

**GSA Council Meeting AGENDA**  
Monday, April 20, 2015 at 6:00 pm  
MEC 2-01

**A pizza dinner will be served at 5:15 pm at MEC 2-01.**

**Substantive material** is sent to all GSA Council members at least one week prior to the date of the meeting to give members abundant time to review (in accordance with the Standing Orders of Council). Any additional substantive material received after this mailing will be emailed as soon as possible.

**Reports** from committees, Directly-Elected Officers, and management are emailed the Friday before a Monday meeting so that the content is as current as possible.

**Speaker Sarah Prescott in the Chair**

<b><u>OPEN SESSION</u></b>	<b>Attached Numbered Pages</b>
1. Roll Call	
2. Approval of the 20 April 2015 Agenda	
3. Approval of the Minutes from the 16 March 2015 GSA Council meeting <i>Attachments:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Minutes from the 16 March 2015 GSA Council meeting</li></ul>	<b>3.0 - 3.10</b>
4. Changes in GSA Council Membership <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>i. Introduction of New Councillors (<i>If you are new to GSA Council, please let us know it is your first meeting</i>)</li><li>ii. Farewell to Departing Councillors (<i>If this is your last GSA Council meeting, or if your last Council meeting is approaching, please let us know</i>)</li></ul>	
<b><u>Presentation</u></b>	
5. University of Alberta Senate <b>Presented by Nathan Andrews (GSA President)</b>  <b>Guest:</b> Ralph Young (Chancellor, University of Alberta)	
<b><u>Elections</u></b>	
6. GSA Councillor-at-Large By-Election: Paper Ballot Election <b>Michele DuVal (Administrative Chair of the GSA Nominating Committee) will present the item.</b>  <i>Attachments:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Nominees for Councillor-at-Large</li></ul>	<b>6.0 - 6.3</b>
<b><u>NOTE:</u></b> Nominees for GSA Councillor-at-Large have been invited to answer two questions. The GSA Nominating Committee is using the format (questions in advance; 30 seconds to answer each question) and the questions provided to Councillor-at-Large Candidates by	

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the GSA Elections and Referenda Committee for the GSA General Election 2015.

Candidates were given these two questions in advance of the Council meeting:

1. What prompted you to run for the position of Councillor-at-Large?
2. What are the critical issues facing graduate students today?

Candidates will be given 30 seconds to answer each question. Brief video presentations will be shown for nominees unable to attend Council.

7. GSA Committee Elections

- i. GSA Budget and Finance Committee: Paper Ballot Election

**Michele DuVal (GSA Nominating Committee Administrative Chair) will present the item.**

*Attachments:*

- Nominees for GSA Budget and Finance Committee

**7.0 - 7.1**

**NOTE:** Nominees for the GSA Budget and Finance Committee have been invited to give very short presentations to Council and to answer questions from Councillors.

- ii. GSA Board: Receive for Information

**Sarah Prescott (GSA Speaker) will present the item.**

*Attachments:*

- Nominees for GSA Board/GSA Nominating Committee

**7.2 - 7.3**

- iii. GSA Elections and Referenda Committee: Receive for Information

**Michele DuVal (GSA Nominating Committee Administrative Chair) will present the item.**

*Attachments:*

- Nominees for GSA Elections and Referenda Committee

**7.4 - 7.5**

- iv. GSA Governance Committee: No Councillor Nominees

**Michele DuVal (GSA Nominating Committee Administrative Chair) will present the item.**

**NOTE:** No nominees were received for the GSA Governance Committee. The GSA Nominating Committee will now begin a proactive search to fill the vacancy for one (1) member of GSA Council.

**Action Items, Councillor Announcements, Appointments, Special Business, Updates**

8. GSA Health and Dental Plan: Fee for 2015-2016 AND Payment from the HDPRF of the Difference Between the GSA Health and Dental Plan Fee and the Actual Cost of the Plan for 2015-2016

**Megha Bajaj (GSA Vice-President Student Services) and Nathan Andrews (Chair of the GSA Budget and Finance Committee) will present the item.**

*Attachments:*

- Outline of Issue
- Cover Letter from the GSA Vice-President Student Services

**8.0 - 8.2**

**8.3 - 8.4**

**Guest:** Kristin Foster (Western and Pacific Director, Studentcare)

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**GSA BFC Members present as members of GSA Council:** Nathan Andrews (GSA President and BFC Chair), Monty Bal (GSA Vice-President Labour and BFC Vice-Chair), Dasha Smirnow (Councillor, Business PhD) and Harsh Thaker (Councillor-at-Large).  
**GSA BFC Member invited to GSA Council as a guest:** Karen Turpin.

9. GSA Board 2014-2015 Strategic Work Plan: Update **(For Information)**  
**Presented by Nathan Andrews (GSA President)**

*Attachments:*

- Cover Letter from the GSA President
- GSA Board 2014 - 2015 Strategic Work Plan Progress Check List

**9.0 - 9.2**  
**9.3**

10. Councillor Announcements

11. Special Business **(none at this time)**

**Reports**

12. President **(Nathan Andrews, GSA President)**

- i. President's Report **12.0 - 12.1**
- ii. GSA Board **12.2 - 12.3**
- iii. GSA Budget and Finance Committee **12.4**
- iv. GSA Governance Committee **(one email vote)** **12.5**

a) GSA Nominating Committee

- i. GSA Nominating Committee Report **(presented by Michele DuVal, GSA Nominating Committee Administrative Chair)** **12.6 - 12.8**

13. Vice-President Academic **(Colin More, GSA Vice-President Academic)**

- i. Vice-President Academic's Report **13.0 - 13.1**

14. Vice-President Student Services **(Megha Bajaj, GSA Vice-President Student Services)**

- i. Vice-President Student Services' Report **14.0 - 14.1**
- ii. GSA Student Affairs Advisory Committee (Joint Chair: Vice-President External) **(no meetings this reporting period)**

15. Vice-President External **(Susan Cake, GSA Vice-President External)**

- i. Vice-President External's Report **15.0 - 15.1**
- ii. GSA Awards Selection Committee **(no meetings this reporting period; will resume meeting Fall 2015)**

16. Vice-President Labour **(Monty Bal, GSA Vice-President Labour)**

- i. Vice-President Labour's Report **16.0 - 16.1**
- ii. GSA Negotiating Committee **(no meetings this reporting period; will resume meeting Fall 2015)**
- iii. GSA Labour Relations Committee **(no meetings this reporting period)**

17. Senator **(Gary Barron, GSA Senator)**

- i. Senator's Report **(no written report at this time)**

18. Speaker **(Sarah Prescott, GSA Speaker)**

- i. Speaker's Report **(no written report at this time)**

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19. Chief Returning Officer ( <b>Hamman Samuel, GSA Chief Returning Officer</b> )	
i. Chief Returning Officer’s Report	<b>19.0</b>
20. GSA Elections and Referenda Committee( <b>presented by Virginia Pimmitt, GSA Elections and Referenda Committee Chair</b> )	
i. GSA Elections and Referenda Committee Report	<b>20.0</b>
21. GSA Management ( <b>Ellen Schoeck, GSA Executive Director</b> )	
i. Executive Director’s Report	<b>21.0 - 21.4</b>

**Question Period**

22. Written Questions

23. Oral Questions

**Adjournment**

**Meeting Transcript  
16 March 2015  
GSA Council Meeting**

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

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

Nathan Andrews (President)	Michele DuVal (Bio Sci)	Willow White (English & Film Studies)	Manoj Parmar (Pharmacy & Pharmaceutical Sci)
Colin More (VP Academic)	Patricia Leighton (Bio Sci)	Amanda Daignault (English & Film Studies)	Emrah Keskin (Political Science)
Monty Bal (VP Labour)	Syed Daniyal Israr (Business MBA)	Sumit Mandal (Human Ecology)	Anya Kuteleva (Political Science)
Susan Cake (VP External)	Dasha Smirnow (Business PhD)	Rachel Osolen (Humanities Computing)	Colin Reynolds (Public Health)
Megha Bajaj (VP Student Services)	Elaheh Davari (Chem & Materials Engineering)	Madhurima Kumar (Internetworking)	Christine McKernan (Public Health)
Sarah Prescott (Speaker)	Chad Iverson (Chemistry)	Jessica Peck (Library & Info Sciences)	Alison Murata (Renewable Resources)
Hamman Samuel (CRO)	Andrew (Chemistry)	Amir Nosrati (Math & Statistical Sci)	Angela Bentley (Res Econ & Enviro Sociology)
Shahriar Rozen (Councillor-at-Large)	Neda Aslsabbaghpourhokmabadi (Computing Sci)	Ninad Mehta (Med Microbio & Immunology)	Kerry Rose (Secondary Education)
Harsh Thaker (Councillor-at-Large)	Candy Pang (Comp Sci)	Grant Norman (Neuroscience)	Tasha Jayatunge (Sociology)
Pooran Appadu (Agri, Food, & Nutritional Sci)	Shelby Sanders (Earth & Atmospheric Sci)	Laura Lee (Oncology)	Antonio Bruni (Surgery)
Alphonse Ndem Ahola (Anthropology)	Amanda Radil (Ed Psych)	Sabina Baghirova (Pharmacology)	

**GUESTS:** Mazi Shirvani (Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research); Eric Loo (Mitacs); Sarah Ficko (GSA VP Labour-Elect, Renewable Resources).

Speaker Sarah Prescott in the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm.

**Roll Call**

**1. Roll Call of Council Members in Attendance**

**Approval of Agenda**

**2. Approval of the 16 March 2015 Consolidated Agenda**

Members had before them the 16 March 2015 Consolidated Agenda, which had been previously distributed on 13 March 2015.

**Agenda approved by UNANIMOUS CONSENT.**

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**Approval of Minutes****3. Minutes****i. Minutes from the 23 February 2015 GSA Council meeting**

Members had before them the 23 February 2015 GSA Council Minutes, which had been previously distributed on 6 March 2015.

**Minutes approved by UNANIMOUS CONSENT.**

**Changes in Council Membership****4. Changes in Council Membership****i. Introduction of New Councillors**

This was the first meeting for a number of Councillors: Hezhen (Andrew) Xie (Chemistry); Rachel Osolen (Humanities Computing); Antonio Bruni (Surgery).

**ii. Farewell to Departing Councillors**

This was the last meeting for one Councillor: Pooran Appadu (Agriculture, Food, and Nutritional Science).

**Action Items, Elections, Appointments, Special Business****5. Professional Development for Graduate Students**

Mazi Shirvani, Dean of the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, was present to speak to Professional Development for Graduate Students.

**N Andrews MOVED to go into Closed Session**, with allowance for the incoming team of GSA Directly-Elected Officers and Councillors-at-Large to remain in attendance. **P Appadu SECONDED.**

**Motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**N Andrews MOVED to go out of Closed Session. C Iverson SECONDED.**

**Motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**6. Mitacs Opportunities for Graduate Students**

M Bajaj introduced the guest, Eric Loo, Business Development Specialist with Mitacs. E Loo spoke about opportunities for graduate students through Mitacs and raised the following points:

Mitacs is a national research network. Mitacs began 15 years ago as the Canadian Network of Centres of Excellence but has now moved beyond that into being a not-for-profit. Mitacs training programs revolve around building internships with industry and community partners. The problem is very acute - where will graduate degrees lead? Canada has a knowledge deficit and ranks low for innovation and number of patents filed. We need to change the culture in Canada by creating internship programs for companies to bring in graduate students as part of their degree programs. Mitacs helps fund internships so companies are more engaged. Last year Mitacs worked with 900 industry partners (eg, Bombardier, Stantec) and also non-profits (eg, Edmonton Economic Development). E Loo works on the U of A campus to promote programs to graduate students. He is able to help graduate students apply to Mitacs programs, and connect with partners. E Loo is available to present in faculties and departments on campus.

Following the presentation there was a number of questions:

C Iverson asked what Mitacs offers for those later in their degrees? E Loo said that Mitacs is open for post-docs and has an accelerated program. They have competitive options; these are worth more.

C More asked E Loo to speak to Mitacs' relationship with the Tri-Council. E Loo stated that Mitacs is funded by the government and not NSERC as it was in the past; they are also funded by all ten provinces. Projects need to have an economic lean but this is present in most projects anyway.

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M Bajaj asked if there are post degree internship programs. E Loo explained that to get researchers onboard, Mitacs wants projects to be built into your program, so you must be a student.

J Kong asked if overseas partner institutions are listed on the Mitacs website. E Loo said that they are not because the list would be too long, but as long as an institution is publicly funded, Mitacs will work with them.

P Appadu asked how the integration between Mitacs and the supervisor works. E Lee explained that they try to make it as seamless as possible. Projects should be a continuation of your thesis in some way and should be part of your research program. Professors need to sign off on project. P Appadu asked if students can publish the research done through Mitacs. E Lee said that quite a few people have but some are restricted. Publishing is project specific and should be agreed upon with the supervisor and industry partner at the beginning. Mitacs has an intellectual property agreement with the university.

H Samuel requested a presentation for Computing Science and added that he did an internship for 8 months with Mitacs. Could E Loo speak to how the stipend system works? E Loo stated that Mitacs tries to prevent delays wherever possible but it depends on how the money flows to them. Mitacs invoices companies and cannot pay the university until they receive the payment. Upfront payments are encouraged because of the success of the program.

#### **7. Councillor Announcements**

E Keskin announced a Political Science graduate student conference that starts on March 19. It will take place Thursday at 9 am and Friday at 10 am, with two keynotes each day. Everyone is welcome. There is free food.

G Norman announced a Neuroscience Research Day; the public lecture, focused on crime and the brain, is on Thursday at 7 pm in Allerd lecture hall in the Katz building with a reception to follow. There is free food but not free drinks.

#### **8. 2015 General Election Results: To Receive For Information For Purposes Of Transferring Banking Signing Authority**

Councillors had before them an outline of issue.

N Andrews introduced the new team of Directly-Elected Officers who were in attendance, and stated that the Motion before Council is to recognize the new Directly-Elected Officers so that signing authority with the bank can be transferred.

**MOTION BEFORE COUNCIL:** That the GSA Council **RECEIVE FOR INFORMATION** the results of the 2015 General Election wherein the following graduate students were duly elected as President, Vice-President Academic, Vice-President External, Vice-President Labour, and Vice-President Student Services:

<b>President</b>	<b>Colin More</b>
<b>Vice-President Academic</b>	<b>Harsh Thaker</b>
<b>Vice-President External</b>	<b>Alphonse Ndem Ahola</b>
<b>Vice-President Labour</b>	<b>Sarah Ficko</b>
<b>Vice-President Student Services</b>	<b>Alireza Talaei</b>

There were no questions.

