

GSA Council Meeting Minutes
Monday, March 21, 2016 at 6:00 pm
2-100 University Hall, Van Vliet Complex

IN ATTENDANCE:

Colin More (President)	Dasha Smirnow (Business PhD)	Sumit Mandal (Human Ecology)	Kathy Tang (Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences)
Harsh Thaker (VP Academic)	Beth Richardson (Cell Bio)	Muhammad Usama Arif (Internetworking)	Jay Worthy (Philosophy)
Sarah Ficko (VP Labour)	Sahar Saadat (Chemical & Materials Engineering)	Mahalakshmi Kumaran (Laboratory Medicine & Pathology)	Brayden Whitlock (Physiology)
Alphonse Ndem Ahola (VP External)	Joseph Cheramy (Chemistry)	Carla Lewis (Library & Information Studies)	Noureddin Zaamout (Political Science)
Ali Talaei (VP Student Services)	Firouz Khodayari (Civil & Environmental Engineering)	Claudia Heinrich (Linguistics)	Michal Juhas (Psychiatry)
Sulya Fenichel (Speaker)	Darian Brennekamp (Communication Science & Disorders)	Michelle Michelle (Mathematical & Statistical Sciences)	Joshua Yong (Psychology)
Virginia Pimmett (CRO)	Cathy Pang (Computing Science)	Hirad Soltani (Mech Eng)	Colin Reynolds (Public Health)
Sean Rah (DRO)	Samira Diar-Bakirly (Dentistry)	Vanessa Carias (Medical Genetics)	Brooke Hanson (Rehab Med)
Pooran Appadu (Councillor-at-Large)	Shelby Sander (Earth & Atmospheric Sciences)	Ninad Mehta (Medical Microbio & Immunology)	Pat Hart (Religious Studies)
Susan Cake (Councillor-at-Large)	Shelby Sanders (Earth & Atmospheric Sciences)	Alexandra Dittrich (Medicine)	Ryan Stanfield (Renewable Resources)
Sarang Gumfekar (Councillor-at-Large)	Jane Traynor (East Asian Studies)	Elli Dehnavi (MLCS)	Rachel Hillabrand (Renewable Resources)
Robert Recklaw (Councillor-at-Large)	Marcia East (Ed Policy Studies)	Mary Obstfeld (Nursing)	Sarah Solvey (Secondary Ed)
Tania Shewring (AFNS)	Amanda Radil (Ed Psych)	Radim Barta (Oncology)	Tasha Jayatunge (Sociology)
Michele DuVal (Biological Sciences)	Lorna Sutherland (Elementary Education)	Prabhjot Bedi (Paediatrics)	Antonio Bruni (Surgery)
Graham Little (Biomedical Engineering)	Shaina Humble (English & Film Studies)	Ines Zuna (Pharmacology)	

GUESTS: Steve Dew (Provost and Vice-President (Academic)); Amy Dambrowitz (Strategic Development Manager, Office of the Provost and Vice-President (Academic)); Kristin Foster (Director of Partnership and Development, Studentcare); Colten Yamagishi (Program Manager, Studentcare)

Speaker Sulya Fenichel 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 21 March 2016 Consolidated Agenda

Members had before them the 21 March 2016 Consolidated Agenda, which had been previously distributed on 18 March 2016. C More **MOVED**; A Talaei **SECONDED**.

C More made a **MOTION** to move Item 6 up to Item 5; P Appadu **SECONDED**.

Motion PASSED unanimously

Approval of Minutes

3. Minutes from the 22 February 2016 GSA Council meeting

Members had before them the 22 February 2016 GSA Council Minutes, which had been previously distributed on 11 March 2016. S Ficko **MOVED**; R Barta **SECONDED**.

S Cake made a point of clarification and referred to an exchange between herself and C More regarding the ab-GPAC fee approval; representatives would need to obtain GSA Council's approval for the fee before moving forward.

APPROVED as amended. ABSTENTIONS: B Whitlock

Changes in Council Membership

4. Changes in GSA Council Membership

i. Introduction of New Councillors

This was the first meeting for one Councillor: M Juhas (Psychiatry)

ii. Farewell to Departing Councillors

This was the last meeting for a number of Councillors: None

Presentations and Councillor Announcements

5. Councillor Announcements

There were no announcements.

6. Institutional Strategic Plan

C More (GSA President) presented the item and introduced guests, Steve Dew (Provost and Vice-President (Academic)) and Amy Dambrowitz (Strategic Development Manager, Office of the Provost and Vice-President (Academic)).

