

GSA Council Meeting CONSOLIDATED AGENDA

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

A pizza dinner will be served at 5:15 pm

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 Sulya Fenichel in the Chair

OPEN SESSION

**Attached Numbered
Pages**

1. Roll Call
2. Approval of the 21 March 2016 Agenda
3. Approval of the Minutes from the 22 February 2016 GSA Council Meeting
Attachments:
 - Minutes from the 22 February 2016 GSA Council Meeting
4. Changes in GSA Council Membership
 - i. Introduction of New Councillors (*If you are new to GSA Council, please let us know it is your first meeting*)
 - ii. Farewell to Departing Councillors (*If this is your last GSA Council meeting, or if your last Council meeting is approaching, please let us know*)

3.0 - 3.8

Presentations and Councillor Announcements

5. Institutional Strategic Plan
Colin More (GSA President) will present the item and introduce the guest
Guest: Steven Dew, Provost and Vice-President (Academic)

Attachments:

- First Draft of the Institutional Strategic Plan

5.1 - 5.28

6. Councillor Announcements

Action Items, Elections, Appointments, Special Business, Updates

7. GSA Health and Dental Plan Fees for 2016-2017
Colin More (GSA President) will present the item and introduce the guest
Guests: Kristin Foster, Director of Partnership and Development, Studentcare, and Colten Yamagishi, Program Manager, Studentcare

Attachments:

- Cover Letter
- Outline of Issue: GSA Health and Dental Plan Fees for 2016-2017
- GSA Health and Dental Plan Summary

7.0 - 7.1

7.2 - 7.4

7.5 - 7.6

Prepared by J Tanguay, C Thomas, and E Schoeck for the Council Meeting of 18 January 2016

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8. GSA Standing Committee Elections
- i. Joint Position on the GSA Board/GSA Nominating Committee Vacancy: Newly-Elected Member (no additional nominations received)
Sulya Fenichel (GSA Speaker) will present the item.
- Attachments:*
- Joint Position on the GSA Board/GSA Nominating Committee Vacancy: Newly-Elected Member **8.0 – 8.1**
- ii. Election: GSA Deputy Speaker (no additional nominations received)
Michelle DuVal (GSA Nominating Committee Administrative Chair) will present the item.
- Attachments:*
- Election: GSA Deputy Speaker (List of Nominees) **8.2 – 8.3**
9. General Election 2016 Results: To Receive For Information For Purposes of Transferring Banking Signing Authority
Colin More (GSA President) will present the item.
- Attachments:*
- Outline of Issue **9.0**

For Information

10. Executive Summary of the Survey on GSA Services Undertaken in October-November, 2015
Ali Talaei (GSA Vice-President Student Services) will present the item
- Attachments:*
- Outline of Issue **10.0**
 - Executive Summary of the Survey on GSA Services Undertaken in October-November, 2015 **10.6**

Reports

11. President (**Colin More, GSA President**)
- i. President's Report **11.0 – 11.2**
 - ii. GSA Board **11.3 – 11.4**
 - iii. GSA Budget and Finance Committee **11.5**
 - iv. GSA Governance Committee **11.6**
12. GSA Nominating Committee
- i. GSA Nominating Committee Report (**Michele DuVal, GSA Nominating Committee Administrative Chair**) **12.0 -12.1**
13. Vice-President Academic (**Harsh Thaker, GSA Vice-President Academic**)
- i. Vice-President Academic's Report **13.0 – 13.1**
14. Vice-President External (**Alphonse Ndem Ahola, GSA Vice-President External**)
- i. Vice-President External's Report **14.0 - 14.1**
 - ii. GSA Awards Selection Committee (**no meetings this reporting period**)
15. Vice-President Labour (**Sarah Ficko, GSA Vice-President Labour**)
- i. Vice-President Labour's Report **15.0 – 15.2**
 - ii. GSA Negotiating Committee **15.3**
 - iii. GSA Labour Relations Committee **15.4**

Prepared by J Tanguay, C Thomas, and E Schoeck for the Council Meeting of 18 January 2016

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| 16. Vice-President Student Services (Alireza Talaei, GSA Vice-President Student Services) | |
| i. Vice-President Student Services' Report | 16.0 – 16.1 |
| ii. GSA Student Affairs Advisory Committee (Joint Chair: Vice-President External) (no meetings this reporting period) | |
| 17. Senator (Leigh Spanner, GSA Senator) | |
| i. Senator's Report | 17.0 |
| 18. Speaker (Sulya Fenichel, GSA Speaker) | |
| i. Speaker's Report (no written report at this time) | |
| 19. Chief Returning Officer (Virginia Pimmett, GSA Chief Returning Officer) | |
| i. Chief Returning Officer's Report | 19.0 – 19.1 |
| 20. GSA Elections and Referenda Committee (Leigh Spanner, GSA Elections and Referenda Committee Chair) | |
| i. GSA Elections and Referenda Committee Report | 20.0 |
| 21. GSA Appeals and Complaints Board (Chris Chen, GSA Appeals and Complaints Board Chair) | |
| i. GSA Appeals and Complaints Board Report | 21.0 |
| 22. GSA Management (Ellen Schoeck, GSA Executive Director) | |
| i. Executive Director's Report | 22.0 – 22.3 |

Question Period

23. Written Questions (**none at this time**)
24. Oral Questions

Adjournment

GSA Council Meeting AGENDA
Monday, February 22, 2016 at 6:00 pm
2-100 University Hall, Van Vliet Complex

IN ATTENDANCE:

Colin More (President)	Cameron Smithers (Biochemistry)	Shaina Humble (English & Film Studies)	Radim Barta (Oncology)
Harsh Thaker (VP Academic)	Michele DuVal (Biological Sciences)	Eve Robidoux (Faculte Saint-Jean)	Ashley Bahry (Paediatrics)
Sarah Ficko (VP Labour)	Graham Little (Biomedical Engineering)	Neil Prather (History & Classics)	Prabhjot Bedi (Paediatrics)
Alphonse Ndem Ahola (VP External)	Sarah Prendergast (Business MBA)	Sumit Mandal (Human Ecology)	Katarina Ondrusova (Pharmacology)
Ali Talaei (VP Student Services)	Dasha Smirnow (Business PhD)	Rachel Osolen (Humanities Computing)	Kathy Tang (Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences)
Sulya Fenichel (Speaker)	Avinash Sheshachalam (Cell Bio)	Muhammad Usama Arif (Internetworking)	Jay Worthy (Philosophy)
Virginia Pimmett (CRO)	Sahar Saadat (Chemical & Materials Engineering)	Mahalakshmi Kumaran (Laboratory Medicine & Pathology)	Norbert Kanyo (Physical Ed & Recreation)
Leigh Spanner (Senator and Councillor-at-Large)	Joseph Cheramy (Chemistry)	Jessica Peck (Library & Information Studies)	Will Giang (Physics)
Pooran Appadu (Councillor-at-Large)	Firouz Khodayari (Civil & Environmental Engineering)	Carla Lewis (Library & Information Studies)	Noureddin Zaamout (Political Science)
Susan Cake (Councillor-at-Large)	Darian Brennekamp (Communication Science & Disorders)	Claudia Heinrich (Linguistics)	Karen Du (Psychology)
Sarang Gumfekar (Councillor-at-Large)	Victor Guana (Computing Science)	Michelle Michelle (Mathematical & Statistical Sciences)	Colin Reynolds (Public Health)
Hannah Madsen (Councillor-at-Large)	Samira Diar-Bakirly (Dentistry)	Vanessa Carias (Medical Genetics)	Michael Gillingham (Religious Studies)
Robert Recklaw (Councillor-at-Large)	Nicole Meyer (Earth & Atmospheric Sciences)	Melissa Silva (Medicine)	Ryan Stanfield (Renewable Resources)
Megha Bajaj (Councillor-at-Large)	Shelby Sanders (Earth & Atmospheric Sciences)	Elli Dehnavi (MLCS)	Alison Murata (Renewable Resources)
Tania Shewring (AFNS)	Jane Traynor (East Asian Studies)	Grant Norman (Neuroscience)	Kelsi Barkway (Sociology)
Kateryna Pashkovska (Anthropology)	Gem Shoute (Electrical & Computer Eng)	Mary Obstfeld (Nursing)	Antonio Bruni (Surgery)
Michael Woolley (Art & Design)	Lorna Sutherland (Elementary Education)	Chantel Lagimodiere (Occupational Therapy)	

GUESTS: Sasha van der Klein (VP Labour Candidate); Somaye Nasr (President, CEEGSA)

Speaker Sulya Fenichel in the Chair.