**MOTION:** That the GSA Council **RECEIVE FOR INFORMATION** the results of the 2015 General Election wherein the following graduate students were duly elected as President, Vice-President Academic, Vice-President External, Vice-President Labour, and Vice-President Student Services:

<b>President</b>	<b>Colin More</b>
<b>Vice-President Academic</b>	<b>Harsh Thaker</b>
<b>Vice-President External</b>	<b>Alphonse Ndem Ahola</b>
<b>Vice-President Labour</b>	<b>Sarah Ficko</b>

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Vice-President Student Services	Alireza Talaei
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N Andrews **MOVED**. G Norman **SECONDED**.

**Motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

#### 9. Elections by GSA Council

##### i. Acclaimed Election: GSA Board/GSA Nominating Committee (no additional nominations received)

Councillors had before them an outline of issue.

**MOTION BEFORE COUNCIL:** That the GSA Council, acting on the unanimous recommendation of the GSA Speaker and Executive Director, **RECEIVE FOR INFORMATION** the newly-elected GSA Council member for the GSA Board/GSA Nominating Committee combined position.

S Prescott presented the item and stated that the ad for this combined position was sent to Council, and one nomination that fit the criteria was received from Syed Daniyal Israr, Councillor for MBA.

**MOTION:** That the GSA Council, acting on the unanimous recommendation of the GSA Speaker and Executive Director, **RECEIVE FOR INFORMATION** the newly-elected GSA Council member for the GSA Board/GSA Nominating Committee combined position. S Prescott **MOVED**. P Appadu **SECONDED**.

**Motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

##### ii. Acclaimed Election: GSA Governance Committee (no additional nominations received)

Councillors had before them an outline of issue.

**MOTION BEFORE COUNCIL:** That the GSA Council, acting on the recommendation of the GSA Nominating Committee, **RECEIVE FOR INFORMATION** the newly-elected member of the GSA Governance Committee.

M DuVal presented the item and stated that one nomination for the position was received from S Cake, the current GSA Vice-President External and an incoming Councillor-at-Large.

**MOTION:** That the GSA Council, acting on the recommendation of the GSA Nominating Committee, **RECEIVE FOR INFORMATION** the newly-elected member of the GSA Governance Committee. M DuVal **MOVED**. G Norman **SECONDED**.

**Motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

#### 10. Special Business (none at this time)

#### Reports

#### 11. President

##### i. President's Report:

Members had before them a written report from the GSA President, which had been previously distributed on 16 March 2015. The reports stood as submitted. In addition, N Andrews stated that he and S Cake spent a Saturday in Calgary with their ab-GPAC counterparts. One key piece they discussed was that the amount previously contributed to AGC could be increased for ab-GPAC. Other groups are all paying \$3 per student and the GSA only pays \$2. The GSA plans to increase contributions by \$1. There are savings from the past year that will cover the next two years. Beyond the next two years, the GSA does not want to pay the same \$6 that the other groups have suggested. The reason for this incremental decision is because this group is still forming. The GSA will pay enough to get the group running and hire part time staff to help this move forward. Once the group is formed and a real budget and structures are in place, a discussion can be had about increasing the amount.

##### ii. GSA Board

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 16 March 2015. The report stood as submitted.

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**iii. Budget and Finance Committee**

No written report was required at this time.

**iv. Governance Committee**

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 16 March 2015. The report stood as submitted. In addition, N Andrews stated that the GSA Governance Committee looked at the income cut-off to qualify for Child Care Grant, and approved increasing the cut off, previously based on 2009 numbers, to new levels based on 2013 numbers. Information on the cut-offs and how to apply for the Child Care Grant can be found at: <http://www.gsa.ualberta.ca/AwardsGrantsBursaries.aspx>.

**a) Nominating Committee**

**i. Nominating Committee Report**

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 16 March 2015. The report stood as submitted.

**12. Vice-President Academic**

**i. Vice-President Academic's Report**

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 16 March 2015. The report stood as submitted. In addition, C More stated that the Students' Union is creating a time capsule and would like the GSA to contribute along with the President's Office, the Senate, and the Chancellor's Office. The time capsule is to be opened in 2065.

**13. Vice-President Student Services**

**i. Vice-President Student Services' Report**

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 16 March 2015. The report stood as submitted. In addition, M Bajaj stated that she recently led some tours of the new Physical Activity and Wellness Centre (PAW) and would like to thank the Councillors and graduate students that attended. There are a number of rooms and spaces available to graduate students to book for free. Information on how to book the spaces can be found here: <http://www.gsa.ualberta.ca/05Services/PAWRoomBooking.aspx>. Spaces are booked through the Faculty of Physical Education & Recreation. Please let M Bajaj know if you run into difficulties so she can help you.

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

No meetings this reporting period.

**14. Vice-President External**

**i. Vice-President External's Report**

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 16 March 2015. The report stood as submitted. In addition S Cake stated that the Multi-Faith Prayer and Meditation Space Memorandum of Understanding is newly drafted and will hopefully be signed soon.

S Cake showed the video "Post Secondary is The Answer", by Public Interest Alberta, available on their website: <http://pialberta.org/pseistheanswer>.

S Cake is also working on Residence issues, specifically the Michener Park parking issues. Speak to her if you have concerns.

**ii. Awards Selection Committee**

No written report was required at this time.

**15. Vice-President Labour**

**i. Vice-President Labour's Report**

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 16 March 2015. The report stood as submitted. In addition M Bal stated that the new collective agreement for 2015/16 includes a 1.5% increase. The GSSF will increase as well.

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N Andrews and M Ball recently presented at the Board Human Resources and Compensation Committee on Collective Agreement compliance issues, something the GSA will continue to look at. Compliance is vital and the University's participation is key.

M Ball showed the U of A's "You Can Play" video (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1d21K7M9Pw>), intended to support sexual and gender minority equality in sports on and off campus.

**ii. Negotiating Committee**

No meetings this reporting period. The Agenda noted that the GSA NC will resume meeting in Fall 2015.

**iii. Labour Relations Committee**

No meetings this reporting period.

**16. Senator's Report**

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 16 March 2015. The report stood as submitted. G Barron was not at the meeting, however N Andrews highlighted that the Senate Task Force focus groups had concluded and the report will be shared with the Senate Executive Committee by April 17. G Barron will share the report with GSA Council after that date.

**17. Speaker**

**i. Speaker's Report**

No written report was required at this time.

**18. Chief Returning Officer**

**i. Chief Returning Officer's Report**

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 16 March 2015. The report stood as submitted. In addition, H Samuel stated that the GSA General Election 2015 had the second highest voter turnout since 2011, at 5.8%. There were a few confusions about the Councillor-at-Large results, and the second round of elimination for VP Academic, which are addressed in the report.

J Kong asked why there was a second round of voting. H Samuel stated that one of the features of preferential voting is there are different rounds of elimination depending on how many candidates are involved.

A Bently asked if the names were randomized on the Councillor-at-Large ballot. H Samuel responded that the names appeared in same order on each ballot, alphabetic by last name.

J Kong pointed to GSA Bylaw 10.6.e and 10.4 – 10.4, which states None of the Above is a candidate; 10.6.e contradicts that. Why are candidates treated differently than None of the Above? H Samuel explained that None of the Above is a candidate for voting purposes and it is considered a special kind of a candidate. J Kong expressed confusion as to why one candidate should be allowed to eliminate all other candidates. N Andrews responded that he understands the point J Kong is making and as a political scientist, making None of the Above a candidate when you have 10 positions to be voted on does not make sense. The GSA needs to make it explicit, that None of the Above should only be a candidate when the position is for a single seat. It does not make sense to have it when there are ten seats to be filled. However, it is up to the GSA ERC to consider a change, and to bring it to GSA Council. H Samuel stated that the GSA ERC will be discussing the election, and proposed changes might come up before he leaves office that could change the structure of Councillor-at-Large elections. It is not clear, and it is different from the Directly Elected Officer positions. The GSA ERC wants to make that clear for future elections.

S Cake asked for more information on changes to the voting software. H Samuel explained that the GSA ERC decided to go with Google Forms, which was reported in his February GSA Council report, because there were issues with the previous system. The developer of the old system has not been available or responsive. Rather than use an old system with known failures and no support, the GSA ERC decided on Google Forms. This change was discussed at multiple meetings and IST came to talk about different options. The election went well, the system never went down and there was IST support if something did go wrong. S Cake asked H Samuel to explain how non-graduate student voters were removed before ballots were counted. H Samuel explained that the way Google Forms is set up, it does not provide

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much customization. He used the parameters provided to the U of A, wherein anyone with a U of A CCID was able to vote. Ineligible votes were removed by cross-referencing a list of CCIDs of all currently registered graduate students to the list of voter CCIDs.

J Kong asked about this process and if it was done manually. H Samuel stated that there is a script that checks one list (all voters) against another list (all grad students), and this script can either remove or mark those outside of the list and these can be manually inspected. D Smirnow asked how many people voted that were then removed, and H Samuel replied nine.

#### **19. Elections and Referenda Committee**

No written report was required at this time. The Agenda noted that the GSA ERC advised the Chief Returning Officer on a number of questions he sent to GSA ERC members during the 2015 GSA General Election.

#### **20. GSA Management**

##### **i. Executive Director's Report**

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 16 March 2015. The report stood as submitted and, in addition E Schoeck asked GSA Council to review the Corporate Documents list. H Hogg and E Schoeck are in the middle of negotiating the collective agreement that covers GSA Staff. The office will also be saving money on a new photocopier lease (old one expires at the end of March). The photocopier for student use in Triffo Hall will be retired; the GSA has been losing money on it for a long time (about \$3400/year). E Schoeck pointed out that the Corporate Documents list is shown to GSA Council twice every year.

H Thaker asked how much alcohol insurance would cost. E Schoeck state that it's very expensive; if graduate students host a conference they should take out PALs, and get insurance for their specific event. The GSA reduces its risk by only recognizing academically-related student groups. It's an issue, and a risk that the U of A carries as well. H Thaker asked how much insurance is for one event. E Schoeck advised that it's about \$300. C Iverson stated that the cost depends on the size of the group.

E Schoeck advised GSA Council that the GSA ERC would meet on Thursday to look in detail at the recent election and what to do to bring forward revised pieces for GSA Council's consideration. The GSA's judicial system, from a professional point of view, is not compliant with procedural fairness; if the GSA went to court they would lose. E Schoeck is anxious to bring forward the Appeals and Complaints Board; this Board will cover basic rules in terms of procedural fairness/due process.

#### **Question Period**

##### **21. Written Questions**

No written questions were received prior to the meeting.

##### **22. Oral Questions**

P Appadu pointed out that there was recently a ten mark question on an exam for a graduate course, fully calculation based, probably only worth five points, and that this is indicative of the professor's insufficient training in education methods. What can the GSA do about this? C More explained that the Students' Union presented this at the GFC Committee on the Learning Environment and the Committee agreed that it is a problem. There is a lot of variation across campus and maintaining academic freedom is important. Courses and training are available but it's difficult to mandate. This is on a lot of peoples' minds but it is a tricky problem to solve.

#### **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:06 pm.

GSA NOMINATING COMMITTEE (NoC)  
**GSA Councillor-at-Large By-Election (SIX POSITIONS)**  
**NOMINEES**

In the GSA General Election 2015 in March, four out of the 10 Councillor-at-Large positions were filled. On March 20 and 27, 2015, the GSA Nominating Committee advertised the remaining six Councillor-at-Large positions for 2015-2016 to all graduate students through the GSA Newsletter, and on the GSA website. The deadline to receive nominations was April 2, 2015, at 12:00 PM (Noon). The GSA received four (4) nominations by the deadline. A call for additional nominations was sent to Council on April 8, 2015, and the deadline was April 15, 2015, at 12:00 PM (Noon). The GSA received one (1) additional nomination.

As set out in GSA Policy, Elections, By-Elections, Section 13.3 :

"In the event that any **CAL positions** are not filled by the end of the General Election, [...] GSA Council will be responsible for electing any remaining CALs. When electing any remaining CALs, the GSA Council will aim to elect graduate students from as broad a range of disciplines as possible. The GSA NoC will decide on procedures and then provide one or more names to GSA Council for consideration, except that the GSA NoC may not waive advertising. Note that the legislated GSA NoC process allows for Councillors to make additional nominations. If the matter is urgent, GSA Council can hold this election electronically."

**There will be a paper ballot vote held at the April 20, 2015 GSA Council meeting for five of the six GSA Councillor-at-Large positions.**

*If you are unable to attend the April 20, 2015, meeting of GSA Council and would like to cast an electronic vote for this position, you must contact the Nominating Committee Coordinator ([gsa.nomcomm@ualberta.ca](mailto:gsa.nomcomm@ualberta.ca)) BEFORE 3:00 PM on Monday April 20, 2015, in order to cast your vote in advance of the Council meeting.*

**Councillor-at-Large Elections by Council: GSA Nominating Committee Procedures**

**The Ballot**

- There will be one ballot with all candidates on the ballot, listed in reverse alphabetical order.
- For each candidate, there will be a "yes" box and a "no" box.

**Voting**

- The voter ticks one box per candidate, or abstains by not voting for a particular candidate (both boxes are left empty).

**Counting**

- If a candidate has more "no" votes than "yes" votes, the candidate is eliminated.
- If after the elimination round, there are **fewer candidate(s) or an equal number of candidates as there are positions**, the candidate(s) with at least one "yes" vote is/are successful.
- If after the elimination round, there are **more** candidates than positions, the candidates with the highest number of "yes" votes, equivalent to the number of positions, are the successful candidates.
- If after the elimination round, there is a **tie for last place** in the number of "yes" votes, the candidate with the fewest number of "no" vote is successful. If the tied vote has the same number of both "yes" and "no" votes, the Speaker will draw one name from a hat.

FOUR PAGES

The names and biographies received (five nominees) are BELOW on pages 6.1 – 6.3. Biographies are presented as received (i.e. not edited).

**Biographies and Resumes of Nominees in the Order in Which they were Received  
(Nominees will be listed in reverse alphabetical order on the ballot)**

**1. Sarang Gumfekar**

**Sarang Gumfekar's Bio:**

I was born in India and completed my Bachelor of Engineering degree at the University of Pune in 2009. During my undergraduate studies, I became a student technical head of the institute and coordinated the organization of an annual technical event. I pursued my masters degree (MASC) in chemical engineering from University of Waterloo, Ontario where I held International Masters Student Award for 2 years. I also hold a Certification in Fundamentals of University Teaching from the University of Waterloo, and have a total 6 terms of experience as a teaching assistant. Currently, I am a second year PhD candidate in Chemical and Materials Engineering at University of Alberta, conducting research on developing the polymers to reduce the environmental footprint of mining operations.

**Sarang Gumfekar's Resume:**

I have been actively involved in student governance since my masters studies. During my study at Waterloo, I served as a Vice President-Finance, and Health and Safety representative of the departmental graduate students association. I have also been a student council member of MITACS organization. In University of Alberta, I have been actively involved in student governance, serving as a Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research (FGSR) Councillor, a member of the International Activity Fund (IAF) Adjudication Committee and a member of the International Students Advisory Committee (ISAC). Apart from the governance, I have been involved in organizing the ABCampus Career Conference, which is to be held in later March 2015. I look forward to be a part of GSA council in 2015-16 as a Councillor-at-Large.