S Dew and A Dambrowitz noted that the Institutional Strategic Plan was produced by the Office of the President and intended to guide the University. GSA Council had seen earlier versions and this was the official first draft. The current title was For the Public Good. The new President created the Plan to give the institution a unified vision. This single document allowed everyone to make decisions based on a common framework with an aligned end point. Dare to Discover and Dare to Deliver were the current Strategic Plans, along with the Board Change Agenda and the Comprehensive Institutional Plan. One single document, the current Plan, would now guide all policy and decisions. S Dew spoke to the long consultation process involved in the development of the Plan (and asked for input before taking it to General Faculties Council (GFC) and the Board of Governors for approval. They noted that the Plan would go through the system three times and that there would also be post approvals.

With respect to the consultation process: it began a year ago when then President-Elect Turpin attended all Faculty Councils, followed by discussion at a senior administrative retreat. The process included over 30 meetings, live-streamed consultations, and roundtables with every committee on campus, Alumni Council, and the Senate. Online and email feedback was also solicited and over 850 people in various meetings provided input. All of this was gathered and is available online. The Strategic Planning Advisory Committee was then formed to represent a cross section of the campus community; most faculties as well as staff, undergraduate, and graduate students and others were on this committee. A Dambrowitz and Anne Bailey (Director, Internal Communications, University Relations) steered the logistics and have done the laborious job of capturing the ideas, integrating them, and writing the draft document. There were 6 full meetings of the Advisory Committee; sub-committees were also formed to delve into focused topics. Each worked with A Dambrowitz and A Bailey to come up with the themes present in the draft document. Some participants wanted the document to be broad and inclusive, others thought it should focus on the history of the institution and others wanted it to look forward. Some felt it should focus on teaching and research and others felt it should focus on what makes us different. So there were many issues considered.

The Plan is structured around 5 themes: Build, Experience, Excel, Engage, Sustain (BEEES). The document leads with a vision statement, mission statement, and common values. Major initiatives could all fall in these five themes. Many can go under multiple themes but the intent was one theme for each initiative. Each theme has a high level goal and a handful of objectives

within that goal. The objectives offer another level of detail and contain strategies within them. President Turpin's intention is that one can read the document in 3 minutes, 30 minutes, or 3 hours, depending on the level of detail you want to get out of it. An underlying theme is that we are a public university and we have an objective responsibility to serve the public good, hence the title.

Build – this refers to building the community, not physical infrastructure; to build an inclusive community of students, faculty, and staff from Alberta, Canada, and the whole world. 5 objectives: student body; faculty and staff; indigenous stakeholders; campus community; and building a story that tells us who we are.

Experience – this refers to the student experience; to inspire, nurture, expand knowledge, and enable success. 5 objectives: first two are based on experiential learning such as studying abroad, Community Service Learning, and internships; taking advantage of the multi-campus environment; lifelong learning.

Excel – refers to excellence. 5 objectives: recognizing that the university is about breadth, we have to “cover the waterfront” (ie. a wide variety) in different areas of research and creativity; build a concentration of activity and stature to world class levels in certain areas; broad foundation with signature areas in research and learning; structures and systems for supporting research, teaching, and professional development.

Engage – refers to engaging internal, geographic, and global communities, both reciprocal and mutually beneficial. Engagement should be meaningful and start from conceptualization of tackling and issue to how we transfer our mutual learnings into the community to address societal challenges. The theme focuses on interdisciplinarity and collaboration and on partnerships with stakeholders and other research organizations.

Sustain – refers, in a broad sense to sustaining the environment, society, and people, but also the University; sustaining staff and students, financial structures, and infrastructure including IT. The theme refers to stewardship across the board: social, economic, and environmental.

S Dew and noted that no theme was prioritized over any other. As this was the first draft, the structure will change with feedback. The title was tentative but captured the “why” of Why We Are Here: research, cultural initiatives, to help students acquire an education, and to serve the public as a public university. Dare to Discover/Dare to Deliver had the same vision, mission, and value statements, and that vision still fits. The mission was been slightly altered to emphasize the value for society; the values remained similar. They noted they were hoping to wrap up consultation on the first draft in 2-3 weeks, which will allow enough time to seek Board of Governors approval in June.

Key questions: Do the goals, objectives, and strategies reflect the values discussed in the consultation phase? If you use this document in your activities, will it empower you? Are there any suggestions for changes? You can provide feedback to engage@ualberta.ca; all the resources reside on the website.