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

Roll Call**1. Roll Call of GSA Council Members in Attendance****Approval of Agenda****2. Approval of the 22 February 2016 Consolidated Agenda**

Members had before them the 22 February 2016 Consolidated Agenda, which had been previously distributed on 19 February 2016. S Fenichel **MOVED**; P Appadu **SECONDED**.

Approval of Minutes**3. Minutes from the 18 January 2016 GSA Council meeting**

Members had before them the 18 January 2016 GSA Council Minutes, which had been previously distributed on 12 February 2016. S Fenichel **MOVED**; N Prather **SECONDED**.

S Cake clarified a point that she made at the January Council meeting, feeling that it was not properly reflected in the minutes. At that meeting she explained that students could be paid on the scale in the CA compared to hours worked, by doing this their supervisor can adjust their pay as the CA does not provide any guidance for how students are placed on the scale. She also noted that she had explained how she understood the scale working; that is a supervisor takes the total amount of money they have to pay a student and then divides it out by the weeks per semester and puts the student on the scale level corresponding to this amount. She specified that, finally, she had noted that the scale allows students working the exact same amount of time to be paid differently depending on the funding available to the supervisor, a loophole in the CA.

APPROVED AS AMENDED.

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

This was the first meeting for a number of Councillors: R Stanfield (Renewable Resources); M Woolley (Art & Design); P Bedi (Paediatrics).

ii. Farewell to Departing Councillors

This was the last meeting for one Councillor: A Murata (Renewable Resources)

Presentations and Councillor Announcements**5. Councillor Announcements**

- H Thaker announced that Let's Talk Science was holding a stem cell event on March 4 and looking for volunteers anytime from 8:00-4:00. Email the coordinator. The public lecture was at 7:00 pm on March 4 in Bernard Snell Hall.
- M Bajaj - FGSR and the Career Centre have partnered to create a graduate student internship program - GSIP. They will offer graduate students internship options, and most are paid. Look for info on the Career Centre website.

Action Items, Elections, Appointments, Special Business, Updates**6. GSA Standing Committee Elections**

M DuVal (Administrative Chair of the GSA Nominating Committee) presented the item.

There was one vacancy to fill on the GSA Appeals and Complaints Board (GSA ACB). M DuVal explained to members that the GSA Nominating Committee (GSA NoC) was trying a new method for voting, based on previous meeting feedback. Everyone should have received a ballot on the way in; each department is allowed one vote. Ballot could be placed in the boxes at the front.

S Cake asked how the GSA NoC interviewed candidates. M DuVal explained that GSA ACB Policy requires an interview in the nominating process. The GSA NoC interviewed each candidate to assess skills required for fair process such as impartiality, the right to be heard, and refraining from making a decision until all materials and parties are heard. The GSA NoC poses questions in the form of scenarios so the nominees can demonstrate these skills. Each candidate before GSA Council has demonstrated these skills.

a) Vote for GSA Appeals and Complaints Board:

Horia Jalily Hasani

Sabrina Lopresti

None of the Candidates

7. Annual Operating and Capital Budget (2016-2017) and Restricted and Other Funding Budget (2016-2017) (For Approval) AND Annual Operating and Capital Five-Year Budget/Business Plan (2016-2021) and Restricted and Other Funding Five-Year Budget/Business Plan (2016-2021) (For Information)

C More (GSA President) presented the item.

- a) **MOTION BEFORE COUNCIL:** That, having been recommended by the GSA BFC and GSA Board, GSA Council **APPROVE** the Annual Operating and Capital Budget (2016-2017) and the Restricted and Other Funding Budget (2016-2017).

The following points were raised during discussion:

E Schoeck stated that C More, S Ficko, and D Smirnow are all on the GSA Budget and Finance Committee (GSA BFC), along with GSA Accountant Shirley Ball, Financial Operator Dorte Sheikh, Courtney Thomas, and Heather Hogg. There are also two at-large graduate students. The budget is presented in two ways, for 'numbers people' and 'words people'.

E Schoeck explained that the process of building the next budget begins immediately after approval of the current budget and looks at what we are spending, what we are spending it on and what the rules and regulations for spending are. We now have solid historical data, as opposed to five years ago when we had none. The budget is built by experienced professionals. The GSA BFC and GSA Board are confident about the budget before GSA Council. Five, four, and three years ago, GSA Council passed large increases to the GSA fees; there has been no increase to the fee in the past few years. Fees have only gone up by the legislated Consumer Price Index (CPI). University of Alberta Financial Services, who assesses and collects GSA fees, has seen improvements in our financial practices; they used to hold the GSA fees until after the September term, so the GSA was operating in a deficit for half the year. They now feel comfortable giving the money up front, and have agreed to do so again. The big news in this budget is that enrollment has gone down. With fewer fees being collected, some changes were made for this in other expenditures. One staff position, for example, is kept vacant. Also, a decision was made to take our share of the rent from Chopped leaf (\$42,000) into the operating budget in case the numbers go down again. To be conservative and careful, no growth in graduate student numbers is predicted for this year and reflected in the five future budgets as well. The GSA receives regular funding from the Alumni Association and FGSR for professional development events.

E Schoeck explained to Council that the GSA hired an IT consultant, which has never been done before. The GSA had an external review and hired this consultant to bring the GSA up to University standards. Additionally, an external review of HR suggested that a fund for medical and parental leave for GSA staff should be established; this is a restricted fund that will not be used every year. The Unitized Endowment Pool is money invested by the GSA. GSA BFC interviewed four banks and selected one to invest these funds. ab-GPAC fees are going to increase by \$1 per year. The money collected for the previous provincial advocacy group (ACG) will go to mitigate this increase over the next two years. E Schoeck noted that in the Restricted Budget, funds are only spent on certain things (Health & Dental is only spent on Health & Dental) while the Operating Budget is spent in seven budget lines.

R Barta asked about the \$25,000 to be invested and the costs involved with that investment. S Ball responded that to retain purchasing power, an investment advisor with a three year strategy and quarterly reporting was decided on. Numbers will be clearly documented in the investment strategy. E Schoeck added that the investment advisor thought the return would be 5% but to be conservative 3% was calculated in the budget. All not-for-profit organizations need at least 3-6 months of operating funds available to avoid dissolution. This money must be on hand in case the organization has to wind itself down. Some funds will stay liquid, such as the legal defense fund, and others have longer investment times.

M Bajaj referred to page 7.7, under GSA Advocacy and asked what the line for University Relations referred to. E Schoeck explained that this fund is used to maintain relationships within the University. For example, taking Sean Price out for lunch to maintain good relations with Alumni Relations.

S Cake reminded GSA Council that last year, there were questions about looking at the Directly-Elected Officers' stipends. E Schoeck responded that this was discussed at GSA BFC, and the closest equivalent found was the University of Calgary. Their GSA is a similar size and falls under the same Act, and the elected officers do similar things. S Cake asked about the honorariums for the Speaker and CRO, are they increased annually by CPI and comparable to University of Calgary? E Schoeck responded that those positions have not been looked at. P Appadu stated that GSA Council should play a greater role in how Directly-Elected Officers are paid and their responsibilities.

R Barta asked what students would gain from the extra dollar spent on ab-GPAC. C More explained that the group is composed of graduate students from Alberta's research intensive universities. Right now, students are not getting much as the group is still young. ab-GPAC does not want to spend money wastefully; currently they are building the organization, website, logos, etc. They would like to hire a policy researcher. In the coming years, students will see the money go to more lobbying activities. One thing ab-GPAC wants to put in place for the future is setting up an Alberta equivalent of the Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario, which provides metrics for education. The ab-GPAC treasurer is going to the HEQCO conference in Ontario to see how we can improve our situation. R Barta asked if our choices of funding are similar to Ontario – was there a reason for the cost per student. C More responded that the cost of the group is based on estimates of what the group might need and based on previous iterations of similar groups.