**Sarang Gumfekar currently serves on the following committees:**

Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research (FGSR) Councillor, International Activity Fund (IAF) Adjudication Committee, International Students Advisory Committee (ISAC)

**2. Leigh Spanner**

**Leigh Spanner's Bio:**

I was born and raised in Ottawa and stayed there to do my undergraduate degree in Political Science, as well as to work in the Parliament of Canada as a Page. Following my undergraduate degree I worked full time in the Senate of Canada, in its Finance Directorate and later in the Interparliamentary Affairs Directorate. I went on to pursue a Masters degree, in Political Science, at the Memorial University of Newfoundland. I am currently in my third year of the PhD program in political science, focusing on Feminist International Relations.

**Leigh Spanner's Resume:**

I have extensive experience in student politics, within University Administration and politics generally which position me to serve as a Councillor at Large. First, I am currently the GSA Representative for the Advisory Search Committee: VP Advancement. I have previously served as the GSA Representative on an Advisory Search Committee: Vice-Provost and University Registrar (2012-2013). My experience advocating for graduate students, as well as working with Senior Administration, was furthered by my position on the Facilitated Learning and Coaching Process for the University of Alberta Office of Student Services (2013-2014). I have also been the Graduate Representative on the Search Committee for the University of Alberta's Political Science Department Chair and Memorial University of Newfoundland's Search Committee for the Deputy Provost (Students) and Associate Vice-President (Academic) Undergraduate Studies (2010).

**FOUR PAGES**

Aside from search committee experience, I am currently the VP Finance for the Political Science Graduate Student Association, (PSGSA). The previous year I was VP General for the PSGSA. Within the Department of Political Science I sit on Department Council (current), and previously sat on the Department's Graduate Council (2013-2014). Within the GSA, I am currently a member of the Elections and Referenda Committee (ERC). I previously sat on GSA Council (2013-2014) and was a member of the GSA's Award Selection Committee from (2012 – 2014). At the University level I am a member of the Student Group Granting Committee (2013-present). During my Masters degree I was the Vice-President Communications and Research for Memorial's Graduate Student Union, where I sat on numerous university committees, and chaired numerous graduate student committees.

My schedule is fairly flexible, as I am in the proposal stage of the PhD program, and have an RAship – both of which are mostly self-directed. I will be available for every meeting, save this coming April's meeting as I will be out of town. I thank you for your consideration.

**Leigh Spanner currently serves on the following committees:**

GSA's ERC

**3. Jude Kong**

**Jude Kong's Bio:**

I am a PhD year PhD student in Applied Mathematics. Prior to moving to the university of Alberta, I completed an Erasmus Mundus masters degree in mathematical modelling from the the university of Hamburg-Germany and the University of L'Aquila in Italy, and a Bsc. In Mathematics from the University of Buea- Cameroon. In the university of Buea, I served the student body as the the Chairman of Council and as the secretary general of the faculty of science students' association. While doing my masters in Europe, we formed the Africa Students' Union-Italy, and I was the first president. I am currently the Erasmus Mundus Students and Alumni Coordinator for Central Africa and one of the University of Alberta GSA Councillors at Large.

**Jude Kong's Resume:**

I have gained a lot of experience from the various leadership roles I have taken. As the Erasmus Mundus Students and Alumni Coordinator, I advocate for the Erasmus students from Central Africa in the European Union. While acting as the Chairperson of Council in the University of Buea, I was the voice and advocate of the students. Among other things, I encouraged partnerships between the students and local businesses. As a team, we made the University of Buea a recognized leading university in Cameroon. All these experiences have helped shaped me into a more mature student advocate and have allowed me to grow while working in a team environment. I believe they have made me a strong candidate for the GSA Council and I would be honoured to work towards making our university a great place for graduate students.

**Jude Kong currently serves on the following committees:**

Councilor-At-Large

**4. Brent Kelly**

**Brent Kelly's Bio:**

I was born in Calgary and moved to Edmonton to attend the U of A. Recently completing my BA in Political Science, I am continuing my studies at the Masters level on a part-time basis. I am currently managing the Constituency Office of an Edmonton MLA. My research interests include electoral participation, public services and public policy, and international relations. My thesis work is on the corporatization of the University of Alberta.

**Brent Kelly's Resume:**

I have a great deal of experience with student government. I served three years as a director of the Students' Union, and two years as a student member of the U of A Board of Governors. In addition, I have also served on numerous non-profit

boards, including: First Alberta Campus Radio Association (CJSR), The Gateway Student Journalism Society, the John Humphrey Centre for Peace and Human Rights board, YOUCAN Youth Services, and the Alberta Public Interest Research Group. My undergraduate career also included serving in executive positions of various student groups. This practical experience compliments extensive theoretical knowledge of politics and governance garnered from my undergraduate and graduate studies.

**Brent Kelly currently serves on the following committees:**

None, currently. Interested in serving on the Labour Relations Committee

**5. Priatharsini (Tharsini) Sivananthajothy**

**Priatharsini (Tharsini) Sivananthajothy's Bio:**

I was born in Jaffna, Sri Lanka and immigrated to Canada when I was 4. Growing up, I learnt to speak both Tamil and English. I completed by BSc in Cell and Molecular Biology at the University of Toronto before deciding to pursue a graduate degree at the University of Alberta. At the University of Toronto, I was heavily involved in the students' union, serving as the Biological Sciences Director for the Scarborough Campus Students' Union (SCSU) for two consecutive years (2009 – 2011). Soon after, I was elected to serve as the Full-time Student Governor for the University of Toronto's tri-campus Governing Council, based on my previous advocacy and leadership experiences. Currently at the University of Alberta, I serve as Co-Chair for the Campus Alberta Student Conference on Health (CASCH), a pan-Albertan public health conference, as well as the President of the School of Public Health Students' Association.

**Priatharsini (Tharsini) Sivananthajothy's Resume:**

I am currently in the second year of my MSc at the School of Public Health, exploring the reasons as to why newcomer mothers in Edmonton have higher caesarean section rates compared to Canadian born mothers, collaborating closely with the Royal Alexandra Hospital. My work is a part of Dr. Zubia Mumtaz's research focus on immigrant maternal health. I've worked both within the research and practice realms of public health including roles such as Health Equity Project Coordinator for the Council of Agencies Serving South Asians, and Research Assistant for the Centre for Global Child Health at the Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto. I have also gained field experience working in Western Province, Kenya, as Research Associate for Students for International Development and continue to serve as a Board of Director, for the organization. Apart from my research, I am heavily involved in the community. I have worked with the John Humphrey Centre for Peace and Human Rights through their Youth Action Project Against Poverty, developing recommendations for the Mayor's Taskforce to eliminate poverty in Edmonton, and have served as a committee member for the Health and Wellness Working Group for the Taskforce itself. I served as the Internal Relations executive for the School of Public Health Students' Association (SPHSA) for the 2014 calendar year, which provided the opportunity to sit on the GSA Council as a Departmental Councilor. I am interested in serving as a Councilor at Large for the GSA, to further my interests in student governance and leadership. Through this position, I hope to carry forward my experiences in student advocacy, while bringing forth the perspectives and concerns of smaller faculties such as the School of Public Health to the larger graduate student conversation. My schedule is flexible to accommodate the GSA Council meetings, along with other additional sub-committees.

**Priatharsini (Tharsini) Sivananthajothy currently serves on the following committees:**

None listed

**GSA NOMINATING COMMITTEE (NoC)  
GSA Budget and Finance Committee (ONE POSITION)  
NOMINEES**

As advertised through the GSA Newsletter on March 20 and March 27, 2015, there is currently one vacancy on the GSA Budget and Finance Committee. The deadline to receive nominations was April 2, 2015, at 12:00 PM (Noon). The GSA received two (2) nominations by the deadline. A call for additional nominations was sent to Council on April 8, 2015, and the deadline was April 15, 2015, at 12:00 PM (Noon). No additional nominations were received.

**There will be a paper ballot vote held at the April 20, 2015, GSA Council meeting for the GSA member position on the GSA Budget and Finance Committee.**

*If you are unable to attend the April 20, 2015, meeting of GSA Council and would like to cast an electronic vote for this position, you must contact the Nominating Committee Coordinator ([gsa.nomcomm@ualberta.ca](mailto:gsa.nomcomm@ualberta.ca)) BEFORE 3:00 PM on Monday April 20, 2015, in order to cast your vote in advance of the Council meeting.*

**Jurisdiction:**

GSA Policy, Nominating, Section 6.6

“The NoC will provide Council with nominations for the GSA Board, all GSA standing committees, Speaker, CRO, and Senator. Additional nominations may be made by Councillors, in writing, in advance of the Council meeting where elections will take place. If a Councillor(s) makes an additional nomination, there will be a written ballot at the Council where the election will take place. All other vacancies will be filled by the NoC and reported to Council.”

**Nominees for this position are listed in alphabetical order by last name and will be presented in reverse alphabetical order on the ballot. ‘None of the Above’ will also be considered a nominee for the purpose of each ballot, following GSA Policy governing the General Election and By-Elections, in GSA Policy, Elections, Section 10.4.**

- 1. Sarang Gumfekar (PhD Program, Chemical Engineering)**
- 2. Sina Yansori (PhD Program, Financial Mathematics)**

**GSA Budget and Finance Committee:** Vacancy: **ONE MEMBER OF THE GSA** (GSA Policy, Standing Committees, Section 4.1.a.iv)

**GSA Budget and Finance Committee Role (GSA Policy, Standing Committees, Section 4.2.a):**

“The overall mandate of the GSA BFC is to advise the President and management on the financial affairs of the GSA and to provide for the long-term financial health of the organization. Members are expected, by GSA Council, to rise above any local/departmental views or issues and to take into account the needs of the GSA as a whole.”

**GSA Member Leaving the Budget and Finance Committee:** Harsh Thaker (Medicine).

**GSA Council Member Staying on the GSA Budget and Finance Committee:** Dasha Smirnow (Business)

**GSA Member Staying on the GSA Budget and Finance Committee:** Karen Vera Lyn Turpin (School of Public Health)

**The names and biographies received (two nominees) are ATTACHED on page 7.1. Biographies are presented as received (i.e. not edited).**

**TWO PAGES**



## Biographies and Resumes of Nominees in Alphabetical Order

### 1. Sarang Gumfekar

#### Sarang Gumfekar's Bio:

I was born in India and completed my Bachelor of Engineering degree at the University of Pune in 2009. During my undergraduate studies, I became a student technical head of the institute and coordinated the organization of an annual technical event. I pursued my masters degree (MAsc) in chemical engineering from University of Waterloo, Ontario where I held International Masters Student Award for 2 years. I also hold a Certification in Fundamentals of University Teaching from the University of Waterloo, and have a total 6 terms of experience as a teaching assistant. Currently, I am a second year PhD candidate in Chemical and Materials Engineering at University of Alberta, conducting research on developing the polymers to reduce the environmental footprint of mining operations.

#### Sarang Gumfekar's Resume:

I have been actively involved in student governance since my masters studies. During my study at Waterloo, I served as a Vice President-Finance, and Health and Safety representative of the departmental graduate students association. I have also been a student council member of MITACS organization. In University of Alberta, I have been actively involved in student governance, serving as a Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research (FGSR) Councillor, a member of the International Activity Fund (IAF) Adjudication Committee and a member of the International Students Advisory Committee (ISAC). Apart from the governance, I have been involved in organizing the ABCampus Career Conference, which is to be held in later March 2015. I look forward to be a part of GSA council in 2015-16 as a Councillor-at-Large.

#### Sarang Gumfekar currently serves on the following committees:

Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research (FGSR) Councillor, International Activity Fund (IAF) Adjudication Committee, International Students Advisory Committee (ISAC)

### 2. Sina Yansori

#### Sina Yansori's Bio:

I was born in Tehran, Iran. After a BSc degree in Applied Mathematics at University of Tehran (2008), I studied at the Sharif University of Technology and attained an MSc in Pure Mathematics (2011). While at University of Teheran I served on our department magazine and was involved in faculty of Science Handball team. I went to England in 2012 pursuing my interest in finance world and I got another master in Mathematical finance at Warwick business school. Here at the U of A, I am a member of our department soccer team. I also volunteered for Math fair.

#### Sina Yansori's Resume:

I am now a second-year PhD student in the Department of Mathematics and Statistics studying the maximization of client's utility function with consumption rate and standard of living. I work with Dr. Choulli. During my undergraduate degree and my MSc, I worked as a Market analyst and investment dealer in Tehran for the Parnia Company. I also taught at high school for a year. I am currently a TA for the Math 113 course and helping students at a help session class. I am interested because it relates to my discipline and I have volunteer experience that is related to this committee's terms of reference. I also have a schedule that is flexible enough to accommodate sitting on a busy committee.

#### Sina Yansori currently serves on the following committees:

None

GSA NOMINATING COMMITTEE (NoC)  
**FOR INFORMATION: GSA Board (ONE POSITION)**

As advertised to GSA Council on March 30, 2015, there was one vacancy on the GSA Board for a Councillor (non-voting position). The GSA NoC advertised the position and received one (1) nomination by the deadline of April 8, 2015, at 12:00 PM (Noon). The GSA NoC sent a call for additional nominations to GSA Council on April 10, 2015, and received no additional nominations by the deadline of April 15, 2015, at 12:00 PM (Noon). Therefore, the **position has been filled by the GSA NoC (GSA Policy, Nominating, Section 6.6).**

**Recommended Motion**

That the GSA Council receive the report of the GSA Nominating Committee and **RECEIVE FOR INFORMATION** the newly-elected GSA Council member for the GSA Board non-voting position.

**Newly-elected GSA Council Member on the GSA Board:**

1. **Monty Bal (Political Science, GSA Vice-President Labour until April 30, 2015, and Councillor-at-Large as of May 1, 2015)**

**Jurisdiction:**

GSA Policy, Nominating, Section 6.6

“The NoC will provide Council with nominations for the GSA Board, all GSA standing committees, Speaker, CRO, and Senator. Additional nominations may be made by Councillors, in writing, in advance of the Council meeting where elections will take place. If a Councillor(s) makes an additional nomination, there will be a written ballot at the Council where the election will take place. All other vacancies will be filled by the NoC and reported to Council.”

GSA Policy, Standing Committees, Section 2.1.e

“Council (GSA Bylaws Part III, Council) may appoint up to three members of Council as non-voting members of the GSAB.”

**No additional nominations were received by the deadline provided of 12:00 on Wednesday, April 15, 2015.**  
 The nominee presented in this report is therefore declared **elected**.