M Juhas asked what sets U of A apart from other universities and what set this Plan apart from other plans. S Dew responded that they gathered a number of plans to use as models; they hoped to avoid disappointment and create a document that inspires and leads to coordinated behavior in a complex organization. The real proof will be in how it is implemented. M Juhas asked if there would be quantitative measures to measure achievement. S Dew stated that Administration wanted to be accountable for the delivery of the Plan and there will be some targets and metrics. At this stage, feedback on whether or not it was aimed in the right direction; the next stage will be more logistical and will include implementation. Initiatives in the next stage of the Plan will have specific objectives that will define accountability lines, metrics, budgets, baselines, and targets. This is where we will see quantitative measures. Some will be anecdotal but there will definitely be measurable components as well. This is a 10 year plan with a 5 year refresh; not everything will move far in benchmarks in the first two years.

S Cake asked about retention and ongoing support in relation to the recruitment strategy. S Dew responded that the narrative said it would seek to “attract” good students, but retention is also important. There is nothing served by bringing someone here and then not setting them up to succeed. The Registrar does not like “recruitment” and prefers “enrollment.” The Plan did not get down to that level at this point but will in future. S Cake added that it was also important to attend to the retention of current graduate students.

S Sanders asked about whether there would be reports about progression and what sort of implementation would occur under the Sustain theme, in terms of student development. S Dew stated that this document was trying to set a direction to go in – how fast we go is harder to predict and determined by variables. There will have to be some prioritization to move quickly on “low hanging fruit” but other components will take time. Building a culture takes time. The Sustain theme can produce some

faster traction around the Healthy Campus Strategy led by the Dean of Students, the Dean of Phys Ed & Recreation, and the Vice-Provost (HR), who are leading initiatives to make this campus a healthier place. Some of the focus is on physical activity and some on mental wellness.

C Reynolds thanked the guests for presenting and expressed appreciation for the opportunity to offer feedback; he pointed out that most students will spend the bulk of their life outside of the University and did the Plan address success after students have left? S Dew stated that Alumni Council also raised this issue and it was being considered.

D Smirnow asked for highlights about what was different about this Plan as compared to the previous plans. S Dew noted that one key thing was a greater focus on culture on campus and building a collaborative and interdisciplinary culture of support on campus. The sustainability piece was also something that had emerged in the past few years that was not previously present. Words like “excellence” are the same but have a different focus when applied to signature areas of excellence. Federal granting programs are aimed at world class programs and initiatives and we risked losing out of we do not build up areas of strength.

S Cake asked if there are plans to improve Michener Park, as there are few financially accessible graduate student housing options. S Dew stated that Don Hickey would more readily have answers to residence questions but that it was his understanding that there are plans to redevelop Michener Park. There has been a longstanding objective to enhance graduate student opportunity.

H Thaker asked if there is a way to put in language that would support internship or co-ops while not being penalized for taking longer to finish, as time to completion is a favoured metric. S Dew responded that the purpose of this institution is to give an experience that helps one grow as much as possible. We needed performance measures to make sure that people are effective in their time. The University was effective at moving people along but to do that at the expense of other opportunities makes no sense. Rich experience is necessary. H Thaker followed-up that the language needs to support supervisors being more supportive of students taking on these kinds of activities. S Dew responded that it is an objective of the institution to have this happen.

N Mehta asked, with falling funding and poor retention of professors, how much of this is possible? N Mehta cited losing professors in Medicine and also asked how they expected a student to pay 70-80% of their stipend to live in student housing and still manage? S Dew responded that the declining professoriate is due to diminished resources after the 2013 cuts and stated that there was interest in diversifying revenue sources. The Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry was hit particularly hard because the Alberta Heritage Fund for Medical Research used to fund 100 professors but the funds were repurposed. That faculty had to absorb those positions and it had come at the expense of new hires. This transition is mostly over although there are still a couple of tough years ahead. That same endowment launched a program to hire new faculty. A number of faculties have lean percentages of the professoriate at the assistant level. Medicine is one of the places where we look to be creative and apply new ideas. In reference to residence costs, S Dew again noted that it served no purpose to bring people here and then set them up to fail due to financial circumstances.

P Appadu pointed to the issue of food security and asked if there were plans to determine if this is a problem for students. S Dew responded that we needed support levels that are viable for students. The Healthy Campus Initiative works to build awareness around good nutrition.