P Appadu asked if there are any ideas to increase GSA revenue, pointing out that the Students' Union holds equity in Dewey's and RATT. E Schoeck responded that the GSA does not run businesses. The GSA has gained new sources of revenue in the past several years – from Alumni, the Wellness Centre, and FGSR. She also added that the GSA previously went bankrupt running a bar.

H Thaker clarified that the membership fee is indexed by CPI however there is no stipulation that expenses are indexed at the same rate.

MOTION: That, having been recommended by the GSA BFC and GSA Board, GSA Council **APPROVE** the Annual Operating and Capital Budget (2016-2017) and the Restricted and Other Funding Budget (2016-2017). C More **MOVED**. A Talaei **SECONDED**.

Motion PASSED unanimously.

- b) **MOTION BEFORE COUNCIL:** That, having been reviewed and advised upon by the GSA BFC and recommended by the GSA Board, GSA Council **RECEIVE FOR INFORMATION** the Annual Operating and Capital Five-Year Budget/Business Plan (2016-2021) and Restricted and Other Funding Five-Year Budget/Business Plan (2016-2021).

No further points were raised.

MOTION: That, having been reviewed and advised upon by the GSA BFC and recommended by the GSA Board, GSA Council **RECEIVE FOR INFORMATION** the Annual Operating and Capital Five-Year Budget/Business Plan (2016-2021) and Restricted and Other Funding Five-Year Budget/Business Plan (2016-2021). C More **MOVED**. S Sanders **SECONDED**.

Motion PASSED unanimously.

8. GSA 2015-2016 Budget and Expenditure (Quarterly) Report

C More (GSA President) presented the item.

MOTION BEFORE COUNCIL: That the GSA Council **RECEIVE FOR INFORMATION** the GSA 2015-2016 Budget and Expenditure (Quarterly) Report.

The following points were raised during discussion:

E Schoeck thanked Councillors who attended the Budget 101 session. She stated that the Audit will be in June.

For the Unitized Endowment Fund, when the GSA cashed the money from the University it was worth \$42,000 more than the valuation done the month before. The old advocacy group (AGC), which ab-GPAC replaced, received \$1.00 per graduate student per term from the GSA. This was a dedicated fee of \$0.50 assessed per graduate student per term that was implemented by a referendum in 2000 and the remaining \$0.50 per graduate student per term was paid out of the GSA Operating Budget. Fees for ab-GPAC have been set at \$3.00 per graduate student per term, effective September 2015. S Cake asked what would happen if the fee increase (from the current \$1 per year to \$3 per year) goes to a referendum and fails. C More responded that this was previously discussed when S Cake was GSA VP External. If it does not pass, we will have to find the money from a different line.

E Schoeck raised that the fact that the Professional line was overspent but was balanced by other lines. There is currently \$18,000 budgeted to have an IT consultant come in for 5-10 hours/week but it might be less than that.

H Thaker asked about the Graduate Student Assistance Program (GSAP) fee and if the surplus was restricted funding. S Ball responded that it is built up and that there is a fund set aside for the surplus accumulated going forward.

MOTION: That the GSA Council **RECEIVE FOR INFORMATION** the GSA 2015-2016 Budget and Expenditure (Quarterly) Report. C More **MOVED**. L Spanner **SECONDED**.

Motion PASSED unanimously.

9. GSA Child Care Grants: Proposed Changes to GSA Policy, Grant Application Policy and Information

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

MOTION BEFORE COUNCIL: That the GSA Council, on the unanimous recommendation of the GSA Board, **APPROVE** changes to GSA Policy, GSA Grant Application Policy and Information, as shown in the attached double column document and effective immediately.

The following points were raised during discussion:

A Talaei noted that this proposal aims to align the GSA Child Care Grant Policy with the other GSA Grant Policy in order to allow students on leave to apply for the GSA Child Care grant. Following a question by N Meyer, A Talaei specified that leaves needed to be approved by FGSR. M Bal noted that leaves can be for mental health, bereavement leave, compassionate leave, etc. R Barta asked if students on leave pay GSA fees and hence contribute to the fund. E Schoeck indicated that GSA grants are not funded by the GSA. They are funded by the Graduate Student Support Fund (GSSF) which is a pool of money negotiated with and given by the University every year. P Appadu asked if a student does not pay their GSA fee, would they be eligible for the grant. C More replied much of it depended on the timing (ie, a graduate student could have paid the GSA fee in September and then gone on leave in October) but part of the application process is verifying that they are registered or on an approved leave. A Talaei noted that only one request from a student on leave has been made and that this sparked this proposal. In response to a question from S Cake, who spoke in clear support of the proposal, A Talaei noted that an exception was made for the student on leave who originally applied.

MOTION: That the GSA Council, on the unanimous recommendation of the GSA Board, **APPROVE** changes to GSA Policy, GSA Grant Application Policy and Information, as shown in the attached double column document and effective immediately. A Talaei **MOVED**. S Ficko **SECONDED**.

Motion PASSED unanimously.

At this point the results of the vote for one member of the GSA Appeals and Complaints Board were presented.

Sabrina Lopresti received 35 votes; Horia Jalily Hasani received 18 votes; None of the Candidates received 2 votes; 2 spoiled ballots. Sabrina Lopresti was elected.

For Information

Reports

10. President

i. President's Report:

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 19 February 2016. The report stood as submitted.

In addition C More stated that, with respect to the GSA Rolling Budget and Business Plan, the GSA BFC and GSA Board discussed a change from a five-year rolling budget and business plan to a three-year one.

C More also indicated that he had two clarifications from the January GSA Council meeting. First he noted that he talked to the University of Lethbridge and their negotiating committee was composed of 3 graduate students, not the whole Council as was suggested. Secondly, with respect to the right to strike and unionization, the GSA Board had extensive discussion on the subject and decided to examine the question with ab-GPAC. Other ab-GPAC universities are not interested in the right to strike or unionization. The government is working on the right to strike question to comply with the Supreme Court decision. C More noted that the last they heard the government had a plan to modify the *Post-Secondary Learning Act (PSLA)* however after receiving legal counsel they were told that it was not constitutional. So they are revising their proposal.

S Cake stated that, regardless of other universities' plans, if we want the right to strike, and to unionize, we should offer suggestions about what would likely be necessary. C More replied that the changes to the *PSLA* will affect all universities the same way. He also specified that, as the government plan is still uncertain, the GSA might want to wait to pursue this any further until there is a clear idea of how the government will amend the *PSLA* to address.

In answer to a question from M Bajaj, C More described the new Mandatory Non-Instructional Fee (MNIF) Oversight Committee. He started by explaining that, under the current system, it was hard to account for what these fees are used for. The new oversight committee tries to fix that issue. The committee will be composed of 6 students, 6 administrators, and 1 member of the Senate. The committee will discuss how the fees are spent, and if they should be raised by the set calculation. C More noted that a lot of transparency on how the MNIFs are spent is gained with this new committee even though the new calculation amounts to a higher increase than the CPI. A memo of principles has been signed by C More, Navneet Khinda (SU President), and Philip Stack (Associate Vice-President Risk Management) and the proposal will go through governance route for final approval.

i. GSA Board

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 19 February 2016. The report stood as submitted.

ii. GSA Budget and Finance Committee

No meetings this reporting period.

iii. GSA Governance Committee

No meetings this reporting period.

11. GSA Nominating Committee

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 19 February 2016. The report stood as submitted. S Cake inquired about vacancies that the GSA NoC is trying to fill. M DuVal specified that there was one joint position to serve on GSA NoC and GSA Board. She added that the GSA NoC had contacted a lot of GSA Councillors regarding interest. M DuVal then described the position. She also specified that the GSA NoC would prefer if someone could serve on both committees but were open to having two different Councillors fill these positions. S Cake asked if it was possible to see current vacancies. M DuVal replied that it is possible to add current vacancies to the report as a standing item.

P Appadu asked a question regarding the advertisement for the standing committees of General Faculty Council (GFC) currently in the GSA Newsletter. M DuVal explained that the GSA NoC advertises these positions and then selects names to forward to the GFC Nominating Committee who has the final say on who will serve on GFC Standing Committees. E Schoeck added that when the GSA NoC was established they met with representatives from GFC to discuss the process of selecting GSA representatives on GFC standing committees. It was also noted that the positions for the GFC University Appeal Board (a quasi-judicial panel) were subject to a more stringent application process – names were sent to GFC for consideration but students could also apply directly. P Appadu then raised if it should not be a prerogative of the GSA to select who represent graduate students on GFC standing committees. E Schoeck specified that this would require a change to UAPPOL. H Thaker indicated that he could discuss this at the next GFC Nominating Committee.