**GSA Board: Vacancy: ONE MEMBER OF COUNCIL**

**GSA Board Role and Requirements (GSA Board Policy):**

The **GSA Board** is the senior administrative authority of the GSA and meets **every Wednesday from 12:00 – 2:00 PM**. As set out in the GSA Board Policy, the responsibilities of the Councillor positions on the Board are:

1. **“Regular attendance at Board meetings is expected**, with regrets and reasons submitted to the President. Any voting Board member may question attendance of Councillors at any time.”
2. **“Understanding that the essence of this position is to provide a link between the elected GSA officials and the floor of Council is essential [...].”**

3. “These Councillors will have a birds-eye view of the Board operations and business. They are expected to provide information gleaned from these meetings, from their own perspective, to Council – **ie to participate and speak up at Council when Board business is discussed, from their own unique views.**”

**GSA Council Member Leaving the GSA Board and Nominating Committee:** Harsh Thaker (Medicine)

**GSA Council Members Staying on the GSA Board:** Michele DuVal (Biological Sciences) and Syed Daniyal Israr (MBA)

GSA NOMINATING COMMITTEE (NoC)  
**FOR INFORMATION: GSA Elections and Referenda Committee (ONE POSITION)**

As advertised through the GSA Newsletter on March 20 and March 27, 2015, there was one vacancy on the GSA Elections and Referenda Committee. The GSA NoC advertised the position and received one (1) nomination by the deadline of April 2, 2015, at 12:00 PM (Noon). The GSA NoC sent a call for additional nominations to GSA Council on April 8, 2015, and received no additional nominations by the deadline of April 15, 2015, at 12:00 PM (Noon). Therefore, **the position has been filled by the GSA NoC (GSA Policy, Nominating, Section 6.6).**

**Recommended Motion**

That the GSA Council receive the report of the GSA Nominating Committee and **RECEIVE FOR INFORMATION** the newly-elected member of the GSA Elections and Referenda Committee.

**Newly-elected GSA Member on the GSA Elections and Referenda Committee:**

- 1. Christopher B. Chen (MSc Clinical Epidemiology)**

**Jurisdiction:**

GSA Policy, Nominating, Section 6.6

“The NoC will provide Council with nominations for the GSA Board, all GSA standing committees, Speaker, CRO, and Senator. Additional nominations may be made by Councillors, in writing, in advance of the Council meeting where elections will take place. If a Councillor(s) makes an additional nomination, there will be a written ballot at the Council where the election will take place. All other vacancies will be filled by the NoC and reported to Council.”

**GSA ELECTIONS AND REFERENDA COMMITTEE: Vacancy: ONE MEMBER OF COUNCIL** (GSA Policy, Standing Committees, Section 3.1.4)

**GSA Elections and Referenda Committee Role (GSA Policy, Standing Committee, Section 9.3.a):**

“The GSA ERC shall advise the CRO on all matters pertaining to elections, referenda, and by-elections (...).”

**GSA Elections and Referenda Committee Eligibility (GSA Policy, Standing Committee, Section 9.2.a):**

“All members of the GSA are eligible to serve on the GSA ERC unless they intend to run in the General Election or By-Election, intend to support a position in an upcoming referendum, or they have run in the previous General Election or By-Election or supported a position in the last referendum. If standing for election to the GSA ERC, GSA ERC candidates agree not to campaign for or endorse any individual running in the General Election or By-Election and not to campaign for or endorse any referendum campaign. GSA ERC members must also be neutral and impartial (eg having no immediate or vested interest in the outcome of GSA Elections and Referenda).”

**GSA Member Leaving the GSA Election and Referenda Committee:** Jean-Philippe Crête (Sociology)

**GSA Members Staying on the GSA Elections and Referenda Committee:** Zhendong Li (Chemistry), Justin Leifso (Political Sciences), Karen Pheasant-Neganigwane (Educational Policy Studies), Leigh Spanner (Vice-Chair, Political Sciences)

**GSA Council Members Staying on the GSA Elections and Referenda Committee:** Virginia Pimmatt (Chair, Cell Biology), Jennifer Bell (Nursing), Axel Perez Trujillo (Modern Language and Cultural Studies).

## Outline of Issue (GSA Council)

### GSA Health and Dental Plan: Fee for 2015-2016 AND Payment from the HDPRF of the Difference Between the GSA Health and Dental Plan Fee and the Actual Cost of the Plan for 2015-2016

**NOTE:** Graduate students are utilizing the GSA Health and Dental Plan at a high rate (health claims are up by 9% over this time last year and dental claims are up by 5%). As claims drive the cost of the Plan, the projected total cost of the Plan for 2015-2016 is \$440.37/year, an **11% increase from the \$396.90 which has been the Plan fee for the past three years (there have been no increases over this period as a result of a now expired locked-in rate from Desjardins and bridging from the HDPRF). It is proposed that 3% of this 11% increase (~\$62,545) be bridged through a drawdown of the HDPRF.** The fee paid by graduate students for the Health and Dental Plan should GSA Council approve the fee increase and the drawdown of the HDPRF would be \$428.65/year, an increase of 8% (or \$31.75/year) over 2014-2015.

#### Suggested Motions for GSA Council:

**MOTION 1:** That the GSA Council **APPROVE**, on the recommendation of the GSA Board, that the GSA Health and Dental Plan fee be set at \$428.65/year, effective September 1, 2015, with collection from graduate students to begin September 1, 2015.

**NOTE ON MOTION 1:** As detailed in the report to GSA Council from the GSA Board, at its meeting of March 25, 2015, the GSA Board approved the automatic enrolment in the GSA Health and Dental Plan of graduate students beginning programs in January, effective in January 2016. Accordingly, graduate students beginning their programs in January will now be assessed a pro-rated GSA Health and Plan fee, as opposed to being required to opt-in manually in order to access Plan coverage.

**MOTION 2:** That the GSA Council **APPROVE**, on the recommendation of the GSA Budget and Finance Committee, payment from the Health and Dental Plan Reserve Fund (HDPRF) of the GSA Health Plan and GSA Dental Plan fee for 2015-2016 above graduate students' fee contribution.

**NOTE ON MOTION 2:** As per GSA Policy, the **GSA BFC has assessed the financial soundness of this plan and its financial implications.**

#### Background:

The GSA has been presented with a projected overall 11% increase in the cost of the Plan for 2015-2016 (this projection includes projected claims, inflationary trends, and administration fees). GSA Council is asked to approve that a portion of this increase (3%) be paid through a drawdown of the HDPRF. **Currently, there is a balance of \$222,733 in the HDPRF and approximately \$160,188 would remain should GSA Council approve the proposed drawdown. The fee paid by graduate students for the Health and Dental Plan should GSA Council approve the fee increase and the drawdown of the HDPRF would be \$428.65/year.**

In response to the projected increase, we have developed a two-year rolling plan regarding increases to the fee coupled with a drawdown of the HDPRF. In year two of this rolling plan, the fee paid by graduate students will increase by ~3% (the amount proposed to be subsidized by the HDPRF in 2015-2016) and ~5% (the estimated increase to the actual cost of the Plan as driven by claims and inflationary trends) for a total increase of ~8%. In the second year of this plan, the HDPRF will not be drawn down, leaving it with a balance of ~\$160,188 for use should the need arise. Should the actual cost of the Plan for 2015-2016 not increase by the projected 11% (there are still 5-6 months of future claims data which may increase or decrease this projected 11%), the amount taken from the HDPRF will be lower.

**NOTE:** The number of graduate students enrolled in the Plan in September 2015 and January 2016, and the actual cost of Plan premiums as calculated later in the year based on claims data, will determine the total drawdown of the HDPRF. Should GSA Council approve this proposal, the total *actual cost* will be reported back as **that body would be approving use of the HDPRF rather than the amount of the drawdown (although an estimate is provided here).**

#### Additional Background:

The GSA implemented the GSA Dental Plan through a referendum in 1994, and the GSA Dental Plan was self-administered at that time. The GSA Health Plan was implemented through a referendum conducted in March 2004. At this time, both the GSA Dental Plan and the GSA Health Plan (HDP) began to be administered through Studentcare. The Agreement with Studentcare has been renewed three times, with the newest agreement taking effect September 1, 2015 and expiring August 31, 2020.

The GSA Health and Dental Plan fee had a 2-year premium guarantee (for 2012-2013 and 2013-2014) as part of the transition to Desjardins as the

Prepared by C Thomas and E Schoeck for GSA Council April 20, 105

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plan provider in Fall 2012. **In 2014 the GSA was presented with an estimated overall 10% increase in the Plan fee for 2014-2015.** On March 26, 2014 the GSA Board unanimously proposed to the GSA Budget and Finance Committee (GSA BFC) to recommend to GSA Council that “the payment of premium increases to the GSA Health Plan and GSA Dental Plan for 2014-2015, above the current fee contribution collected from graduate students, be paid from the Health and Dental Plan Reserve Fund (HDPRF)” (GSA Board Motion, March 26, 2014).

On April 2, 2014, the GSA BFC unanimously recommended the use of the HDPRF to GSA Council.

Finally, at its meeting of April 14, 2014, **GSA Council approved “on the unanimous recommendation of the GSA Budget and Finance Committee that the payment of premium increases to the GSA Health Plan and GSA Dental Plan for 2014-2015, above the current fee contribution collected from graduate students, be paid from the HDPRF”** (GSA Council Motion, April 14, 2014). **Subsequently, a revised analysis of claims by Studentcare showed that the increases in claims was less than had been previously been estimated and, consequently, GSA Council approved, at its meeting of July 14, 2014, an increase to vision benefits.**

**In July 2014, GSA Council approved an increase in vision coverage for 2014-2015, the first increase in plan benefits since 2008-2009.** The increase in vision coverage used the HDPRF, as its use had previously been approved in April 2014 by GSA Council on recommendation from the GSA Board and GSA BFC. Premiums came in lower than projected in April, and the opportunity to provide an increase in coverage at no cost to graduate students was taken. Coverage to vision care was chosen because in the 2013 survey conducted by Studentcare, Question 27 asked “*What area of coverage would you most like to see increased?*” and 29.9% of University of Alberta graduate students responded that they would most like to see an increase to their vision coverage.

**Additional background information may be found in the attached cover letter from the GSA Vice-President Student Services to GSA Council.**

#### **Jurisdiction:**

GSA Policy, GSA Health and Dental Plan and GSA Health and Dental Plan Reserve Fund, Section 3.1:

*“Fee(s)” shall refer to the amount of money paid by enrolled graduate students for the Plan. The amount of the Fee includes both Plan premiums and administrative overhead. The Fee may include an amount for the replenishment of the Health and Dental Plan Reserve Fund (see GSA Policy, GSA Health and Dental Plan and GSA Health and Dental Plan Reserve Fund, Section 8, Health and Dental Plan Reserve Fund).”*

GSA Policy, GSA Health and Dental Plan and GSA Health and Dental Plan Reserve Fund, Section 7.1:

*“Any increase in the Fee or modification of coverage must be approved by GSA Council on the recommendation of the GSA Board. Any increase in the Fee exceeding 15% of the previous year’s Fee must also be put to a referendum.”*

GSA Bylaw, Part X Finances, Section 3.2.1.1:

*“The HDPRF is meant to ensure that all Health and Dental Plan fees paid by graduate students are going towards health and dental coverage... lessen the GSA Health and Dental Plan fee increases from one year to another, acting as a buffer.”*

GSA Policy, GSA Health and Dental Plan and GSA Health and Dental Plan Reserve Fund, Section 8.2.c:

*“To draw down the HDPRF, the GSA Board must provide to the GSA BFC information regarding the proposed use of the HDPRF, including the anticipated amounts to be drawn down from the HDPRF (quoted in GSA Policy, Standing Committees, Section 4, Budget and Finance Committee, 4.2.g) and a rolling plan regarding the HDPRF.”*

GSA Policy, GSA Health and Dental Plan and GSA Health and Dental Plan Reserve Fund, Section 8.2.c.i:

*“If the GSA BFC finds that the proposal is financially sound, it shall present the proposal and the financial implications to GSA Council for approval (quoted in GSA Policy, Standing Committees, Section 4, GSA Budget and Finance Committee, 4.2.g.i).”*

GSA Policy, GSA Health and Dental Plan and GSA Health and Dental Plan Reserve Fund, Section 8.2.c.ii:

*“If the GSA BFC finds that the proposal is financially unsound, it will report its findings to the GSA Board for reconsideration (quoted in GSA Policy, Standing Committees, Section 4, GSA Budget and Finance Committee, 4.2.g.i).”*

GSA Policy, GSA Health and Dental Plan and GSA Health and Dental Plan Reserve Fund, Section 8.2.d:

*“GSA Council must approve any proposals prior to use of HDPRF funds.”*



Dear Members of GSA Council,

As you may be aware, we have a **GSA Health and Dental Plan Reserve Fund (HDPRF)**. On April 20, 2015, you will be asked to consider a recommendation from the GSA Budget and Finance Committee **with respect to use of the HDPRF for payment of the GSA Health Plan and GSA Dental Plan fee for 2015-2016 above the fee contribution collected from graduate students** (GSA Policy, GSA Health and Dental Plan and GSA Health Plan Reserve Fund, Section 8.2.c). As per GSA Policy, the **GSA BFC has assessed the financial soundness of this plan and its financial implications**. Below, I provide background information and historical plan use data to help you in considering this proposal.

When the GSA switched to Desjardins as the Plan provider (Fall 2012), the GSA was given a 2-year premium guarantee (for 2012-2013 and 2013-2014). In April 2014 GSA Council, on the recommendation of the GSA Board and the GSA BFC, approved use of the HDPRF for payment of premium increases above the 2014-2015 fee contribution collected from graduate students. **Thus, there have been no changes to the Health and Dental Plan fee collected from graduate students for three years, since Fall 2012 (\$396.90).**

The projected premiums, which are based on six months of claims data from September through February, are sometimes higher than the actual premium paid once the next year's premium is locked-in later in the year. The HDP fee to be paid by graduate students has traditionally been approved as part of the GSA Budget. However, as you may remember from the February meeting of GSA Council where the GSA Budget was before you, this year we have uncoupled the HDP fee from the budget, and are presenting it to you in April, the latest at which the fee can be decided upon. This is because we have to approve the fee by April so that approval of its collection can begin moving through the Board of Governors' governance process, with final approval by the BoG occurring in May. **As the HDP fee is set using the claims data available to date (six months), the projected premium may change as more claims data comes in after that date.** The table below shows the breakdown of projected premiums, actual premiums, and the fee charged to graduate students from 2008-2009 to 2015-2016.

Any differences between the actual premium and the HDP fee paid by graduate students reflects either payment into the HDPRF of the positive difference between premium and fee or, when the difference is negative, use of the HDPRF to offset cost to students.