E Dehnavi thanked the presenters; she pointed out that sustainability, diversity, and excellence are nice words but asked how they work in practice. Her observation was that things are not changing for the better. Comparative Literature used to be thriving but now is invisible in Modern Languages and Cultural Studies (MLCS). Graduate funding comes from teaching language courses or literature content courses. This is getting worse with budget cuts. Many have to work part-time and this makes it difficult to finish in 5 years. Fewer and fewer language courses are being taught and in fewer languages as part of the proposed BA Transition project – she noted this was moving back to a Eurocentric model with respect to the study of languages. Many students in her department have no funding; with the funding situation getting worse, they will not be able to attract the best grad students. S Dew expressed appreciation for these comments but added that he is not really in a position to comment on the BA Transition, as it was a faculty prerogative. He noted that he saw Councillor Dehnavi’s point – through developing efficiencies we risk undermining some of the more niche programs that fuel our diversity. S Dew and the Dean of FGSR have discussed how to make the experience and support levels across campus more uniform so we do not have “ghettos”. This will take time but it is something to aspire to.

B Richardson brought up diversity and the importance of recruiting from other universities – considering the difficulties of transferring from a non-GPA system, can this be looked into? S Dew responded that a major priority was a more sophisticated approach to international students, particularly understanding applicants better. This would will take time they were currently

reviewing the three most common to align them with our own systems. He noted that the University hoped to partner with some universities with enough frequency that both institutions become familiar to each other. The Registrar and FGSR recognize this and are currently working on it.

N Mehta pointed out that a recent survey showed that 40% of students who do not live with their parents have used the campus food bank. If students and faculty cannot be healthy and happy, what is the point? Without keeping the stipends up, the number of students must decrease so that the ones already here can stay happy and healthy. S Dew acknowledged Councillor Mehta's point and thanked him for his comments.

S Dew closed by asking GSA Council to visit the website to provide further comments.

Action Items, Elections, Appointments, Special Business, Updates

7. GSA Health and Dental Plan Fees

C More (GSA President) presented the item and introduce guests, Kristin Foster (Director of Partnership and Development, Studentcare) and Colten Yamagishi (Program Manager, Studentcare).

C More explained that the Health and Dental fee was driven by the numbers and amounts of claims. It usually increased from year to year. The fee has to be set well in advance of its collection. There is a projected fee increase of 17% for 2016-2017. As per GSA Policy, any increases over 15% must go to a referendum. C More added that it was possible to draw down from the Health and Dental Plan Reserve Fund (HDPRF) to bridge the remaining 2%. C More concluded by saying that, following extensive discussion at GSA Board (GSAB) on the subject, the GSAB was not ready to come to GSA Council with a recommendation and would like to hear GSA Council thoughts on the subject. C More introduced the guests.

K Foster noted that claims have increased dramatically. She added that it is a good thing that the claims are going up it means that the students are using the Health and Dental Plan and communication strategies are working. She mentioned that she would not be comfortable if graduate students were not using the Health and Dental Plan; there would be no point in having a Health and Dental Plan if no one was using it. She then mentioned that dentists in Alberta have really high fees, so much so that it attracted national attention and referred to a recent newspaper article

C Yamagishi presented the document "U of A GSA Council: Health and Dental Plan Renewal Summary" distributed to GSA Council in advance of the meeting. He specified that the number per capita claims was obtained by dividing the total of claims by the enrolment in the Health and Dental Plan. He noted that usually fees increase around 5% and 6%, this increase is high.

K Foster noted that the increase was due to the increase in volume and cost of these claims. All the other costs were constant (such as administration fees). K Foster mentioned that the 17% increase projected was based on data until the end of February and that she was hoping that claims would go down and the increase would be lower than 17%. She added that she would have data until the end of March at the April GSA Council. K Foster outlined the three main options in front of GSA Council to manage the projected increase: GSA Council could approve a 15% increase (any increase over 15% must go to referendum as per GSA Policy) with the remaining 2% bring bridged from the HDPRF (making the fee paid by graduate students \$492.95); GSA Council could approve holding a referendum to increase the fee by the full 17% (bringing the fee to \$500.34); or GSA Council could approve decreasing coverage.