12. Vice-President Academic

ii. Vice-President's Academic's Report

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 19 February 2016. The report stood as submitted. In addition H Thaker highlighted the academic governance renewal happening at GFC; he specified that he thought it was a great exercise in democracy. S Cake asked if he was suggesting that the GSA looks at its governance structure. H Thaker replied that the quorum of the GSA Council should be revised, as it is very low for the number of seats that there is. S Cake asked him if he was making a motion. H Thaker replied that he would address this point during question period.

13. Vice-President External

iii. Vice-President External's Report

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 19 February 2016. The report stood as submitted. In addition, A Ndem Ahola mentioned the very positive outcome of discussion and collaboration with UAI and the Career Centre in regards with Master students in the Internetworking program. These students are now offered multiple workshops on how to build resume and how to find a job in Canada. Students are very satisfied. A Ndem Ahola also added that during discussion on the Institutional Strategic Plan, issues about international students with disabilities were raised.

S Sanders indicated that students in her department brought to her attention concerns with English as a Second Language students struggling with their English skills and looking for additional support. P Appadu noted resources through the Faculty of Extension and Toastmasters, F Khodayari noted resources with UAI, and H Thaker mentioned the English Language School which might have a cost associated. S Sanders noted that it would be helpful if the University were to endorse any external resources to assist these students. A Ndem Ahola indicated that he would raise the question with UAI.

iv. GSA Awards Selection Committee's Report

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 19 February 2016. The report stood as submitted.

14. Vice-President Labour

i. Vice-President Labour's Report

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 19 February 2016. The report stood as submitted. In addition S Ficko noted that negotiations for the renewal of the Academically-Employed Graduate Students Collective Agreement (CA) are moving forward and there will be a special meeting of GSA Council to ratify the CA in late March or early April.

S Cake stated that she appreciated S Ficko taking the time to address all her questions in the GSA VP Labour's report. She also indicated that when she served on the GSA Labour and Relations Committee, she read all of English Canada Universities AEGS CAs and felt that the ones from Alberta were the worst. She added that she felt that it was a systemic problem. She then asked how keeping negotiations confidential was beneficial. S Ficko replied that confidentiality was part of good faith bargaining. S Cake added that she did not see how the secrecy around negotiations would help to better the AEGS CA. S Ficko indicated that it could not be change for this year's negotiation and that details could not be shared with GSA Council under a memorandum of agreement was developed and brought forward for ratification.

P Appadu asked if our negotiation techniques could be more aggressive, for example at the University of Toronto, graduate students went on strike. Secondly, he asked why nothing was done for departments who were recalcitrant in complying with the CA. S Ficko answered the first question by stating that there is a big culture difference between Alberta and Ontario and that the graduate student population at the University of Alberta is not as engaged in those matters. She addressed the second question by saying that to be able to intervene in departments she needs to be made aware of problems, and that the University is responsible of ensuring that departments comply with the AEGS CA. S Cake suggested accessing appointment letters directly from departments and not wait to have them to be set to the GSA by graduate students.

Following a question by C Reynolds, C More specified that he highlighted the importance of having well paid and satisfied graduate students to attract excellence in an array of venues to Administration. He added that this argument has resonance in some places but it has not reached the AEGS CA discussion yet.

R Barta asked, if we want to bring forward ideas to modify the CA, when should this discussion happen. S Ficko replied that the GSA Labour Relations Committee will start this discussion when it is time to develop the next opening position to commence bargaining.

S Cake stated that she was confused as to why compliance with the AEGS CA resided with the Provost's Office. C More specified that it was because they are the ones with authority over departments and academic staff, the GSA has no authority to force departments to comply with the AEGS CA.

C Reynolds inquired what kind of feedback will be welcomed when the CA will be presented at the special meeting. S Ficko indicated that it will only be a question of ratifying or not ratifying the Memorandum of Settlement.

ii. GSA Negotiating Committee

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 19 February 2016. The report stood as submitted.

iii. GSA Labour Relations Committee

No meetings this reporting period.

15. Vice-President Student Services

i. Vice-President Student Services' Report

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 19 February 2016. The report stood as submitted. In addition A Talaei stated that the results of the survey on GSA services will be presented at the March Council meeting. The biggest take away is that the GSA needs to communicate its services better. A Talaei also reported that the prorated U-Pass fee, which was a pilot project, was now permanent. Following a question, A Talaei gave an update on the Michener Park Transit issue and noted that the next step was to acquire an institutional support letter.

ii. GSA Student Affairs Advisory Committee

No meetings this reporting period.

16. Senator

i. Senator's Report

No written report at this time.

17. Speaker

i. Speaker's Report

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 19 February 2016. The report stood as submitted, but S Fenichel also reported orally so as to reach as many people as possible. She was originally asked by H Thaker about the attendance policy instituted last May. She noted that emails were sent for first and second absences, and emails following a third absence were aimed at first ensuring that the student was alright and then at trying to fill the vacant position at the departmental level. Currently there were two ongoing situations with a Councillor-at-Large and our Deputy Speaker. The Deputy Speaker cannot continue and GSA Council will soon see a call for nominations. The Councillor-at-Large in question has not responded to any emails. P Appadu wondered how the GSA worked to fill departmental vacancies. F Robertson explained that we always try to contact the group first and, then if we have no answer, we go from there and work with the student group or a departmental administrator to find a new representative.

18. Chief Returning Officer

i. Chief Returning Officer's Report

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 19 February 2016. The report stood as submitted. In addition V Pimmitt urged all Councillors to go back to their constituents and encourage them to vote. P Appadu asked if there will be mechanisms in place to have laptops available so that graduate students can vote in their departments. V Pimmitt responded that this was discussed with the GSA Elections and Referenda Committee, and while the idea was good in theory, in practice it was not logistically feasible. H Thaker made a Point of Information to the effect that there were plenty of computers in libraries that could be used.

19. 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 19 February 2016. The report stood as submitted. In addition L Spanner encouraged members to urge their colleagues to vote, as previously noted by the CRO. C Smithers asked, since the vote was online, could Councillors host polling stations in their own department. L Spanner replied that using devices provided by someone else is problematic, especially when that person is a GSA representative. There is a potential risk of bias, even if only perceived. J Tanguay reminded Councillors that there were posters to advertise the election available for them to take to their departments.

20. GSA Management

i. Executive Director's Report

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 19 February 2016. The report stood as submitted.

Question Period

21. Written Questions

None at this time.

22. Oral Questions

D Smirnow stated that many Councillors do not know how to add items on the agendas for specific committees and asked if it was possible to share this information. S Fenichel asked Councillors to write to someone in the office who can instruct them on proper procedure. P Appadu stated that it should be under the purview of the Speaker to accept additions to GSA Council

agendas and that Directly-Elected Officers should not have this responsibility. S Fenichel clarified that such requests are filtered through GSA Bylaw and Policy and discussed at the standing committee level first.

H Thaker made a **MOTION TO REFER** to GSA Governance Committee that Council Quorum be reviewed and that GSA Governance Committee recommend changes by next GSA Council meeting. H Thaker **MOVED**. P Appadu **SECONDED**.

P Appadu asked if H Thaker had a number in mind. H Thaker suggested a percentage of the whole, similar to General Faculties Council (1/3 of voting members). Vacancies do not count. S Sanders pointed out that the next GSA Governance Committee meeting was fast approaching and was it even feasible to have a recommendation by the next GSA Council? C More suggested a friendly amendment to bring an update to the next GSA Council, rather than proposed changes. H Thaker did not accept the friendly amendment. S Cake added that the change is not a big change and is feasible.

E Schoeck offered a Point of Information: there were previously two quorums on the books. It was not carefully considered; one was deleted. C More disagreed that the timeline was feasible and did not want to assume the GSA Governance Committee could have a carefully considered recommendation prepared for the next GSA Council meeting – such a recommendation should not be rushed. He noted his belief that one month or three weeks was not long enough for a proper discussion. P Appadu asked Speaker to clarify the options before GSA Council. S Fenichel clarified that GSA Council can make a friendly amendment, although H Thaker does not wish to. GSA Council can vote it down. K Barkway asked what would happen with respect to the proposed special meeting. H Thaker stated that the first mailing for the next GSA Council meeting was March 11, which would actually be difficult so he would accept the friendly amendment and change the Motion to request an update rather than a recommendation for proposed changes.