Plan Year	Projected Premium	Actual Premium	HDP Fee Paid by Students	Use of HDPRF*
2008-09	\$326.63	\$329.61	\$329.64	+ \$0.03
2009-10	\$345.93	\$330.70	\$346.12	+ \$15.42
2010-11	\$361.75	\$360.00	\$360.00	--
2011-12	\$384.15	\$384.12	\$378.00	- \$6.12
2012-13	\$405.00**	\$376.08	\$396.90	+ \$20.82
2013-14	N/A***	\$376.08	\$396.90	+ \$20.82
2014-15	\$414.05	\$413.16	\$396.90	- \$16.26
2015-16****	\$440.37		\$428.65	- \$11.72

\* A positive figure indicates payment **into** the HDPRF; a negative figure indicates **use of** the HDPRF

\*\* High jump in premium resulted in a request for proposals and switch to Desjardins as the plan provider

\*\*\* No projected premium necessary because of two-year guaranteed premium rate

\*\*\*\*Projected premium and fee

Since 2009, there has been an increase in the use by graduate students of the HDP, with the exception of 2012-2013 which saw a slight decrease (see table below). Since group health and dental plan costs are driven by member usage, **increased use of the HDP drives up the cost of the plan.** In 2011-2012, the HDPRF was used to mitigate the cost of the HDP for graduate students. The switch to Desjardins as provider in 2012 also helped to mitigate the cost of the HDP for graduate students, as the premiums were locked in for two years at a lower rate than graduate students were already paying.



These are the usage figures:

Health Plan	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015*
Paid Claims	\$687,160	\$819,533	\$882,134	\$913,072	\$903,759	\$1,046,325	\$1,118,690
Enrolment	4,738	5,324	5,451	5,409	5,469	5,427	5,303
Per Capita Claims	\$145.02	\$153.94	\$161.83	\$168.80	\$165.24	\$192.79	\$210.97
<b>Dental Plan</b>							
Paid Claims	\$569,986	\$664,506	\$696,000	\$705,749	\$713,678	\$749,820	\$759,450
Enrolment	4,691	5,260	5,409	5,377	5,410	5,353	5,242
Per Capita Claims	\$121.51	\$126.34	\$128.67	\$131.25	\$131.92	\$140.07	\$144.87
<b>Total</b>							
Incurred Claims	\$1,257,146	\$1,484,039	\$1,578,134	\$1,618,821	\$1,617,438	\$1,796,145	\$1,878,141
Enrolment	5,292	4,715	5,430	5,393	5,440	5,390	5,278
Per Capita Claims	<b>\$280.45</b>	<b>\$266.65</b>	<b>\$290.62</b>	<b>\$300.16</b>	<b>\$297.34</b>	<b>\$332.23</b>	<b>\$355.84</b>

\* Projected Claims Data

The GSA has now been presented with a projected overall 11% increase in the cost of the Plan for 2015-2016 (this projection includes projected claims, inflationary trends, and administration fees). The GSA Board proposed to the GSA BFC that a portion of this increase (3%) be paid through a drawdown of the HDPRF and the GSA BFC subsequently made a recommendation to GSA Council to that effect. Currently, there is a balance of \$222,733 in the HDPRF and approximately \$160,188 would remain should GSA Council approve the proposed drawdown. **The fee paid by graduate students for the Health and Dental Plan should GSA Council approve the fee increase and the drawdown of the HDPRF would be \$428.65/year.**

In response to the projected increase, we have developed a two-year rolling plan regarding increases to the fee coupled with a drawdown of the HDPRF. In year two of this rolling plan, the fee paid by graduate students will increase by ~3% (the amount proposed to be subsidized by the HDPRF in 2015-2016) and ~5% (the estimated increase to the actual cost of the Plan as driven by claims and inflationary trends) for a total increase of ~8%. **In the second year of this plan, the HDPRF will not be drawdown, leaving it with a balance of ~\$160,188 for use should the need arise. Should the actual cost of the Plan for 2015-2016 not increase by the projected 11%, the amount taken from the HDPRF will be lower.**

I will be happy to answer any questions you have. As well, Kristin Foster (Pacific and Western Director, Studentcare) will be at GSA Council to answer questions.

Best,

Megha Bajaj, GSA Vice-President Student Services 2014-2015



**GSA Council 20 April 2015**  
**GSA Board 2014-2015 Strategic Work Plan: Update**

Dear GSA Council,

As continuing members will recall, **the GSA Council received the GSA Board 2014-2015 Strategic Work Plan (SWP) at its meeting of June 16, 2014.** GSA Council then received **updates concerning the GSA's progress thus far in pursuing the strategic goals outlined in the Board SWP in September and January. I now offer you a final update as we come to the end of our terms.** Your new team of Directly-Elected Officers has been hard at work (in collaboration with myself and the current team of Directly-Elected Officers) on developing the GSA Board 2015-2016 Strategic Work Plan and will bring it to Council in May.

As a reminder, the Board SWP is available online for your review at <http://www.gsa.ualberta.ca/03SWP.aspx>. It was prepared by me along with the GSA Vice-Presidents to direct our efforts and identify areas where we can work with others in the University community. The current Board SWP builds upon the 2013-2014 Board SWP, which ensures continuity in terms of strategic goals, planning, and advocacy.

**PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

As Councillors will recall, the Dean of FGSR presented on FGSR's plan for professional development at the March meeting of GSA Council. **A notice of motion to approve the addition of professional development requirements for graduate students to the U of A Calendar was made at FGSR Council on March 25, 2015;** we expect that the program will be passed by June. **The GSA has been active in the development of the plan,** with Vice-President Academic Colin More and Vice-President External Susan Cake leading the team on professional development issues. We look forward to seeing the final plan, and for the implementation of more professional development opportunities for graduate students to begin.

**SERVICES FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS**

**The proposal for Permanent Residence (PR) application assistance at the U of A is still under review by the University legal team.** Vice-President Student Services Megha Bajaj and Vice-President Labour Monty Bal continue to work on the issue, and **the new team of DEOs plans to continue this work.** As a reminder, the proposal for PR application assistance includes initial consultations regarding under which PR stream to apply, group sessions about PR application, and the ability to have an immigration consultant review a PR application before it is submitted. The application assistance services are proposed to be available at a subsidized, pay-per-use cost.

**DEPARTMENT LIAISON INITIATIVE (DLI) AND DEPARTMENTAL GSAs**

**As we have reported in Council, we have created a draft constitution for Departmental GSAs to use when forming as a group under Student Group Services.** Under the leadership of Vice-President Student Services Megha Bajaj, we have met several times with Student Group Services about registration issues for Departmental GSAs. Our discussions are still in the preliminary phases, but we are working towards being able to offer more supports for Departmental GSAs and other academically-related graduate student groups within the GSA office. **The new team will also be working hard this summer to move forward the Departmental Liaison Initiative,** with plans to meet with graduate students in departments across campus. **It is our goal to have meetings with every departmental GSA on campus, to hear directly from graduate students, and to strengthen the connection between graduate students and the GSA.**

**GRADUATE STUDENT SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT**

**This year, the GSA worked to increase the amount of social engagement opportunities offered for all graduate students. In the fall, we partnered with the Alumni Association to offer what we hope will be an annual Fall Mix and Mingle event.** This event invited graduate students to mingle with each other, and with professionals from a variety of fields, over bowls of delicious chili. **In February, we also hosted the first Winter Career & Networking Mixer.** Again, professionals from a variety of disciplines were invited to attend. This event was more formalized, with the intention being that professionals share with graduate students their

experiences of moving from the academic to the industrial, non-profit, or government realm. **Both events were great successes, and we hope that the new team of DEOs will continue to offer these opportunities and others to graduate students.**

#### GSA INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL ADVOCACY

As we reported in March, Vice-President External Susan Cake and I have worked with the three other Alberta CARI GSAs to **finalize the creation of the new Alberta Graduate Provincial Advocacy Council (ab-GPAC)**. The application to form as a society under the *Societies Act* has been submitted, and we are planning a transition meeting to train the new teams of DEOs from all four GSAs. **We also continue to work with the GU15 graduate student group**, which met recently in Calgary. Because the meeting was so close, we were able to send the current and incoming Presidents and Vice-President Externals. GU15 brings together GSAs from across Canada to discuss commonalities and differences in issues facing graduate students at different institutions. Topics discussed at this meeting included graduate student funding, professional development, and international student issues, among many others.

#### MENTAL HEALTH

**Vice-President Labour Monty Bal continues to be an active participant in an array of discussions on mental health** that are happening on campus and this is a priority for the GSA. As he reports to you regularly in Council, **the University is planning several major initiatives with respect to mental health**. At February Council, we also heard from the Interim Dean of Students with regards to the initiatives from her office, **including a suicide awareness campaign which should launch over the spring/summer**. In the meantime, Monty continues to ensure that the graduate student voice is present in mental health initiatives across campus.

#### SUSTAINED AND ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT IN PSE TUITION, FEES, AND FUNDING DISCUSSIONS

**The GSA is committed to remaining active in discussions regarding PSE tuition, fees and funding discussions**. The Government of Alberta had minimal consultation with graduate students leading up to the recent 2015 Alberta Budget, which saw another cut in funding to PSE. **Through ab-GPAC, we intend to make sure that graduate student voices are heard at the provincial level**. At the university level, we are an active participant in discussions with the Provost's Office and the Students' Union regarding **restructuring of Mandatory Non-Instructional Fees at the U of A**. Although there have been no decisions yet in this discussion, the entire group is keen to move forward and ensure that MNIFs are handled in a clear and transparent manner. We are sure that the new team will continue these considerations, and remain engaged in other discussions related to tuition, market modifiers, and mandatory non-instructional fees.

#### MULTI-FAITH PRAYER AND MEDITATION SPACE

**In March, plans to renovate the designated HUB Mall space into a Multi-Faith Prayer and Meditation Space were approved by the General Faculties Council Facilities Development Committee**. To move ahead with the renovation, \$200,000 needs to be raised, and a fundraising campaign will be initiated through the Office of Advancement. **An MOU to create the new space has been signed between the GSA, the SU, the Dean of Students, and Facilities and Operations**.

#### PAW CENTRE

**The Grand Opening of the PAW Centre occurred in March, and Vice-President Student Services Megha Bajaj and I both spoke at events throughout the day**. We are thrilled that the PAW Centre is open and that graduate students are actively using the space. **In March, Megha also led tours of the various spaces in PAW that are available for graduate student groups to book for their meetings and events at no cost**. Watch for the creation of patio space outside of the Graduate Student Lounge as summer progresses. Finally, the GSA is working on programming that will make use of the Graduate Student Lounge.

#### COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT GOVERNING THE ACADEMIC EMPLOYMENT OF GRADUATE STUDENTS

**The 2015-2016 Salary Scale for the Collective Agreement governing the Academic Employment of Graduate Students has been released** and is available here: <http://www.gsa.ualberta.ca/en/04CollectiveAgreement.aspx>. **Led by Vice-President Labour Monty Bal, we continue to work on compliance issues**. Recently, we have done a survey of information provided to graduate students on departmental websites; we also continue to work with Administration to accumulate copies of contracts. **We intend to use the**

mechanisms in the CA to address clear violations with Administration, and hope that these actions will lead to all graduate students being treated fairly under the terms of the CA.

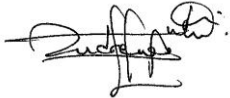
**LONG-TERM HEALTH OF THE ORGANIZATION**

Council approved a balanced 2015-2016 GSA Budget at its February meeting, which reflects the overall health of the GSA. The Financial Team (ED Ellen Schoeck (team leader), Director of Operations Heather Hogg, Financial Manager Dorte Sheikh, and Accountant Shirley Ball) is now preparing for the 2015 Audit, which will come to Council in July. **Our previous photocopier lease expired at the end of March, which saw the removal of the photocopier available for graduate student use in Triffo Hall.** Although the machine saw some use, the use did not offset the cost. Our new photocopier lease is for two machines for GSA office use for three years, and **represents a significant decrease in costs overall compared to the previous lease.** Our lawyers reviewed the lease contract before it was signed, as per our practice before signing any lease, and we were able to decrease the GSA's risk on the lease through some amendments to the contract.

As the GSA continues to evolve, **Executive Director Ellen Schoeck and her management team have reassessed our staffing needs** to ensure optimal support for the initiatives outlined in the Board SWP. **I am happy to report that negotiations for the NASA Collective Agreement that covers our office staff should conclude in May.** Following on external consultations that occurred over the summer, we are working to revamp and improve the GSA website to enhance our external image. **We continue to work on the comprehensive review and restructuring of GSA Bylaw and Policy that began in 2010** (joining bylaw and policy together is a top priority). The major re-haul of bylaw and policy with respect to GSA elections remains ongoing.

On behalf of my entire team, I want to thank Council for their active and productive engagement on these and other initiatives over the last year. We have been proud to serve as your Directly-Elected Officers, and are confident that the incoming team will continue the work we started to ensure that graduate student concerns and issues are addressed across campus. Watch for the GSA Board 2015-2016 Strategic Work Plan from the new team in May.

Sincerely,



Nathan Andrews, GSA President 2014-2015



## The Graduate Students' Association of the University of Alberta

### GSA Board 2014 - 2015 Strategic Work Plan Progress

	Complete For Our Term with Ongoing Attention	In Process of Implementation	Stakeholder Buy-In & Engagement	Stakeholder Consultation & Coordination
Increased Funding for the GSSF	✓			
PAW Centre - Graduate Student Lounge	✓			
Multi-Faith Prayer and Meditation Space	✓			
Professional Development Opportunities for Graduate Students	✓			
Connecting with Graduate Students through Social Engagement	✓			
Effective Advocacy to the Government of Alberta and BoG		✓		
Connecting with Graduate Student Groups (Department Liaison Initiative)		✓		
Increased Funding for Graduate Students		✓		
Sustained and Active Engagement in PSE Tuition, Fees and Funding Discussions		✓		
Permanent Residence Assistance and Improved Services for International Graduate Students		✓		
Excellence in Graduate Student Supervision		✓		
Collective Agreement Education and Compliance		✓		

**GSA President**  
**Report to Council for April 20, 2015 GSA Council Meeting**

To: GSA Council  
 From: Nathan Andrews  
 Date: April 17, 2015

Dear Colleagues,

I must say that it is quite interesting how time flies. This is my second-to-last report as President (next month you will receive a brief report on my last two weeks in office), so let me take this opportunity to say thanks for granting me the honour of serving this esteemed organization for the past year. It has been a busy number of months but, most importantly, it has been a rewarding year for the VPs and myself, as we have cooperatively worked towards advocating for the interests of all graduate students at all levels. We hope we have served you well.

The GSA Board Strategic Work Plan report (Item 9) covers almost everything I would have elaborated here so I will not repeat myself. Yet, I will highlight a few things. First of all, I am excited to announce that the **Multi-Faith Prayer and Meditation Space MoU** has finally been signed. This is an exciting achievement being that this project has been on the radar of the GSA for a number of years. I believe the new team under the leadership of incoming President Colin More will advance the intents expressed in the MoU in order to establish a space that is both available and inclusive.

On the recently released budget, the **Alberta Graduate Provincial Advocacy Council** (ab-GPAC) issued a press release a day after the announcement came from the government. Even though the cut is possibly lower than most institutions anticipated, it still falls short of the promise by Premier Prentice to restore the cuts from 2013. For ab-GPAC, the most worrying thing was the lack of consultation and engagement regarding this budget (especially since we know both CAUS and ASEC were involved in different conversations), and we made this message clear in a phone conversation with the Minister of Innovation and Advanced Education, Don Scott.