K Foster noted that, in order to gauge the opinions of graduate students, Studentcare conducted a phone survey from March 1 to March 8, 2016 using a random generated list of GSA members. She mentioned that Studentcare did a survey every couple of years; this year they did something unique by asking very pointed questions using concrete example. The results indicated that 50.4% of respondents supported increasing the cost of the Health and Dental Plan to maintain the current level of coverage, 23.5% preferred to decrease coverage in order to maintain the current Health and Dental Health and Dental Plan cost, and 21.7% supported increasing the cost of the Health and Dental Plan by more than 80% in order to increase coverage. C Yamagishi highlighted that there were three types of students: the ones that were satisfied, the ones that were more finance conscious, and the ones that want to pay more for more benefits. The survey gave an idea of the scope of what the student membership wanted. K Foster noted that respondents were asked which category they would feel more comfortable decreasing. The results showed that students would choose to reduce vision care coverage (53%). K Foster than added that when she was looking at mitigating the increase she focused on dental costs – where the large increase is coming from, however students absolutely do not want to reduce dental care coverage. Lastly K Foster mentioned that there was no easy answer although, by experience, reducing benefits was more noticeable and tended to raise more voices. C More noted that his personal choice was to increase the fee by 15% and bridge the difference by using the HDPRF. Using the HDPRF would allow

time to consult students properly with a well-thought referendum question presenting all the options possible including possibly a tiered plan. He added that going to a referendum now could seem attractive but the process might be rushed.

J Kong noted that Studentcare came to GSA Council every year and asked if there was a way to not have an increase every year. He then asked about the negotiation process with the insurance company and where the projected numbers were coming from. K Foster replied that the projections are internal and that they usually have been accurate compared to the numbers insurance come up with. She added that it was possible to proceed with a request for quotations from other insurers, although it is better to do when there is a change in the insurance landscape (for example a new player in the market). She also noted that, if you send a request for quotations too often, insurers will stop quoting as it is a long and expensive process. She added that if the GSA chooses to send out a request for quotations she will do it. To a comment made by J Kong, A Talaei mentioned that the GSA appreciates all the great work K Foster does for the GSA. If sending out a request for quotations was not a viable solution for the moment, it certainly was an idea to revisit in the next 3 or 4 months. A Talaei added that in his opinion K Foster worked hard to establish a strong network with professionals that offered discounts to graduate students. K Foster then added that she wished the increase was not as substantive as it was, regardless of who the broker was.

R Barta asked if it was possible to project for a two-year period. K Foster explained that she has done so in the past and it was not accurate. She specified it was hard to project without at least 6 months data and it was made further difficult and less accurate because the graduate student population was always changing and had different health issues. She noted that it was possible to negotiate for a multiple year plan, however as the insurers were taking a greater risk in doing this, the fee was usually higher and after the set number of years there was an even greater increase.

P Appadu asked if it was possible to distribute the Health and Dental fees over the semester as to not have a bigger bill in the Fall. K Foster replied that that would be a change to work out with the University as they were collecting the fee.

S Cake asked about the procedure of having a referendum in the fall and how a decision made by GSA Council might then be changed by a referendum. C More specified that the decision taken next month by GSA Council would be applicable for the whole 2016-2017 school year, the a coming referendum would then apply to upcoming years. K Foster noted that the last time graduate students examined a Health and Dental question by referendum was in 2003; the Health and Dental Plan has evolved since then. It was a good idea to ask graduate students for a fresh mandate on the administration of the Health and Dental Plan.

M Juhas asked how the survey was representative of the student body and noted that he has heard of international students for whom their funding does not pay for the Health and Dental Plan and they chose to opt-out of the Health and Dental Plan as they are covered by the U of A Health Insurance Plan (UAHIP). K Foster explained that the survey was contracted to a firm on behalf of the GSA. The intent was to reach three hundred graduate students who were asked validation questions to ensure that the survey group was as comparable to the actual demographic of the graduate student population at the University of Alberta, including students who opted out of the Health and Dental Plan. The margin of error of the survey was of 5.4. On M Juhas's second question, K Foster replied that UAHIP was an emergency plan that helped international students who don't have access to Alberta Health Care because they have not been in the country for at least 12 months. To opt-out of the GSA Health and Dental Plan a student has to be covered by an equivalent plan, UAHIP is not an equivalent plan.

C Reynolds asked if by using the network (a group of specialists who agree to offer discount to students covered by Studentcare Health and Dental Plan) students end up paying more the next year. KF replied that she was always exploring elements that she can twig so that students pay the least amount possible. She outlined one possibility: negotiate a discount of 30% instead of the current 20% with the dentists in the network and decrease the dental coverage by a percentage offset by the dental network. K Foster also noted that she did a comparative table of the cost of the GSA Health and Dental Plan with other student plans administered by Studentcare and that the GSA Health and Dental Plan is not in the most expensive range, it is in the middle.

