work throughout the year on **a series of important issues related to graduate student housing**.

MENTAL HEALTH

Our participation in the Administration's ongoing mental health review has resulted in an initiative on the part of Provost's Fellow Robin Overall to establish **a dedicated graduate student counseling space in Triffo Hall**.

U-PASS

Negotiations for the **continuation of the U-Pass agreement** were recently completed, thanks to the efforts of the VP Student Services. A referendum on the agreement will be forthcoming.

MODERNIZING GSA INFRASTRUCTURE

There have been a number of strategic goals identified by the GSA concerning infrastructure which I am proud to report we have met. **The implementation of online fillable forms and a modernized direct deposit system** are completed and constitute a huge step forward for the GSA.

GSA'S LONG TERM HEALTH

The ongoing hard work of the GSA staff, management, and financial team have ensured **that the GSA is developing into an organization that will remain robust over time**. Planning for the next five-year budget (which will come before the GSA Council) is underway.

MOVING FORWARD

Moving forward, your GSA elected officials will continue to work hard in pursuit of the goals outlined in the GSA SWP 2012/2013. In the coming term we will be taking part in both **IGNITE: The Future of Alberta's Post-Secondary Education System Conference**, which will be held on campus and offers an important forum for engagement with government leaders on the future of post-secondary education, and the **University of Alberta Political Science Graduate Students' Association (PSGSA) upcoming conference which will focus on the future of the University**. The GSA elected officials, in particular the VP Student Services, continue to work on the **development and construction of the PAW Centre**.

Finally, as GSA President, I am investigating the **GSA's external lobbying presence**. We are lobbying to attend the upcoming **Western Deans Conference** as well as looking forward to the upcoming **GU15 Conference** as well as investigating the possibility of a future **relationship between the GSA and APIRG**. A number of other key issues, including access to daycare services on campus, remain on the list of upcoming projects for the GSA.

Sincerely,

Ashlyn Bernier, GSA President