Motion PASSED unanimously.

H Thaker referred to Councillor Smirnow's earlier point regarding adding items to the agenda and reminded GSA Council that when the agenda is approved at the beginning of the meeting, this is an opportunity to add something to the agenda. S Fenichel added that, between the first and second mailing of Council materials, Councillors can also submit written questions. D Smirnow asked if this is something GSA Council can be reminded of periodically. S Fenichel informed members that the office was currently working on a GSA Council Handbook that will help with this and many other queries.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:35 pm.



INSTITUTIONAL STRATEGIC PLAN
FOR THE PUBLIC GOOD

DRAFT

MARCH 2016

The University of Alberta respectfully acknowledges that it is located on Treaty 6 territory.

INSTITUTIONAL STRATEGIC PLAN

FOR THE PUBLIC GOOD

MARCH 2016 DRAFT

Vision

To inspire the human spirit through outstanding achievements in learning, discovery, and citizenship in a creative community, building one of the world's great universities for the public good.

Mission

Within a vibrant and supportive learning environment, the University of Alberta discovers, disseminates, and applies new knowledge for the benefit of society through teaching and learning, research and creative activity, community involvement, and partnerships. The University of Alberta gives a national and international voice to innovation in our province, taking a lead role in placing Canada at the global forefront.

Values

The University of Alberta community of students, faculty, staff, and alumni rely on shared, deeply held values that guide behaviour and actions. These values are drawn from the principles on which the University of Alberta was founded in 1908 and reflect a dynamic, modern institution of higher learning, leading change nationally and internationally.

Above all, **we value intellectual integrity, freedom of inquiry and expression, and the equality and dignity of all persons** as the foundation of ethical conduct in research, teaching, learning, and service.

We value **excellence** in teaching, research, and creative activity that enriches learning experiences, advances knowledge, inspires engaged citizenship, and promotes the public good.

We value **learners** at all stages of life and strive to provide an intellectually rewarding educational environment for all.

We value **academic freedom and institutional autonomy** as fundamental to open inquiry and the pursuit of truth.

We value **diversity, inclusivity, and equity** across and among our people, campuses, and disciplines.

We value **creativity and innovation** from the genesis of ideas through to the dissemination of knowledge.

We value **history and tradition**, celebrating the contributions of students, alumni, faculty, staff, volunteers, Indigenous peoples, and other groups, which bring pride to the university.

At the University of Alberta, we begin with people—people with ideas, talent, and purpose. Then, we act.

We seek knowledge. We educate citizens. We ask the big questions. We push the limits of human understanding and knowledge. We engage with partners and communities close to home and around the world to lead positive change. We empower creative people to take risks and experiment.

Why? The answer is simple: We are a public university acting for the public good.

When we act, we provide meaningful educational experiences, promote innovative thinking, and develop compelling and relevant solutions that matter. When we lead, we tackle the most important local, national, and global challenges. When we excel, our work sparks and feeds widespread social, cultural, and economic benefits for others—indeed for the uplifting of the whole people.

In *For the Public Good*—our institutional strategic plan for the coming decade—we embrace and affirm our vision to inspire the human spirit through outstanding achievements in learning, discovery, and citizenship in a creative community, building one of the world’s great universities for the public good.

We forge ahead, motivated and supported by the University of Alberta’s 108-year history of leadership, achievement, and public service. Inspired by the goals and aspirations in this plan, we will:

BUILD a diverse, inclusive community of exceptional students, faculty, and staff from Alberta, Canada, and the world.

EXPERIENCE diverse and rewarding learning opportunities that inspire us, nurture our talents, expand our knowledge and skills, and enable our success.

EXCEL as individuals, and together, sustain a culture that fosters and champions distinction and distinctiveness in teaching, learning, research, and service.

ENGAGE communities across campuses, the province, Canada, and the world to create reciprocal, mutually beneficial learning experiences, research projects, partnerships, and collaborations.

SUSTAIN our people, our work, and the environment by attracting and stewarding the resources we need to deliver excellence to the benefit of all.

In pursuit of these shared goals, the University of Alberta will deepen our dedication to excellence and extend our record of public leadership, playing a lead role in building a better province, a better Canada, and a better world.

The University of Alberta is Alberta’s educator, generator of new ideas, and engine of social, cultural, and economic prosperity. Created by one of the first acts of the legislature, our university is one of the province’s most enduring and vital public institutions. As our name suggests, our history is bound to that of Alberta; we acknowledge with pride that we stand on Treaty 6 Territory, the traditional gathering place of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples. For more than a century, University of Alberta scholars have inspired graduates to become purposeful, active citizens and leaders. Our alumni—now numbering more than 275,000—have founded more than 70,000 organizations and businesses around the world, creating one and a half million jobs, nearly 400,000 in Alberta. Along with inspiring next-generation leaders, University of Alberta scholars have engaged in research and creative activities answering fundamental questions, building new industries and businesses, healing the sick, fostering social and economic change, and leading an innovative and vibrant arts and culture scene. They are world leaders in fields as diverse as virology, literature and history, agricultural genomics and proteomics, paleontology, and energy. Today, the University of Alberta is one of Canada’s leading research universities. Standing with pride among the world’s finest public institutions, the University of Alberta brings the ideas of Albertans to the world, and the world of ideas to Albertans.

BUILD

GOAL: Build a diverse, inclusive community of exceptional students, faculty, and staff from Alberta, Canada, and the world.

Through the development of strategic recruitment, retention, and renewal plans, the University of Alberta will build a community of exceptional students, scholars, researchers, and staff from Alberta, Canada, and the world. We will foster an inclusive culture in which people excel through exchange and collaboration, enriched by the diversity of individuals, groups, disciplines, perspectives, approaches, and questions that compose our community. We will sustain this culture and community through rich educational and life experiences in a supportive learning environment. We will engage Indigenous students and nations to create programs and spaces that acknowledge the complexities of Canada's history. We will celebrate the University of Alberta community and our achievements, enhancing our reputation in Alberta, across Canada, and around the world by defining, telling, and promoting our story.

To begin, we will attract outstanding students...

1. OBJECTIVE: Build a diverse, inclusive community of exceptional undergraduate and graduate students from Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, and the world.

- i. **Strategy:** Develop and implement an undergraduate and graduate recruitment strategy to attract top students from across the diverse communities in Alberta and Canada, leveraging our strengths as a comprehensive research-intensive, multi-campus university with options for francophone and rural liberal arts education.
- ii. **Strategy:** Develop and implement an undergraduate and graduate recruitment and retention strategy to attract top Indigenous students.
- iii. **Strategy:** Optimize our international recruiting strategies to attract well-qualified international students from regions of strategic importance, and enhance services and programs to ensure their academic success and integration into the activities of the university.
- iv. **Strategy:** Ensure that qualified undergraduate and graduate students can attend the university through the provision of robust student financial support.

...educated by exceptional faculty...

2. OBJECTIVE: Create a faculty renewal program that builds on the strengths of existing faculty and ensures the sustainable development of the University of Alberta's talented, highly qualified, and diverse academy.

- i. **Strategy:** Attract and retain a diverse complement of faculty and post-doctoral fellows from around the world, with initial attention on increasing the proportion of assistant professors.
- ii. **Strategy:** Review, improve, and implement equity processes and procedures for recruiting and supporting faculty to ensure a balanced academy, representative of women, visible minorities, sexual and gender minorities, Indigenous peoples, and people with disabilities.
- iii. **Strategy:** Stabilize long-term investments in contract academic staff by offering career paths that include the possibility of continuing appointments based on demonstrated excellence in teaching.
- iv. **Strategy:** Support career transitions and encourage professors emeriti to continue to share their expertise and experience through active engagement with the university community.

...at a university committed to respectful relations with First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples.

3. OBJECTIVE: Develop, in consultation and collaboration with internal and external community stakeholders, a thoughtful, respectful, meaningful, and sustainable response to the report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada.