During the Easter break, a number of us (me, Susan, Colin, Alphonse, along with ED Ellen and management team member Courtney) spent three days in Calgary attending the **GU15 meeting with our counterparts from across Canada**. Several issues of shared importance were discussed including supervision, professional development, funding, and mental health, among others. The major outcome is that, in light of the forthcoming Federal elections we agreed to write and sign open letters to cover some of these issues that are important to a majority of the GU15 schools, at least those present. I can discuss this more in my oral report.

Besides these points, I am happy to answer questions about any of the meetings I attended since my last report to Council. Please find the list of meetings included below.

Cheers,  
 Nathan Andrews, GSA President

*Please find below a list of meetings I attended between March 17, 2015 to April 17, 2015. I was on academic leave from March 17 to March 19, and April 13 to April 15, 2015.*

March 17	Graduate Students' Tuition and Cost Committee
March 20	PAW Grand Opening
March 20	Prayer and Meditation Space
March 20	PAW Grand Opening Formal Evening
March 23	GSA Transition

March 24	GSA Transition
March 25	FGSR Council
March 25	Prayer and Meditation Space MoU Signing
March 26	Alberta Graduate Provincial Advocacy Council (ab-GPAC)
March 26	Dean of Students
March 26	City Council and Board of Governors Dinner
March 27	Call with Minister of Innovation and Advanced Education, Don Scott
March 27	GSA Awards Night
March 31	Dean of FGSR
April 1	Celebration for I Samaraskera
April 6-8	GU15
April 9	Future Interim Dean of FGSR, Heather Zwicker
April 9	Alberta Graduate Provincial Advocacy Council (ab-GPAC)
April 9	Dean of Students
April 10	Breast-Feeding Friendly Spaces
April 10	Lunch with the Dean of FGSR
April 16	Peter Lougheed Leadership College, Kim Campbell
April 16	Prayer and Meditation Space Discussion
April 17	Sustainability Plan for Academic Content with Naomi Krogman

**GSA Board  
Report to Council for April 20, 2015 GSA Council Meeting**

To: GSA Council  
 From: Ellen Schoeck, Executive Director and Coordinator of the GSA Board; Heather Hogg, Director of Operations; and Courtney Thomas, Director of Services and Governance  
 Date: April 17, 2015

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. Open session Minutes are available upon request. The President, Vice-Presidents, Director of Operations, Director of Services and Governance, Financial Manager, and I will be happy to answer any questions or provide more information at the Council meeting.

**18 March 2015 GSA Board Meeting**

Main Agenda Items:

GSA Donation to the Carl Amrhein Aboriginal Student Fund; Students' Union Time Capsule: Request for Sponsorship; ARFAC Terms of Reference: For Review and Feedback

Motions and Agreements:

That the GSA Board **APPROVE** a donation in the amount of \$1000 to the Carl Amrhein Aboriginal Student Fund. NA **MOVED**. MeB Seconded. **CARRIED**.

That the GSA Board **APPROVE** an external grant in the amount of \$250.00 for the Students' Union time capsule, as requested by Kathryn Orydzuk (SU VP Academic), in the attached proposal on page 4.1. CM **MOVED**. MoB Seconded. **CARRIED**.

Members **AGREED** to support the ARFAC Terms of Reference with the provision that agenda items could be added by members and that there would be regular meetings.

**25 March 2015 GSA Board Meeting**

Main Agenda Items:

GSA Health and Dental Plan: Automatic Enrolment of Graduate Students Beginning Programs in January; Professional Development Awards, Child Care Grants, and Emergency Bursaries: Reallocation of GSSF Fund Rolling Opening Balances; DEO Leave Policy

Motions and Agreements:

That the GSA Board **APPROVE** the automatic enrolment in the GSA Health and Dental Plan of full-time graduate students beginning programs in January, effective in January 2016. MeB **MOVED**. SC Seconded. **CARRIED**.

That the GSA Board **APPROVE** the reallocation of the amounts remaining in the budgets and contingency budgets for Professional Development Awards, Child Care Grants, and Emergency Bursaries (approximately \$128,000 in total) as follows: **~\$61,000 to the budget line for Professional Development Awards, ~\$43,000 to the budget line for Child Care Grants, and ~\$23,000 to the budget line for Emergency Bursaries**. NA **MOVED**. MeB Seconded. **CARRIED**.

**01 April 2015 GSA Board Meeting - Joint Meeting with the GSA Board and Finance Committee**

Main Agenda Items:

GSA Health and Dental Plan: Proposed Fee for 2015-2016; GSA Health and Dental Plan Reserve Fund (HDPRF): Proposal to the GSA Budget and Finance Committee to Recommend Payment from the HDPRF of the Difference Between the GSA Health and Dental Plan Fee and the Actual Cost of the Plan for 2015-2016; GSA Health and Dental Plan Reserve Fund (HDPRF): Recommendation to GSA Council to Approve Payment from the HDPRF of the Difference Between the GSA Health and Dental Plan Fee and the Actual Cost of the Plan for 2015-2016 (GSA BFC Item); DEO Leave Policy

Motions and Agreements:

That the GSA Board **RECOMMEND TO GSA COUNCIL** that the GSA Health and Dental Plan fee be set at \$428.65/year, effective September 1, 2015, with collection from graduate students to begin September 1, 2015. MeB **MOVED**. SC Seconded. **CARRIED**. SC Abstained.

That the GSA Board **PROPOSE TO THE GSA BUDGET AND FINANCE COMMITTEE** that the GSA BFC recommend to GSA Council payment from the Health and Dental Plan Reserve Fund (HDPRF) of the GSA Health Plan and GSA Dental Plan fee for 2015-2016 above graduate students' fee contribution. MeB **MOVED**. SC Seconded. **CARRIED**. SC Abstained.

**08 April 2015 GSA Board Meeting**

Meeting cancelled as two DEOs and two members of Management attended the GU 15 meeting in Calgary. No pressing items.

**15 April 2015 GSA Board Meeting**

**Main Agenda Items:**

Attendance at ab-GPAC, May 1-3, 2015, in Edmonton, AB: Estimated Expense; Actual Expenses for Attendance at an ab-GPAC Meeting, February 28, 2015, in Calgary, AB: External Relations Travel Expenses; Draft GSA Board Strategic Work Plan 2015-2016: For Discussion; Collective Agreement: Background Training

**Motions and Agreements:**

That the GSA Board **APPROVE** the estimated expense for four (4) representatives of the GSA to attend the ab-GPAC meeting, May 1-3, 2015, in Edmonton, as noted below. CM **MOVED**. SC Seconded. **CARRIED**.

The GSA Board is asked to **REVIEW** the attached summary of actual expenses incurred through attendance at the ab-GPAC meeting on February 28, 2015, in Calgary, AB. CM **MOVED**. SC Seconded. **CARRIED**.



**GSA Budget and Finance Committee (GSA BFC)  
Report to Council for April 20, 2015 GSA Council Meeting**

To: GSA Council  
From: Nathan Andrews  
Date: April 17, 2015

Dear Council Colleagues,

**The GSA BFC met jointly with the GSA Board on April 1, 2015 to consider a proposal made to the GSA BFC by the GSA Board concerning use of the Health and Dental Plan Reserve Fund to pay the difference between the GSA Health and Dental Plan fee and the actual cost of the Plan for 2015-2016.** GSA BFC members heard from Kristin Foster, Director of Development & Partnerships, Studentcare, regarding increases to the GSA Health and Dental Plan fee as a result of rising claims and also reviewed the GSA's rolling plan with respect to the Health and Dental Plan Reserve Fund. **After assessing the financial soundness of the proposal before them, and its financial implications, GSA BFC members voted to recommend to GSA Council payment from the Health and Dental Plan Reserve Fund of the GSA Health Plan and GSA Dental Plan fee for 2015-2016 above graduate students' fee contribution.**

I would be happy to report further orally.

Respectfully,

Nathan Andrews, GSA President and Chair of the GSA Budget and Finance Committee

**GSA Governance Committee (GC)**  
**Report to Council for April 20, 2015 GSA Council Meeting**

To: GSA Council  
From: Nathan Andrews  
Date: April 17, 2015

Dear Council Colleagues,

The Chair and Vice-Chair of the GSA Governance Committee (GSA GC), under delegated authority from the GSA GC, **approved, via email, factual changes to GSA Policy with respect to the GSA Health and Dental Plan.**

As background, the GSA Health and Dental Plan was implemented following a first referendum vote in 1994. New and current full-time graduate students were automatically enrolled and assessed Health and Dental fees in September. At that time **it was not operationally possible within the Registrar's Office to automatically enroll the small number of full-time graduate students who began their academic programs in January. Those individuals needed to enroll themselves in the Plan and were then, thereafter, automatically enrolled beginning in September.**

K Foster, Pacific and Western Director, Studentcare, has been working with the Registrar's Office over the past several years to develop a mechanism whereby graduate students beginning in January can be automatically enrolled in the Plan. K Foster looked into this change in response to graduate student demand (eg complaints and late opt-ins by graduate students beginning in January) and questions by GSA Board members over several years. It was never the GSA's intention to exclude graduate students beginning their programs in January from equal access to the Health and Dental Plan. **The self-directed opt in mechanism was developed as a 'band aid solution' in the absence of the programming ability within the Registrar's Office to automatically enroll students. Now that this is possible, the GSA Board voted on March 25, 2015 to approve the automatic enrolment in the GSA Health and Dental Plan of graduate students beginning programs in January, effective in January 2016.** GSA Policy then needed to be updated to reflect this. **The changes considered by the GSA GC were purely editorial in nature and amended factual inaccuracies.**

Finally, the Chair and Vice-Chair of the GSA GC, under delegated authority from the GSA GC, also **approved, via email vote, a purely editorial change to GSA Policy on Elections, Section 13. A factually inaccurate reference to a non-existent section of GSA Bylaw was removed.**

I would be happy to report further orally.

Respectfully,  
Nathan Andrews, GSA President and Chair of the GSA Governance Committee

**GSA Nominating Committee (NoC)  
Report to Council for April 20, 2015 Council Meeting**

To: GSA Council  
From: Michele DuVal, Administrative Chair of the GSA Nominating Committee  
Date: April 17, 2015

Dear Council Colleagues,

The report from the GSA Nominating Committee (NoC) is a summary of discussions/decisions the NoC has made since its last report, together with a list of all vacancies filled.

The Bylaw governing the NoC is located in Part V (Standing Committees). Policy governing the NoC is found in the sections titled "Nominating" and "Standing Committees." As provided for in its terms of reference, the GSA Nominating Committee (NoC) has been conducting business via e-mail.

Sincerely,

Michele DuVal, Administrative Chair of the GSA Nominating Committee

### **Councillors-at-Large By-Election**

As set out in GSA Policy, Elections, Section 13.3: "In the event that any CAL positions are not filled by the end of the General Election, or a CAL position is vacated prior to December 1 (or the next working day) GSA Council will be responsible for electing any remaining CALs. When electing any remaining CALs, the GSA Council will aim to elect graduate students from as broad a range of disciplines as possible. The GSA NoC will decide on procedures and then provide one or more names to GSA Council for consideration, except that the GSA NoC may not waive advertising. Note that the legislated GSA NoC process allows for Councillors to make additional nominations. If the matter is urgent, GSA Council can hold this election electronically".

After the GSA General Election there were six (6) Councillor-at-Large positions available on GSA Council for 2015-2016. These positions were advertised through the GSA Newsletter on March 20, 2015, and again on March 27, 2015. The deadline for nominations was Thursday, April 2, 2015. We received four (4) nominations. On Wednesday, April 8, 2015 the GSA NoC forwarded these four (4) nominations to GSA Council with a call for additional nominations. Additional nominations were accepted until Wednesday, April 15, 2015 at 12:00 PM (Noon). We received one (1) additional nomination. **See Item 6 for the list of nominees.**

### **GSA Council-Elected Officers**

#### **2014 GSA Senator Elections**

Nominations for the GSA Senator position opened on April 3, 2015. The nomination period will last one month, with nominations closing on Thursday, April 30, 2015 at 12:00 PM (Noon). The Senator is the GSA's representative to the University of Alberta Senate. Contact the NoC ([gsa.nomcomm@ualberta.ca](mailto:gsa.nomcomm@ualberta.ca)) if you are interested in and would like to learn more about this position.

## GSA Standing Committees

### 1) GSA Budget and Finance Committee

As of April 20, 2015, there will be one (1) vacancy on the GSA Budget and Finance Committee. The NoC advertised this vacancy through the GSA Newsletter on March 20, 2015, and again on March 27, 2015. The deadline for nominations was Thursday, April 2, 2015. We received two (2) nominations. On Wednesday, April 8, 2015, the NoC forwarded these two (2) nominations to Council with a call for additional nominations. Additional nominations were accepted until Wednesday, April 15, 12:00 PM. We received no additional nominations. **See Item 7i for the list of nominees.**

### 1) GSA Board

As of May 1, 2015, there will be one (1) vacancy on the GSA Board. The NoC advertised this vacancy via email to GSA Council on March 30, 2015. The deadline for nominations was Wednesday, April 8, 2015. We received one (1) nomination. On Friday, April 10, 2015 the NoC forwarded this one (1) nomination to Council with a call for additional nominations. Additional nominations were accepted until Wednesday, April 15, 2015 at 12:00 PM. We received no additional nominations. Since we did not receive any additional nominations, **the nominee is declared elected: Monty Bal (PhD Program, Political Science).** See Item 7ii for more information.

### 3) GSA Governance Committee

There is currently one (1) vacancy on the GSA Governance Committee. The NoC advertised this vacancy via email to GSA Council on March 30, 2015. The deadline for nominations was Wednesday, April 8, 2015. We received no nominations. On Friday, April 10, 2015 the NoC sent to Council a call for additional nominations. Additional nominations were accepted until Wednesday, April 15, 2015 at 12:00 PM. We received no additional nominations. **There is thus still a vacancy.**

### 4) GSA Elections and Referenda Committee

Due to the resignation of one of its members, there is currently one (1) vacancy on the GSA Elections and Referenda Committee. The NoC advertised this vacancy through the GSA Newsletter on March 20, 2015 and, again on March 27, 2015. The deadline for nominations was Thursday, April 2, 2015. We received one (1) nomination. On Wednesday, April 8, 2015 the NoC forwarded this one (1) nomination to Council with a call for additional nominations. Additional nominations were accepted until Wednesday, April 15, 2015 at 12:00 PM. We received no additional nominations. Since we did not receive any additional nominations, **the nominee is declared elected: Christopher B Chen (MSc Program, School of Public Health).** See Item 7iv for more information

## Bodies External to the GSA

GSA 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 Policy, “advertising may be waived in instances where, in the NoC’s view, it is urgent to fill a vacancy” (GSA Policy, Nominating, 5.2).