Following a question by D Smirnow, C More specified that the HDPRF would not be emptied out, it had not been emptied out for 15 years and it would not be the best practice.

Following a question by D Brennekamp, K Foster replied that the danger with using the HDPRF is that the gap between the real cost and the cost paid by the students increases continuously.

Following a question by S Cake asking for demographic data on the survey respondents, K Foster offered to circulate the survey to GSA Council. She also specified that the survey had two validation questions: the faculty the student was in and their status (full time or part time). The validation questions were in the regular range. The idea of the survey was to take the pulse of members. K Foster noted that she did not know how many students were called to reach the 300 student target.

F Khodayari asked why, if the big increase in the claims was with dental, the health increase was bigger. C Yamagashi explained that it is because, in the past, the HDPRF subsidy had been applied to the Health Plan. K foster specified that last breakdown did not match the actual cost of each coverage as most students stay enrolled in both plans it is irrelevant if you are overcharging for one.

R Barta suggested that students that opt-out of the Health and Dental Plan enrolled in plans with better coverage. He added that he thought GSA Council should increase coverage.

B Whitlock noted that he supported C More's earlier proposal to increase the fee by 15% and bridge the difference by using the HDPRF. He expressed concerns on the collegiality of questions for fear of silencing people. Speaker agreed the tone was not as collegial as it could be.

Following a question by B Richardson, it was noted that the last referendum turnout was higher than the General Election turnout.

R Reklow noted that he supported holding a referendum as important changes needs to be made and required broader approval. M Juhas suggested presenting all the possible options in a referendum question. C More noted that, as per GSA Policy, a referendum question has to be a yes/no question and it was one of the reason to delay, so that Policy could perhaps be changed and a better questions shaped.

S Cake supported R Reklow and noted that GSA Council did not base decisions on majority - there was not proportional representation on GSA Council. She asked for GSAB to be more creative in solutions and to think outside of the box, using the example of perhaps incorporating the payment of H&D fees into the Collective Agreement. A Talaei raised the possibility of tiered plan in the future. C More encouraged Councillors to bring forward any creative solutions they may have.

Following a question by J Kong, K Foster specified that the internal analysis was not shared with the insurers and if Desjardins came up with significantly higher numbers Studentcare would push for a different insurer.

MOTION: That the GSA Council conduct a straw poll of GSA Council to provide some guidance to GSAB on how to proceed between the following options 1) holding a referendum, 2) 15% increase coupled with a drawdown of the HDPRF (with a referendum to be held in the coming year), and 3) decreasing coverage. S Sanders **MOVED**. N Metha **SECONDED**.

Option 1: In Favor: 4. Opposed: 25. Abstentions: 11 (J Kong, F Khodayari, C Reynolds, J Yong, J Worthy, H Thaker)

Option 2: In favour: 32. Opposed: 5 Abstentions: 4 (J Kong, H Thaker, V Carias, J Worhty)

Option 3: In favor: 1. Opposed: 26. Abstentions: 14 (S Cake, S Humble, B Richardson, J Kong, J Traynor, R Barta, D Brennekamp, R Reklow, S Ficko, C More, C Reynolds, M DuVal).

8. GSA Standing Committee Elections

S Fenichel (GSA Speaker) and M DuVal (GSA Nominating Committee Administrative Chair) presented the items.

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

M DuVal noted that no additional nominations were received. Radim Barta (Oncology) was elected.

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

Motion PASSED unanimously

- ii. Vote for GSA Deputy Speaker

M DuVal presented the item and noted that this election was to fill the Deputy Speaker vacancy for the remainder of the term, until June Council. The GSA Nominating Committee received two (2) nominations. She asked members to cast their ballots in one of the ballot boxes and ask any questions they may have.

The two nominees are:

1. Stephanie Ibsen (Renewable Resources)
2. Leigh Spanner (Political Science)

9. General Election 2016 Results: To Receive for Information For Purposes of Transferring Banking Signing Authority.
C More (GSA President) presented the item.

MOTION BEFORE GSA COUNCIL: That the GSA Council **RECEIVE FOR INFORMATION** the results of the General Election 2016 wherein the following graduate students were duly elected as President, Vice-President Academic, Vice-President External, Vice-President Labour, and Vice-President Student Services:

President	Sarah Ficko
Vice-President Academic	Firouz Khodayari
Vice-President External	Masoud Khademi
Vice-President Labour	Sasha van der Klein
Vice-President Student Services	Alireza Talaei

C More **MOVED**. D Smirnow **SECONDED**.