- i. **Strategy:** Foster learning opportunities across our campuses that enable student, staff, and faculty participation in reconciliation.
- ii. **Strategy:** Build the Maskwa House of Learning as a place of understanding, welcome, and cultural connection, where Indigenous and non-Indigenous students together can grow and celebrate the unique and proud histories of Indigenous peoples, and where Indigenous students can access social, cultural, and spiritual supports that enable their academic success.
- iii. **Strategy:** Evaluate and measure the University of Alberta's responses to the TRC's calls to action on an ongoing basis.

As a community, we recognize that our future is built on shared values...

4. OBJECTIVE: Build and strengthen trust, connection, and a sense of belonging among all members of the university community through a focus on shared values.

- i. **Strategy:** Support and enhance activities, initiatives, and traditions that bond alumni, students, faculty, professors emeriti, and staff to the university.
- ii. **Strategy:** Celebrate and support diversity and inclusivity.
- iii. **Strategy:** Identify and increase opportunities to engage alumni and volunteers as valued advisers, mentors, volunteers, and interested constituents.
- iv. **Strategy:** Appreciate and value the different roles faculty, staff, and students play on our campuses and use their diversity of skills, perspectives, and experiences to the benefit of the institution as a whole.
- v. **Strategy:** Foster trust through respectful dialogue between faculties, departments, administrative units, and campuses, and create opportunities to learn from each other's cultural variations.
- vi. **Strategy:** Encourage and support institution-wide initiatives, services, and programs, such as intramurals, student groups, clubs, and centres, which bring students from all faculties into community with each other.

...and ours is a story to share widely.

5. OBJECTIVE: Build and support an integrated, cross-portfolio institutional strategy to demonstrate and enhance the University of Alberta's local, national, and international story, so that it is shared, understood, and valued by the full University of Alberta community and its many stakeholders.

- i. **Strategy:** Discover an institution-wide, comprehensive brand platform (reputation, identity, and image) around the core story of the university: its promise, its mission, and its impact.
- ii. **Strategy:** Engage and advocate strategically with all levels and orders of government and other key stakeholders, and identify and demonstrate how university activities align with their goals and strategies.
- iii. **Strategy:** Communicate, using both quantitative and qualitative evidence, how the University of Alberta serves as a cornerstone of the community bringing widespread economic and societal benefits to all Albertans, as well as to national and international partners and stakeholders.

Stories told by University of Alberta alumni often share a common thematic arc. That arc tells of students being inspired by exceptional professors to pursue excellence, stretch themselves in new ways, and take on the responsibilities of public service and leadership. Undergraduate and graduate students, along with professional, continuing, and lifelong learners, continue to pursue learning experiences that reveal and nurture their talents and prepare them for success. They seek an education that is rich with experiential learning, interdisciplinary depth, research opportunities, and engagement with business, government, and community organizations. At the University of Alberta, we strive to answer learners' intellectual and professional aspirations. Arts and science programs form the foundation of the university's broad network of professional faculties and continuing education opportunities. Our multi-campus environment offers students the benefits of an intimate liberal arts education at Augustana Campus or an immersive francophone education at Campus Saint-Jean, connected to one of Canada's most highly respected research universities. This diversity of opportunity, combined with our international, multicultural, and Indigenous populations of students, faculty, and staff, builds global citizens—leaders with the imagination, critical eye, and passion to rethink the status quo, diversify economies, and reinvigorate society.

EXPERIENCE

GOAL: Experience diverse and rewarding learning opportunities that inspire us, nurture our talents, expand our knowledge and skills, and enable our success.

Pushing beyond the conventional, students, no matter their background, age, or stage of education, will experience learning as an integral part of all their activities at the University of Alberta. We will pay attention to the development of the whole person and will excel in providing experiences both inside and outside of the traditional classroom, laboratory, or studio that sustain us, nurture our talents, expand our knowledge and skills, and enable our success. We will build innovative curricular and co-curricular experiential learning programs that engage students, faculty, and staff with issues, questions, and ideas relevant to community organizations, industry, and governments today. We will mobilize the expertise of our faculty and expand access to educational experiences for continuing, professional, and lifelong learners.

By providing our students with exceptional experiences that link them to their futures, we will facilitate their success both within the curriculum...

6. OBJECTIVE: Increase graduate and undergraduate students' access to a range of curricular experiential learning opportunities, such as community service learning, undergraduate research, co-ops, internships, and international experiences.

- i. **Strategy:** Increase students' experiential learning through mutually beneficial engagement with community, industry, and government organizations locally, nationally, and internationally.
- ii. **Strategy:** Develop global competency in our graduates through access to short- and long-term outbound international experiences.
- iii. **Strategy:** Expand professional development opportunities for graduate students and post-doctoral fellows.

...and outside the classroom.

7. OBJECTIVE: Create and facilitate co-curricular and extracurricular learning experiences for undergraduate and graduate students that enable their self-discovery and give them the skills to use their talents, creativity, and curiosity to contribute as future citizens and leaders.

- i. **Strategy:** Increase the opportunities for all undergraduate and graduate students to experience the benefits of living on campus, including guaranteeing the offer of a place in residence to every first-year undergraduate student.
- ii. **Strategy:** Expand and encourage student mentorship programs.
- iii. **Strategy:** Support the roles of the Graduate Students' Association and Students' Union, along with other student groups, in promotion of extracurricular programs on our campuses to create a sense of community and support of the learning environment.
- iv. **Strategy:** Expand access to leadership development programs for undergraduate and graduate students, such as the Peter Lougheed Leadership College.
- v. **Strategy:** Continue to support and enhance a student-athlete-centred university sport environment on all campuses that facilitates the academic, athletic, and personal development of students.

Our multi-campus environment provides exciting opportunities to build a great and diverse university...

8. OBJECTIVE: Enhance, support, and mobilize the unique experiences and cultures of all University of Alberta campuses to the benefit of the university as a whole.

- i. **Strategy:** Facilitate and deepen inter-campus connections, communication, and collaborations, ensuring that Augustana Campus's leadership as a liberal arts college and living laboratory for teaching and learning innovation benefits the entire university.
- ii. **Strategy:** Highlight and strengthen the role that Campus Saint-Jean plays in reflecting and reinforcing the linguistic duality of Canada as well as the worldwide multi-ethnic Francophonie, by positioning the university locally, nationally, and internationally as a destination of choice for francophone and bilingual students, and by progressively improving Faculté Saint-Jean students' and applicants' access to French-language services.
- iii. **Strategy:** Enhance collaborative, community-based learning activities and build on the relationships that have been developed through the programs offered at Enterprise Square and South Campus.

...opening doors to a lifetime of learning experiences.

9. **OBJECTIVE: Expand access to and engagement in the University of Alberta for learners engaging in continuing and professional education programs, experiences, and lifelong learning activities.**
- i. **Strategy:** Develop continuing and professional education programs that connect the knowledge-mobilization activities of the university's faculty members to the needs of diverse learner communities.
 - ii. **Strategy:** Create a wide range of opportunities, both in person and online, for broad, learning-centred programs for alumni and other communities of learners engaging in continuing and professional education.

At the University of Alberta, excellence is both a goal and an attitude. We aspire to achieve the first and to inspire the latter. Motivated to excel, University of Alberta students, faculty, post-doctoral fellows, and staff consistently attract more than \$480 million in external research funding each year. Over the history of the university, they have received many academic awards and distinctions, including 71 Rhodes Scholarships, 15 Banting Post-doctoral Fellowships, and 41 3M National Teaching Fellowships. Many in our community are members of the Order of Canada (60), fellows of the Royal Society of Canada (138), members of the Alberta Order of Excellence (20), and winners of the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal (11)—honours that recognize not only outstanding research achievement, but also exceptional service and contribution to society. These honours highlight that our excellence matters. When we excel as researchers, we create knowledge that translates into social, technical, and artistic innovations, new enterprises and community organizations, life-saving medical treatments and procedures, critically needed environmental protections, and more. When we excel as researchers, teachers, and students, we empower a culture that values curiosity, critical thinking, diversity, hard work, and ambition—all vital to advancing knowledge and inciting change for the public good. When we excel on the global stage, we connect Alberta and Canada to the world.

EXCEL

GOAL: Excel as individuals, and together, sustain a culture that fosters and champions distinction and distinctiveness in teaching, learning, research, and service.