### 1) General Faculties Council (GFC) Standing Committees

On February 27, 2015, the GSA NoC advertised for graduate student-at-large positions on various GFC Standing Committees for 2015-2016. The GSA NoC reviewed the bios and resumes received and made the following recommendations to the GFC Nomination Committee. **IMPORTANT NOTE:** though the GSA

NoC has recommended these students to the GFC Nominating Committee, all students must still go through the GFC Nominating Committee Elections Process, since it is **the GFC that elects all the representatives to these standing committee.**

**ACADEMIC PLANNING COMMITTEE (APC):** Brayden Whitlock (PhD Program, Physiology)

**CAMPUS LAW REVIEW COMMITTEE (CLRC):** Brayden Whitlock (PhD Program, Physiology)

**COMMITTEE ON THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT:** Luis Fernando Marin (PhD Program, Educational Psychology)

**UNIVERSITY TEACHING AWARDS COMMITTEE:** Dana Christine Massing (PhD Program, Elementary Education)

**GSA Vice-President Academic  
Report to Council for April 20, 2015 GSA Council Meeting**

To: GSA Council  
From: Colin More  
Date: April 17, 2015

Happy spring everyone!

**There are two FGSR initiatives I'd like to focus on this month.** One is an effort to improve how students interact with their supervisors, while the other is an effort to integrate professional development into all programs.

Like many relationships, those between students and supervisors often break down because of poor communication. Unclear expectations and assumptions on either side can slowly build until a critical point is reached, triggering a serious disagreement. Fortunately, clear initial communication is one aspect of the student/supervisor relationship that FGSR can influence through policy. **New calendar language will be coming before the FGSR Council for discussion on April 29, 2015. It stipulates that every program create a list of topics to be discussed between the two parties at their first meeting.** While FGSR is not mandating any specific topics, they are suggesting things like conference attendance, finances, and publishing practices. The hope is that by explicitly addressing these issues early on, future disagreements may be avoided.

FGSR is also interested in preparing students for life after graduate school. Many students (understandably) don't think about what they'd like to do until their degree is nearly finished. By then, it's often too late to fill gaps in their skills which otherwise would have boosted their career. **Calendar changes addressing this are going before the April 29 FGSR Council for approval. The proposal mandates a minimum of 8 hours of professional development work be completed by each student by the end of their degree, including the completion of an Individual Development Plan (IDP).** The IDP template is currently being developed by Renee Polziehn (Professional Development and Outreach Director, FGSR) and a small working group. Individual students may opt out of the program, but will need to gain the approval of their supervisor, graduate coordinator, and the FGSR Dean.

Efforts to broaden professional development offerings are not confined to our school, or even to our province. This is a national discussion occurring over a background of if and how graduate education should be rethought in the twenty-first century. **I've listened to and participated (in a small way) in these discussions, notably at the CAGS conference in the fall and the recent GU15 meeting in Calgary** (which GSA President Nathan Andrews and GSA Vice-President External Susan Cake also discuss in their reports). The latter brought together graduate student leaders from most of the 15 leading research-intensive universities in Canada. We mainly discussed problems the schools have in common, and how the various attempted solutions have worked. Professional development is certainly in the top three issues at most institutions.

**The University of Alberta appears to be unique in its attempt to build an element of professional development into all of its graduate programs.** Other schools have offerings -- Université de Montreal's in particular is quite impressive -- but they are not mandatory. However, many feel that the best professional development comes from finding a really excellent mentor or relevant internship. Unfortunately, such things tend to be quite hard and quite expensive to do on an institutional scale.

Fortunately, while the new provincial budget isn't exactly good news for post-secondary institutions, **the government has committed targeted funding to a three-year professional development pilot program.** Our university's share of those funds is around \$2.15 million per year. That money could allow for such large-scale, experimental projects to be attempted. There are no firm plans yet -- the money was only confirmed a week or two ago -- but the coming year is going to be pretty exciting!

I think that's enough for this month. As always, please let me know if you have any questions at all!

Colin More, GSA Vice-President Academic

*Please find below a list of meetings I attended between March 17, 2015 to April 17, 2015.*

March 17	Dean of FGSR
March 20	PAW Grand Opening
March 20	Professional Development Committee Subcommittee
March 23	GSA Transition
March 24	GSA Transition
March 25	FGSR Council
March 26	Dean of Students
March 26	Council of Student Affairs (COSA)
March 27	Call with Minister of Innovation and Advanced Education, Don Scott
March 27	GSA Awards Night
March 30	SU VP Academic
March 31	Dean of FGSR
March 27	Call with Minister of Innovation and Advanced Education, Don Scott
March 31	Bob Luth
March 31	GFC CLE Sub-Committee
April 2	Residence Advisory Committee ( RAC)
April 6-8	GU15
April 9	Future Interim Dean of FGSR, Heather Zwicker
April 9	Dean of Students
April 10	Lunch with the Dean of FGSR
April 13	SU VP Academic
April 13	GFC NoC
April 13	GFC Exec
April 14	Policy Review Committee (PRC)
April 15	Peter Lougheed Leadership College
April 16	Peter Lougheed Leadership College, Kim Campbell
April 17	Sustainability Plan for Academic Content with Naomi Krogman

**GSA Vice-President Student Services  
Report to Council for April 20, 2015 GSA Council Meeting**

To: GSA Council  
From: Megha Bajaj  
Date: April 17, 2015

Dear Colleagues,

It's the time for finals, proctoring and marking exams again! Apart from being busy with all your academic duties, I hope you are also able to enjoy the beautiful weather.

Below is an update from some of the meetings I attended since last GSA Council.

**Joint U-Pass ETS meeting**

Committee members discussed the **lower replacement U-Pass pilot program**. Transit authorities have agreed to **continue this program into the Spring/Summer semester**. They will also be reviewing the audited number of replacement stickers sold at each school over the Fall 2014 and Winter 2015 semesters. Based on the review the committee will decide on how to move forward on this program. The GSA will keep pushing to make this a permanent program until Transit authorities adopt Smartfare for public transportation in Edmonton.

**Sustainability Workshop with a Focus on University Residences**

This is a follow-up from my February 2015 GSA Council report. The Office of Sustainability is hosting a series of workshops to put together a new **Sustainability Plan (2016-2020) for the University**. This second workshop in the series was focused around the **challenges of implementing recommendations in residences**. The workshop attendees included students, staff from Residence and Ancillary Services, members of the Office of Sustainability, and we gave our feedback on the challenges in residences.

The final phase of the workshops will comprise of preparation of the **Sustainability Plan with specific action items and accountability reporting system**. I believe the Office of Sustainability will follow up with all the participants once the plan has been drafted.

**Appreciation Dinner Hosted by the Vice-Provost, International**

GSA Vice-President Labour Monty Bal and I attended a dinner hosted by the Vice-Provost International and University of Alberta, International Centre (UAI). This was an event to **acknowledge all the students who have worked towards improving the international student experience** at the University. I was really glad to see some of the **GSA Councillors** who volunteer with UAI at the event. It was a fun event with presentations from UAI and good food!

**GFC Facilities Development Committee (GFC FDC):**

The University Architect presented the design for the Multi-Faith Prayer and Meditation Space. I, along with my SU counterpart, presented background information including the history of the various collaborations on this project. The designs were well received by the committee and were unanimously approved by members. GSA President Nathan Andrews provides further updates on the Multi-Faith Prayer and Meditation Space MoU in his report. St. Joseph's Women's Residences will achieve "substantial completion" by July 2015 and will be ready for move-in starting September 2015. The incoming GSA Vice-President Student Services, Ali Talaei, will review the space during the "substantial completion" phase to make sure it's on target for move-in for the Fall 2015 semester.

**GSA Transition and Trainings:**

I, along with other members of the GSA executive (current and incoming) attended a one and a half day transition. We began to develop the 2015-2016 GSA Board Strategic Work Plan together, and made changes and improvements to it. **I am really excited for the incoming team to take office in May 2015.**



I also attended a number of training sessions with the **incoming Vice-President Student Services, Ali Talaei, to discuss projects in my portfolio. I think Ali will do a wonderful job as the Vice-President Student Services in the coming year!**

I also attended the **PAW Opening Ceremonies with other members of the GSA**. It was great to see a lot of people from the community attend the grand opening events. PAW meetings kept me really busy in the last two years and I am glad to see that students are using this facility significantly.

In addition, I also attended the **GSA Awards Night** and it was wonderful to hear about the achievements of our graduate students. I would like to thank the GSA management and staff for planning and delivering this event!

Last but not the least, I would like to thank you all for your active participation in GSA Council over the last two years. It has been a pleasure to work with and learn from you all. I hope that you will continue your involvement in the GSA Council, and also consider running for office in the coming years. Though I will not be in the GSA Council in the coming year I will continue to be involved in GSA committees and hope to see some of you around.

I would also like to thank everyone in the GSA office for the continued support and guidance during my term in office. A big thank you to all the Directly-Elected Officers - you are all awesome! Good luck everyone and have a great summer!

Sincerely,

Megha Bajaj, GSA Vice-President Student Services

*Please find below a list of meetings I attended between March 17, 2015 to April 17, 2015.*

March 18	Joint U-Pass Advisory Committee
March 18	PAW Tour for Graduate Students
March 18	U-Pass Admin Meeting
March 20	PAW Grand Opening
March 20	Sustainability Plan–Residences–Obstacles & Strategies Workshops
March 20	PAW Grand Opening Formal Evening
March 23	GSA Transition
March 24	GSA Transition
March 24	University of Alberta International (UAI) Dinner
March 26	General Faculties Council Facilities Development Committee (GFC FDC)
March 27	University Research Policy Committee (URPC)
March 27	GSA Awards Night
April 16	North Power Plant Follow-Up
April 17	Sustainability Plan for Academic Content with Naomi Krogman

**GSA Vice-President External  
Report to Council for April 20, 2015 GSA Council Meeting**

To: GSA Council  
From: Susan Cake  
Date: April 17, 2015

Dear Colleagues,

Another month has come and gone once again. It's nice to finally have some warmer weather as well. I hope everyone has been doing well since the last time we met. Once again things have been busy at the GSA.

This past month I've been participating in consultations regarding the **governance of residence policies and services**. I've had the chance to talk with some students living in residence about their experiences. I'm happy to talk to more students if anyone has experiences they want to share. In the future, there will be important decisions coming regarding residences. I think it is very important that students have a say in the coming changes since residences are ultimately there for students.

I've also spent a fair amount of time working on projects related to the future of the PhD program in Arts and Humanities. **I was very happy to see some councilors attending the open session this past month and hope to see more students become engaged in these discussions**. Once again, I firmly believe if there are program changes it needs to be guided by input from students and this means students must become engaged.

**Some students may have also been asked recently to provide information related to their own publications, presentations, and professional development**. We at the GSA are aware different departments are collecting information and it is possible that the information may be used to guide further financial cuts. In the 2014-2015 GSA Board Strategic Work Plan, we committed to advocating for "new quality measures, funding models, and graduate student management plans (GSMPs) do not disproportionately favour some facilities or departments over others in future resource allocation and that graduate students are involved in reform discussions at the department, faculty, and university levels". Given this commitment, we will continue pushing for students to be involved at every level.

**I've been giving updates regarding the new provincial advocacy group for graduate students (ab-GPAC) throughout my term, and I am pleased to announce that we are now an official society under the Societies Act!** Since my term is winding down the main focus has been to release a brief about the recent provincial budget (as GSA President Nathan Andrews discussed in his report), preparing for the upcoming election and planning the changeover for the new Directors of Ab-GPAC.

Finally, I also spent a few days in Calgary with Nathan and the incoming President and VP External. As GSA President Nathan Andrews and GSA Vice-President Academic Colin More report, **GU 15 was a very exciting conference once again that brought to light a lot of issues graduate students share across the country**. At this conference we were able to cover important issues such as the upcoming Federal election, tri-council funding, issues facing international students, professional development, and graduate student funding.

As always, if you have any questions, concerns or comments please feel free to contact me. As well, if you have any residences issues or concerns also contact me. I'm happy to help out in any way I can.

Susan Cake, GSA Vice-President External

*Please find below a list of meetings I attended between March 17, 2015 to April 17, 2015.*

March 17	Residence MoU with the SU
March 19	Residence changes with a student
March 20	Future of the PhD in the Arts
March 20	PAW Grand Opening
March 20	Prayer and Meditation Space
March 20 -21	Future of the PhD in the Arts
March 23	GSA Transition
March 24	GSA Transition
March 25	Faculty of Self-Study in the Arts
March 25	Residence Budget Advisory Council (RBAC)
March 25	Prayer and Meditation Space MoU Signing
March 26	Alberta Graduate Provincial Advocacy Council (ab-GPAC)
March 26	Athletic and Recreation Fee Advisory Committee (ARFAC)
March 27	GSA Awards Night
April 6-8	GU15
April 10	Alberta Graduate Provincial Advocacy Council (ab-GPAC)
April 10	Alumni Council Volunteerism
April 10	Breast-Feeding Friendly Spaces

**GSA Vice-President Labour  
Report to Council for April 20, 2015 GSA Council Meeting**

To: GSA Council  
From: Monty Bal  
Date: April 17, 2015

Dear Colleagues,

Almost my last report. Almost.

**Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Panel**

I was able to present on a panel with representatives from the other associations on campus (AASUA, NASA, SU) regarding **how our institutions work to deal with diversity on campus. I was able to highlight some of the progressive positions that the GSA has taken, with respect to our CA, GSA Council operations, and our GSA Board Strategic Work Plan goals, which seek to advance a more inclusive environment on campus.** I represented the GSA as being self-critical organization which is constantly in the process of re-evaluating its own policies and procedures to deal with these critical issues. We also discussed how the organizations can come together and deal with common issues regarding equity, diversity, and inclusiveness (including for example the prayer and meditation space) to foster a cultural change in how we deal with these matters.

**TRAMM ACCESS**

Incoming Vice-President Labour Sarah Ficko and I were involved in a meeting with the principle investigators of the TRAMM ACCESS project. **We were notified that because of the level of detailed work the taskforce has done at the U of A, our project proposal was recognized as being one of the most complete proposals presented at a conference in Montreal recently.** Due to this the investigators are very pleased with our progress and our involvement. In line with providing early and continued access to mental health services, **the U of A proposal seeks to connect with students before they actually set foot on campus, via internet and recruitment resources and provide tools they need for mental health wellness.** This includes providing self-assessment tools for prospective students and resources on ways to connect to mental health service providers, as well as other community resources. As we have argued in the past, **I was able to present the importance of Teaching Assistants as frontline resources for students and the investigators were open to providing training services to TAs to deal with some of these issues.**

**Suicide Prevention Taskforce**

Incoming Vice-President Labour Sarah Ficko and I were able to attend the World Cafe on the issue of suicide prevention on campus. **The meeting dealt with issues concerning education and consciousness-raising, improving early identification, increasing help-seeking behaviour, and improving access to care. Moving forward there will be discussions on how to restrict access to means, promoting social-connectedness on campus, and fostering a healthy educational environment.** After these World Cafes have been completed the taskforce will work to develop a strategy program to implement in the upcoming year. At this initial World Cafe, **the issue of stigma was centrally highlighted** and dialogue focused on how to de-stigmatize the issue of mental health by involving high level actors on campus who would openly discuss personal issues involving their own mental health. In addition to this, we advocated the **importance of moving out of the campus bubble to recognize that family also plays an important role in mental wellbeing and that there should be some type of orientation available to parents on the importance of mental health in their children's education.**

Finally, as always, if there are any issues you have related to your RA/TAship, please contact us directly so we can work to help you out.