C More reported to Council that voter turnout was up from previous years.

MOTION: That the GSA Council **RECEIVE FOR INFORMATION** the results of the General Election 2016.

Motion PASSED unanimously.

For Information

10. Executive Summary of the Survey on GSA Services Undertaken in October-November 2015

A Talaei (GSA Vice-President Student Services) presented the item.

A Talaei explained that the GSA undertook a survey last October/November to find out what graduate students think of GSA Services; this was not to be confused with the survey undertaken by Studentcare, discussed earlier. The GSA wished to monitor and measure the quality of services provided. The questions were available to all graduate students through the newsletter and circulated to GSA Council. 200 responses were received: the general takeaway was that graduate students are overall satisfied but do not know a lot about the services available to them, many people reported to not using all of the services, and responses regarding the Child Care Grant were positive but few people have used it. A Talaei noted that the GSA was promoting services through orientations, the GSA handbook, and the website and would continue to promote and advertise GSA services and requested that Councillors also help in spreading this information.

S Cake pointed out that part of the survey was done in GSA Council and Councillors-at-Large were asked to self-identify. She asked how this information was used? A Talaei responded that everything was anonymized and a differentiation was not made. C Thomas explained that because the survey was opened up to all graduate students, rather than just to GSA Council as originally intended, this differentiation did not matter. S Cake pointed out that she did not self-identify because she was concerned that her answers would not be anonymous.

R Recklow asked if there was an opportunity to suggest services. A Talaei responded that students could provide comments and suggestions on the survey and C Thomas added that the only comment received concerning introducing a new service was to provide a bursary for pet owners.

P Appadu asked, since there was a large percentage of students that indicated that Health and Dental was a high value service, whether or not we will lobby for an increase in those services. A Talaei responded that according to Studentcare's recent survey, only ¼ of respondents wanted an increase so this will have to be discussed further in the coming months.

M Juhas asked if it could be determined how many of the respondents received grants. A Talaei noted that participants had the option of indicating if they had never used a particular service.

Reports

11. President

i. President's Report:

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 18 March 2016. The report stood as submitted. In addition C More stated that the GSA Governance Committee discussed quorum and would meet again on April 5 to discuss this issue further. Additionally, a review of VP portfolios was currently underway with S Ficko; results will be brought to GSA Council. C More also recently had a phone call with the Minister of Advanced Education; their intention is to consult with individual student groups as well as provincial student associations.

S Cake asked for more details on the sexual assault review. C More explained that the report was the result of a meeting between the Provost, Dean of Students' representative, and University Relations. The meeting was on Friday and the report came out on the following Monday so we were informed that the report was coming out in case we received media requests (we did not). Hopefully a committee will be struck to look at the findings in the report, which showed poor coordination between bodies on campus that deal with sexual assault. I expect the GSA to be involved but we do not yet know how or when.

H Thaker asked if the GSA Governance Committee could suggest possible changes to GSA Policy on referenda and V Pimmitt stated, as a Point of Information, that this would go to GSA Elections and Referenda Committee. C More noted that changes would require a change to GSA Bylaw and GSA Policy, which were GSA Council decisions. H Thaker pointed out that a yes/no questions seemed restrictive and V Pimmitt noted that she would bring this issue forward to the GSA Elections and Referenda Committee.

i. GSA Board

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 18 March 2016. The report stood as submitted.

ii. GSA Budget and Finance Committee

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 18 March 2016. The report stood as submitted. In addition C More stated that GSA BFC recommended a proposal to GSA Council to use three-year projections rather than five-year projections when developing the budget.

iii. GSA Governance Committee

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 18 March 2016. The report stood as submitted.

12. GSA Nominating Committee

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 18 March 2016. The report stood as submitted. In addition M DuVal highlighted upcoming vacancies: General Faculties Council has 14 grad student positions; there is also a GSA Board vacancy for Councillors; the GSA Appeals and Complaints Board was looking for current or recent former councillors. If the person who was councillor before you is still a graduate student, they are eligible. S Cake asked if Councillors-at-Large are eligible. M DuVal responded, that as they participated in the previous election, they were not eligible. If a student has run in the most recent election, they are not eligible; if you were a Councillor-at-Large two years ago, you would be eligible.