To excel and achieve our full potential as an institution and community of individuals, the University of Alberta will sustain a learning and research culture that inspires, supports, and champions high professional standards and outstanding achievements in basic and applied research and scholarship, creative activity, administration, and governance. We will ensure that learning experiences at our university are of the highest quality, based on a practice of continuous improvement and innovation in teaching. From our broad-based strength as a comprehensive, research-intensive public university, we will highlight current and emerging areas of global distinction and leadership by building a portfolio of signature programs that distinguish us from among our peer institutions and exemplify the University of Alberta's capacity to engage in big questions and global challenges.

The foundation of our university is our breadth of inquiry...

10. OBJECTIVE: Advance the University of Alberta's reputation for research excellence by pursuing fundamental questions and ideas, pushing the frontiers of knowledge, inspiring creative experimentation, driving innovation, and advancing society.

- i. **Strategy:** Encourage and champion achievements in a broad base of fundamental and applied research, scholarship, and creative activities.
- ii. **Strategy:** Support our culture of entrepreneurship and innovation among students, faculty, and staff where contributions to all sectors of society are rewarded, valued, and celebrated.
- iii. **Strategy:** Nurture, enable, and reward public intellectuals.
- iv. **Strategy:** Support and enhance the activities and effectiveness of TEC Edmonton and other translational initiatives.
- v. **Strategy:** Advance the University of Alberta's reputation for excellence in research through a co-ordinated recognition, awards, and honours program.

...from which we will build areas of distinction.

11. OBJECTIVE: Build a portfolio of signature research and teaching programs in areas where the University of Alberta is or will be recognized as a global leader.

- i. **Strategy:** Identify and support established and emerging areas of research and teaching distinction and distinctiveness, using the following criteria:
 - national and international stature for excellence, relevance, and impact
 - critical mass—opportunity for broad, cross-institution engagement
 - grassroots leadership, participation, and support from within our university community
 - stakeholder partnerships
 - research partners (international, community, government, industry)
 - capacity to shape and align with federal and provincial research funding priorities
 - teaching excellence in high-demand academic programs
 - physical and operational capacity
 - geographic or situational relevance
- ii. **Strategy:** Leverage provincial, national, and international funding programs and partnership opportunities that support the activities, impact, influence, and reach of signature programs.
- iii. **Strategy:** Encourage and facilitate knowledge and technology transfer to ensure that society can realize the benefits of intellectual capital arising from research and creative endeavours.
- iv. **Strategy:** Develop mechanisms for identifying both emerging and declining areas of distinction and global leadership to sustain the vibrancy of the university's portfolio of signature programs.

Within a supportive, creative culture, we will foster excellence in research...

12. OBJECTIVE: Enable University of Alberta researchers to succeed and excel.

- i. **Strategy:** Expand services and supports for researchers at all career stages (graduate students, post-doctoral fellows, and faculty), including the development of research mentorships and Grant Assist programs.
- ii. **Strategy:** Maintain and pursue partnerships across the global academy to expand research and funding opportunities for our researchers and thus increase their capacity for success.
- iii. **Strategy:** Pursue strategies to increase the success of graduate students and post-doctoral fellows in national grant, scholarship, and award programs.
- iv. **Strategy:** Secure and sustain funding for the continuous evolution and operation of research facilities and resources (e.g., libraries, labs, live animal facilities, museums)

and collections, performance spaces, fine arts facilities, U of A Press, etc.) to meet the changing needs of our broad-based research community.

- v. **Strategy:** Participate fully in matching programs and maintain and pursue memberships in relevant funding organizations to expand and leverage funding opportunities for the university and to increase our researchers' reach, influence, and impact.
- vi. **Strategy:** Seek and attract an exceptional cohort of post-doctoral fellows and support their participation in and contribution to the university's research environment.

...and teaching...

13. OBJECTIVE: Inspire, model, and support excellence in teaching and learning.

- i. **Strategy:** Foster, encourage, and support innovation and experimentation in curriculum development, teaching, and learning at the individual, unit, and institutional levels.
- ii. **Strategy:** Adopt a set of core graduate attributes, skills, and competencies at both the undergraduate and graduate level; develop strategies for implementing them in specific disciplines and programs; and monitor graduate outcomes.
- iii. **Strategy:** Provide robust supports, tools, and training to assess teaching quality, using qualitative and quantitative criteria that are fair, equitable, and meaningful across disciplines.
- iv. **Strategy:** Create and support an institutional strategy that enables excellence in the design, deployment, and assessment of digital learning technologies.
- v. **Strategy:** Develop and implement programs that assure a high quality of graduate student and post-doctoral fellow supervision and mentorship.

...through professional development.

14. OBJECTIVE: Foster a culture of excellence by enriching learning and professional development opportunities for faculty, staff, and post-doctoral fellows.

- i. **Strategy:** Expand access to leadership development programs for faculty, staff, and post-doctoral fellows.
- ii. **Strategy:** Establish mentorship programs at the institutional, faculty, and unit levels to nurture and support faculty, post-doctoral fellows, and staff throughout their professional careers.
- iii. **Strategy:** Create pathways for career progression of academic, administrative, and non-academic staff members, which include opportunities for secondments, exchanges, job shadows, and other professional development programs and educational opportunities.
- iv. **Strategy:** Encourage, facilitate, and reward the sharing of best practices across units, faculties, and campuses.

From the earliest years when professors and staff travelled to rural communities to lecture on Shakespeare, agricultural practices, and more, the University of Alberta has been deeply embedded in communities both near and far. In 1908, founding president Henry Marshall Tory reminded Albertans that “the modern state university has sprung from a demand on the part of the people themselves” and promised “that knowledge shall not be the concern of scholars alone. The uplifting of the whole people shall be its final goal.” He challenged future generations not to forget this ultimate goal. It has not been forgotten. We continue to seek mutually beneficial, reciprocal connections and collaborations with partners throughout the global academy, local communities, First Nations, industry, business, and government. We engage with diverse partners to conduct and translate learning and research into evidence-based public policy, improved industrial practices, changed attitudes, and healthier, more compassionate communities. We sit at the centre of the province’s Campus Alberta and Edmonton’s City of Learners, working with our post-secondary partners to provide Albertans with multiple integrated pathways to achieve their educational goals and aspirations. We build multi-level, cross-sectoral national and international partnerships with high-ranking universities and institutions across Canada and the world. Through these efforts and more, we reaffirm Tory’s founding promise on a daily basis, and continue to grow as an university that endeavours to create and disseminate knowledge and scholarship for the benefit and uplifting of the whole people.

ENGAGE

GOAL: Engage communities across our campuses, the province, Canada, and the world to create reciprocal, mutually beneficial learning experiences, research projects, partnerships, and collaborations.

To serve the public well, the University of Alberta will excel at listening, connecting, and collaborating with key partners across all sectors of society. We will strive to be relevant as well as excellent and actively disseminate what we learn and discover for the benefit of the public good. We will engage across disciplines, campuses, faculties, and units to create interdisciplinary learning experiences for our students that prepare them to face the complex nature of today's challenges and workplaces. We will continue to build and deepen mutually beneficial and reciprocal partnerships with local, provincial, national, and international communities, agencies, industries, businesses, and organizations. In doing so, we will expand and sustain the University of Alberta's leadership in major national and international initiatives and networks that increase our reach and influence as one of Canada's leading research universities.

Our ability to contribute to society will flow in large measure from our ability to connect with our communities...

15. OBJECTIVE: Enhance, increase, and sustain reciprocal, mutually beneficial community relations, community engagement, and community-engaged research and scholarship that will extend the reach, effectiveness, benefit, and value of our university-community connections.

- i. **Strategy:** Identify and embrace opportunities to build, strengthen, and extend the University of Alberta's connections to and engagement with external stakeholders, including the general public, neighbouring communities, ethnic and cultural communities, and other communities of practice.
- ii. **Strategy:** Develop an integrated institutional strategy for fostering and rewarding community-engaged research and evaluation that is intentionally collaborative from research question design through to knowledge mobilization.
- iii. **Strategy:** Engage with government, community, industry, business, and the post-secondary sector to address shared local, provincial, national, and global challenges.
- iv. **Strategy:** Continue to build mutually beneficial, authentic relationships with donors and alumni.
- v. **Strategy:** Welcome increased community access, participation, and engagement at all University of Alberta sites, such as our downtown campus at Enterprise Square and our sports facilities at South Campus.