Thanks,  
Simarjit S. Bal (Monty), GSA Vice-President Labour

Please find below a list of meetings I attended between March 17, 2015 to April 17, 2015.

March 17	Graduate Students' Tuition and Cost Committee
March 18	Meeting with a Student
March 19	Alberta Mental Health Framework
March 20	PAW Grand Opening
March 23	GSA Transition
March 24	GSA Transition
March 27	Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Panel
March 27	GSA Awards Night
April 2	President's Installation Planning
April 8	Adolescent/young adult Connections to Community-driven, Early, Strengths-based and stigma-free Services (ACCESS) National Meeting
April 11	University Suicide Prevention Task Force (World Café)
April 16	Adolescent/young adult Connections to Community-driven, Early, Strengths-based and stigma-free Services (ACCESS) Working Group Meeting
April 17	Sustainability Plan for Academic Content with Naomi Krogman

**GSA Chief Returning Officer  
Report to Council for April 20, 2015 GSA Council Meeting**

To: GSA Council  
From: Hamman Samuel, Chief Returning Officer  
Date: April 17, 2015

Dear Council Colleagues,

Since the March meeting of GSA Council, I have been working with the GSA Elections and Referenda Committee to debrief on the GSA General Election 2015, and begin reviewing the recommended changes to GSA Bylaw and Policy on Elections that were brought to GSA Council in November.

See the GSA ERC Report (Item 20) for more information. I am happy to answer any questions you have at GSA Council.

Sincerely,

Hamman Samuel, GSA Chief Returning Officer

**GSA Elections and Referenda Committee (GSA ERC)  
Report to Council for April 20, 2015 GSA Council Meeting**

To: GSA Council  
From: Virginia Pimmitt  
Date: April 17, 2015

Dear Council Colleagues,

The **GSA ERC met on March 24, 2015** to debrief the 2015 General Election. At this meeting **the GSA ERC reviewed the GSA Chief Returning Officer's GSA General Election 2015 report.**

In that report, which went to GSA Council in March, the GSA CRO recommended that the GSA ERC review the suggestions made by Council regarding the GSA Bylaw and Policy revisions that the GSA ERC brought forward in November. We are now working on reviewing those documents, and at are meeting of March 24, 2015, we began by discussing the **election of the Councillor-at-Large positions.**

I would be happy to report further orally.

Respectfully,  
Virginia Pimmitt, Chair of GSA Elections and Referenda Committee

**GSA Executive Director  
Report to Council for April 20, 2015 GSA Council Meeting**

To: GSA Council  
From: Ellen Schoeck  
Date: April 17, 2015

Dear Council,

In the President's report on the Strategic Work Plan, there is reference to bylaw and policy review. As we continue to rebuild the GSA infrastructure, the focus of the Management Team, in concert with the incoming DEOs, will be integrating GSA Bylaws with GSA Policy into one document.

This will involve stripping codes and joining bylaw and policy on all major topics. For instance, with respect to Health and Dental (HD), you would first see HD Bylaw followed by HD Policy-- at present these two are some 45 pages apart. Joining the Bylaws and Policies will require a complete renumbering.

As deep background on Bylaw and Policy, we have, since 2011, moved large chunks of Bylaw (highest governing documents requiring 2 readings by Council) into Policy (operational governing documents requiring one reading by Council). In my view, more of that needs to be done. Also, since 2011, we have identified and resolved many "bloopers" (eg at one point the GSA had different quorums for Council in both Bylaw and Standing Orders). We have removed most but not all references to the GSA's far past when we were not a corporation under the *Post-Secondary Learning Act* but, rather, were registered under the *Societies Act*. In addition, Council has seen many proposals for changes to Bylaws and Policies emanating from its robust committees. For the information of Council, there *will* be proposals for changes to Bylaw and Policy coming forward to Council **before** the joined document comes forward to you.

The detailed management reports submitted weekly to the Board are attached. As always, Courtney, Heather and I welcome your questions and feedback.

Best,  
Ellen Schoeck, Executive Director



Management Report to the GSA Board, March 18, 2015

Dear All,

The following issues have dominated management’s attention in the two weeks since the last GSA Board meeting on March 4, 2015:

**Strategic**

- **Main Issues Dealt With in the Past Week:** Transition planning, Student Advisors’ Conference, photocopier lease, report on usage of GSSF funds, PaMS, SWP 2015-2016, GSA website, preparing for GSA Council, automatic enrolment in the Health and Dental Plan of graduate students beginning their programs in January, office clean up and organization, NPP visioning, MNIF restructuring, cost of living analysis.
- **Bylaw and Policy Review – Editorial:** A review of all Bylaws and Policies for inconsistencies and errors, integration of the two, and creating a “definitions” section; and **Substantive:** thinking regarding a review of the Board Policy Manual, and a targeted focus on some specific policies, including judicial, is planned.
- **Graduate Student Groups:** Ongoing work to ramp up initiatives with respect to renewing the MOU with the Dean of Students and Student Group Services, alcohol liability waiver, assisting with departmental graduate student group elections in ALES departments, Surgery, and Occupational Therapy, ability for the GSA to assist groups experiencing governance issues, **the next stage of the Department Liaison Initiative (getting into departments) and connecting effectively with constituents.**

**Grants and Operations**

- **Social Media:** Facebook = 554 likes (down 3 from March 4). **Our Facebook posts reached 397 users this week**, up 137 from March 4. Twitter = 357 followers (up 5 from March 4).
- **Awards Night planning.**
- **Grants review and processing (note, with the approval of the VPSS, some funds have been reallocated within the categories below):**

	Total Amount Available This period	Total Amount Remaining this period	Number of new applications	Total number of applications this period
<b>PDA</b>	\$91,864*	\$45,098	13	98 (15 pending processing)
<b>CCG</b>	\$146,212*	-\$6,000	8	108 (17 pending processing)
<b>ASGA</b>	\$6,832	\$405	0	8 (0 pending processing)
<b>EB</b>	\$134,068 *(no periods)	\$50,020.27	0	36 (0 Pending processing)

**Week in Review – Office Operations:**

- Support for the **GSA ERC and for the General Election. Supporting GSA NoC work filling vacancies on several committees (GFC Standing Committee, etc)** and assisting with elections for **departmental GSAs (Occupational Therapy and Surgery).**
- Assistance with **planning for Awards Night and GSA Council.**
- **Grants processing.**

Management Report to the GSA Board, March 25, 2015

Dear All,

The following issues have dominated management’s attention in the two weeks since the last GSA Board meeting on March 18, 2015:

**Strategic**

- **Main Issues Dealt With in the Past Week:** Transition, report on the GSSF, GSSF budget for 2015-2016, request for release of 2015-2016 GSSF funds, preparing for GU15, Health and Dental, draft Board SWP 2015-2016, GSA FGSR Council Caucus, MNIF restructuring, GSA ERC meeting, Awards Night, GSA Council preparation, elections debrief and review of associated GSA Bylaw and Policy, GSA committee replenishment and election of CALs.
- **Bylaw and Policy Review – Editorial:** A review of all Bylaws and Policies for inconsistencies and errors, integration of the two, and creating a “definitions” section; and **Substantive:** thinking regarding a review of the Board Policy Manual, and a targeted focus on some specific policies, including judicial, is planned.
- **Graduate Student Groups:** Ongoing work to ramp up initiatives with respect to renewing the MOU with the Dean of Students and Student Group Services, alcohol liability waiver, ability for the GSA to assist groups experiencing governance issues, **the next stage of the Department Liaison Initiative (getting into departments) and connecting effectively with constituents.**

**Grants and Operations**

- **Social Media:** Facebook = 554 likes (up 1 from March 18). **Our Facebook posts reached 421 users this week**, up 24 from March 18. Twitter = 360 followers (up 3 from March 18).
- **Awards Night planning** and grants processing.
- **Grants review and processing (note, with the approval of the VPSS, some funds have been reallocated within the categories below):**

	Total Amount Available This period	Total Amount Remaining this period	Number of new applications	Total number of applications this period
<b>PDA</b>	\$91,864	\$38,698	13	111 (19 pending processing)
<b>CCG</b>	\$191,635	\$32,635.17	3	112 (15 pending processing)
<b>ASGA</b>	\$6,832	\$405	0	8 (0 pending processing)
<b>EB</b>	\$99,068 (no periods)	\$13,020.27	1	37 (pending processing)

**Week in Review – Office Operations:**

- Support for the **GSA ERC and assistance the election of CALs. Supporting GSA NoC work filling vacancies on several committees (GFC Standing Committee (ERC, BFC), etc).**
- Assistance with **planning for Awards Night and Transition.**
- **Grants processing** and assisting with a developing a 2015-2016 GSSF budget.

**Management Report to the GSA Board, April 1, 2015**

Dear All,

The following issues have dominated management’s attention in the two weeks since the last GSA Board meeting on March 25, 2015:

**Strategic**

- **Main Issues Dealt With in the Past Week:** Health and Dental, Awards Night (this year’s event was very successful and we received a lot of great feedback!), GSSF budget for 2015-2016, preparing for GU15, draft Board SWP 2015-2016, GSA committee replenishment, GSA Council preparation, election of CALs, DEO leave policy and associated form.
- **Bylaw and Policy Review – Editorial:** A review of all Bylaws and Policies for inconsistencies and errors, integration of the two, and creating a “definitions” section; and **Substantive:** thinking regarding a review of the Board Policy Manual, and a targeted focus on some specific policies, including judicial, is planned.
- **Graduate Student Groups:** Ongoing work to ramp up initiatives with respect to renewing the MOU with the Dean of Students and Student Group Services, alcohol liability waiver, ability for the GSA to assist groups experiencing governance issues, holistic thinking on all aspects of graduate student groups, **the next stage of the Department Liaison Initiative (getting into departments) and connecting effectively with constituents.**

**Grants and Operations**

- **Social Media:** Facebook = 558 likes (up 4 from March 25). **Our Facebook posts reached 421 users this week**, down 47 from March 25. Twitter = 366 followers (up 6 from March 25).
- **Grants processing** and photocopier renewal.
- **Grants review and processing (note, with the approval of the VPSS, some funds have been reallocated within the categories below):**

**NOTE:** As the new fiscal year and a new granting period begins on April 1, the next Management Report to the GSA Board will feature the 2015-2016 budget, which is being developed with the current and incoming Vice-Presidents Student Service.

	<b>Total Amount Available This period</b>	<b>Total Amount Remaining this period</b>	<b>Number of new applications</b>	<b>Total number of applications this period</b>
<b>PDA</b>	\$91,864*	\$32,817.75	12	123 (15 pending processing)
<b>CCG</b>	\$191,635*	\$26,635.17	5	117 (15 pending processing)
<b>ASGA</b>	\$6,832	\$405	0	8 (0 pending processing)
<b>EB</b>	\$99,068 *(no periods)	\$13,020.27	0	37 (0 pending processing)

**Week in Review – Office Operations:**

- Support for the **GSA ERC and assistance the election of CALs. Supporting GSA NoC work filling vacancies on several committees** (GSA Standing Committees, Vargo Chair Selection Committee, University Cup Selection Committee, Distinguished University Professor Selection Committee, etc).
- Assistance with **Awards Night and preparations for GSA Council.**
- **Grants processing** and assisting with developing a 2015-2016 GSSF budget.

Management Report to the GSA Board, April 15, 2015

Dear All,

The following issues have dominated management’s attention in the two weeks since the last GSA Board meeting on April 1, 2015:

**Strategic**

- **Main Issues Dealt With in the Past Two Weeks:** GU15, GSA Council preparation, election of CALs, replenishment of GSA committees, DEO leave policy and associated form, GSA agreement with the Campus Food Bank, forward planning for GSA Fall Orientation, forward thinking on GSA social engagement events and potential grants of funding.
- **Bylaw and Policy Review – Editorial:** A review of all Bylaws and Policies for inconsistencies and errors, integration of the two, and creating a “definitions” section; and **Substantive:** thinking regarding a review of the Board Policy Manual, and a targeted focus on some specific policies, including judicial, is planned.
- **Graduate Student Groups:** Ongoing work to ramp up initiatives with respect to renewing the MOU with the Dean of Students and Student Group Services, alcohol liability waiver, ability for the GSA to assist groups experiencing governance issues, holistic thinking on all aspects of graduate student groups, **the next stage of the Department Liaison Initiative (getting into departments) and connecting effectively with constituents.**

**Grants and Operations**

- **Social Media:** Facebook = 560 likes (up 2 from April 1). **Our Facebook posts reached 155 users this week**, down 266 from April 1. Twitter = 375 followers (up 9 from April 1).
- **Grants processing**, 2015-2016 GSSF budget, working with the current and incoming Vice-Presidents Student Services on using Google Forms for applications.

**NOTE:** At the **GSA Board meeting of March 25, 2015, Board members voted to “APPROVE** the reallocation of the amounts remaining in the budgets and contingency budgets for Professional Development Awards, Child Care Grants, and Emergency Bursaries (approximately \$128,000 in total) as follows: **~\$61,000 to the budget line for Professional Development Awards, ~\$43,000 to the budget line for Child Care Grants, and ~\$23,000 to the budget line for Emergency Bursaries.”** The table below reflects these allocations.

	Total Amount Available This period	Total Amount Remaining This Period	Number of New Applications	Total Number of Applications This Period
<b>PDA</b> s	\$91,406.13	\$74,521.98	35	35 (20 pending processing)
<b>CCG</b> s – applications closed	\$54,640.28	\$640.28	32	32 (13 pending processing)
<b>ASG</b> A – applications closed	\$3,562.50	\$0.00	4	4 (4 pending processing)
<b>EB</b> s	\$158,528.99 (no periods)	\$158,528.99	0	0 (0 pending processing)

**Week in Review – Office Operations:**

- Support for the **GSA ERC** and **supporting GSA NoC work filling vacancies on several committees** (GSA ERC, GSA BFC, GSA GC, GSAB, Vargo Chair Selection Committee, University Cup Selection Committee, Distinguished University Professor Selection Committee, General Faculties Council, ONEcard Advisory Group, etc).
- Assistance with **preparations for GSA Council.**
- **Grants processing** and assisting with developing a 2015-2016 GSSF budget.