13. Vice-President Academic

ii. Vice-President's Academic's Report

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 18 March 2016. The report stood as submitted.

14. Vice-President External

iii. Vice-President External's Report

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 18 March 2016. The report stood as submitted.

iv. GSA Awards Selection Committee's Report

No meetings this reporting period.

15. Vice-President Labour

i. Vice-President Labour's Report

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 18 March 2016. In addition, S Ficko noted that the GSA Labour Relations Committee has discussed how to increase awareness regarding the AEGS Collective Agreement. She stated that she wished to continue this discussion in the future. She added that she had been meeting with GSA Councillors to gain an understanding of how each departments function. P Appadu noted that he appreciated the effort and the proactivity and hope S van der Klein continues.

S Cake asked what the goal of these meetings was and S Ficko replied that she wanted to gain an understanding of the culture of departments and of common issues to be able to target better actions taken in the future. S Cake specified that actions should be taken now to better the situation in certain departments. S Ficko encouraged Councillors to approach her if they want to discuss the culture in their department.

ii. GSA Negotiating Committee

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 18 March 2016. The report stood as submitted.

iii. GSA Labour Relations Committee

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 18 March 2016. The report stood as submitted.

16. Vice-President Student Services

i. Vice-President Student Services' Report

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 18 March 2016. The report stood as submitted.

ii. GSA Student Affairs Advisory Committee

No meetings this reporting period.

17. Senator

i. Senator's Report

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 18 March 2016. The report stood as submitted.

18. Speaker

i. Speaker's Report

No written report at this time.

19. Chief Returning Officer

i. Chief Returning Officer's Report

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 18 March 2016. The report stood as submitted. Additionally, V Pimmatt thanked candidates in the recent General Election and everyone who voted. She noted that the turnout last year was 5.8% and this year it was 10.8%.

S Cake asked about the nature of complaints made in the General Election. V Pimmatt replied that the GSA Elections and Referenda Committee had not debriefed yet and she added they dealt with informal complaints as well as formal complaints. She also mentioned that there would be another report that would also highlight some needed GSA Bylaw and Policy changes.

S Cake asked whether you were able to vote if you were a graduate student on leave. E Schoeck replied that, as per the GSA's third-party information sharing agreement, only registered graduate students were eligible to vote which discounted graduate students on leave unless they had registered in order to have access to certain University and GSA services. V Pimmatt noted that this issue was on the "to fix" list.

20. GSA Elections and Referenda Committee

i. GSA Elections and Referenda Committee Report

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 18 March 2016. The report stood as submitted.

21. GSA Management

i. Executive Director's Report

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 18 March 2016. The report stood as submitted. Additionally, E Schoeck noted that the office was getting ready for transition; two full days (April 8 and April 22). She indicated that the newly-elected Directly-Elected Officers (DEOs) had started job shadowing.

J Kong indicated that he wanted to make a motion to investigate the payment of the Health and Dental Plan fee of the DEOs through the use of GSA fees.

MOTION IN FRONT OF GSA COUNCIL: That the GSA Council refer to the GSA Budget and Finance Committee an investigation of the payment of the Health and Dental fees for the Directly-Elected Officers. J Kong **MOVED**. P Appadu **SECONDED**.

S Cake asked who had made the decision that the DEOs' Health and Dental Plan fee would be paid for. E Schoeck replied that the GSA Budget and Finance Committee compared the DEOs' stipends and benefits with those for the DEOs at the University of Calgary (who are the closest equivalent to the GSA with respect to workloads, etc) and they did not feel a change was necessary. S Cake raised the question of transparency.

C More noted that the payment of this fee for the DEOs was the equivalent of approximately 36 cents/graduate student. It was also noted that most companies and Boards paid for such things for employees and members, even though DEOs did not fall under employment law. It was specified that they are full time graduate students.

MOTION: That the GSA Council refer to GSA Budget and Finance Committee to investigate the payment of the Health and Dental fees for the Directly-Elected Officers. J Kong **MOVED**. P Appadu **SECONDED**.

Motion **FAILED**. In favour: 5. Opposed: 7. 9 Abstentions (J Worhty, C More, S Ficko, A Talaei, H Thaker, A Ndem Ahola)

Question Period

22. Written Questions

None at this time.

23. Oral Questions

P Appadu indicated that he wanted to bring forward a motion to refer to the GSA Governance Committee a review of the duties and responsibilities of the DEOs. P Appadu withdrew the motion until next GSA Council.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:54 pm.