...and to build interdisciplinary connections...

16. OBJECTIVE: Facilitate, build, and support interdisciplinary, cross-faculty, and cross-unit engagement and collaboration.

- i. **Strategy:** Incent the development of interdisciplinary and cross-faculty graduate and undergraduate teaching and learning initiatives, including programs, courses, and embedded certificates.
- ii. **Strategy:** Develop mechanisms for identifying research expertise at the institution to allow for greater exploitation of emerging research opportunities and funding programs, particularly those requiring interdisciplinary research teams.
- iii. **Strategy:** Expand or create policies, resources, infrastructure, and strategies to encourage academic and administrative partnerships and collaborations.

...that support institutional partnerships locally, nationally, and internationally.

17. OBJECTIVE: Seek, build, strengthen, and sustain partnerships with local, national, or international research agencies, governments, government ministries and agencies, universities, Indigenous communities, libraries, not-for-profits, industry, business, and community organizations.

- i. **Strategy:** Provide leadership in Alberta's post-secondary sector and support integration, collaboration, and partnership across the province's six-sector model to the benefit of all Albertans.
- ii. **Strategy:** Participate and provide leadership in municipal, provincial, national, and international consortia, networks, and programs.
- iii. **Strategy:** Encourage provincial, national, and international collaborations, partnerships, and MOUs at the institutional, faculty, department, unit, and individual levels.
- iv. **Strategy:** Seek, enhance, and support partnerships with industry, including small and medium enterprises.
- v. **Strategy:** Work closely with key provincial partners and government agencies, including members of Campus Alberta, Alberta Health Services, Alberta Innovates, The Alberta Library, NEOS, etc., to undertake mutually beneficial research, and where possible, co-ordinate, streamline, and deliver shared systems, services, and processes to the benefit of all Albertans.

As a proud public university, the University of Alberta not only serves the people of our province and our country, but also receives their steadfast support. We earn that support and trust because of the quality of our work and the benefits we bring to all Albertans and Canadians as a leading global institution founded on more than a century of excellence in teaching, learning, research, and service. We maintain that support and trust because we take seriously our responsibility to steward and sustain public investments in our people, operations, infrastructure, and systems. One of Canada's Greenest Employers since 2009, we strive to model sustainability as an integral part of university life, recognizing that the health and well-being of our people are tied to the health and well-being of our environmental, economic, and social systems. The University of Alberta is a recognized leader in environmental sustainability and energy management in practice as well as teaching and research. We promote a culture of continuous improvement in administration and governance, and ensure that our resources are used and sustained effectively to ensure the long-term vibrancy of our institution. We do this to the benefit of Campus Alberta as a whole: we share critical research infrastructure, provide systems and services to smaller institutions, facilitate student mobility, and build partnerships across the province to ensure that all Albertans have access to their provincial university and the benefits we offer.

SUSTAIN

GOAL: Sustain our people, our work, and the environment by attracting and stewarding the resources we need to deliver excellence to the benefit of all Albertans.

To achieve our strategic goals, the University of Alberta will attract and steward the resources we need to excel and deliver our core teaching and research mission at the high standard expected by all Albertans. We will continue to build our capacities for securing new sources of operating, capital, research, and philanthropic funding. We will continue to model and advance teaching and learning in the area of environmental sustainability on our campuses and in our work. We must sustain our people by promoting health, wellness, and safety as a defining feature of the University of Alberta's learning and working experience, and by maintaining and enhancing the university's essential teaching, learning, and research infrastructure. Continuous improvement and cross-unit engagement and co-operation will define our approach to governance and administration to ensure that our systems, policies, and procedures facilitate the achievement of our shared goals.

Our success as an institution will be determined by our support for our people...

18. OBJECTIVE: Prioritize and sustain student, faculty, and staff health, wellness, and safety by delivering relevant, responsive, and accessible services and initiatives.

- i. **Strategy:** Develop an integrated, institution-wide health and wellness strategy, which increases the reach and effectiveness of existing health and wellness resources, programs, and services and promotes work-life balance.
- ii. **Strategy:** Bolster resources for and increase access to mental health programs that provide support to students, faculty, and staff.
- iii. **Strategy:** Endorse a strong culture of safety awareness, knowledge, planning, and practice to ensure the safety of students, employees, and visitors to our campuses.

...and our commitment to sustainability.

19. OBJECTIVE: Continue to build and support an integrated approach to social, economic, and environmental sustainability that incorporates teaching and learning, research, outreach, capacity building, and the operations that support them.

- i. **Strategy:** Integrate sustainability into teaching, learning, research, and outreach in ways that foster critical, interdisciplinary, long-term, and systemic thinking on sustainability.
- ii. **Strategy:** Embed social, economic, and environmental sustainability into the development and care of the university's indoor and outdoor spaces.
- iii. **Strategy:** Enhance awareness of the university's environmental sustainability features, practices, and resources across University of Alberta campuses and external communities.

Our commitment extends to administration and governance...

20. OBJECTIVE: Encourage continuous improvement in administrative, governance, and risk management systems, procedures, and policies that enable students, faculty, staff, and the institution as a whole to achieve shared strategic goals.

- i. **Strategy:** Encourage transparency and improve communication across the university through clear consultation and decision-making processes, substantive and timely communication of information, and access to shared, reliable institutional data.
- ii. **Strategy:** Ensure that individual and institutional annual review processes align with and support key institutional strategic goals.
- iii. **Strategy:** Consolidate unit review and strategic planning processes, and where possible, align with accreditation processes, to ensure efficient assessment processes.
- iv. **Strategy:** Facilitate easy access to and use of university services and systems, reduce duplication and complexity, and encourage cross-institutional administrative and operational collaboration.
- v. **Strategy:** Develop a set of equitable, meaningful, and relevant measures to monitor our progress toward strategic goals and develop the tools required to report on them.

...financial resources....

21. OBJECTIVE: Secure and steward financial resources to sustain, enhance, promote, and facilitate the university's core mission and strategic goals.

- i. **Strategy:** Seek and secure resources needed to achieve and support our strategic goals.
- ii. **Strategy:** Ensure a sustainable budget model to preserve and enhance our core mission and reputation for excellence in teaching, learning, research, and community engagement.
- iii. **Strategy:** Ensure responsible and accountable stewardship of the university's resources and demonstrate to government, donors, alumni, and community members the efficient and careful use of public and donor funds.

...and infrastructure.

22. OBJECTIVE: Ensure that the University of Alberta's campuses, facilities, utility, and information technology infrastructure can continue to meet the growth needs and strategic goals of the university.

- i. **Strategy:** Plan and seek funding for future expansion and renewal of infrastructure projects based on evolving teaching and research priorities.
- ii. **Strategy:** Build and maintain undergraduate and graduate student housing to support our students' academic success and sense of belonging to the university community.
- iii. **Strategy:** Provide effective IT solutions and enhancements that enable secure and reliable delivery of high-quality programs and services.
- iv. **Strategy:** Engage and strategically partner with stakeholders to explore and develop joint-use projects.

The University of Alberta, one of this province's oldest public institutions, anchors Alberta's integrated, diverse post-secondary education sector. We stand among Canada's premier research-intensive, medical-doctoral universities. Our international ranking confirms our placement with the finest public universities in the world. As our mission states, the University of Alberta gives a national and international voice to innovation in our province, taking a lead role in placing Canada at the global forefront.

Leadership, we know, requires action and purpose. Leadership demands that we build on our existing foundational strengths; experience and disseminate the power of transformative ideas and opportunities; excel in all that we do; engage across disciplines, communities, and sectors; and sustain the vibrancy of our multi-campus communities.

Through dialogue and consensus, we have set our strategic goals and aspirations. Now, we will act. Together, we will propel this great institution—the University of Alberta—to a place of unprecedented leadership, and in common cause, we will build a better province, a better Canada, and a better world.

INSTITUTIONAL STRATEGIC PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

David Turpin (Co-Chair)
Steven Dew (Co-Chair)
Lorne Babiuk (Vice-Chair)
Tim Caulfield
Walter Dixon
Joseph Doucet
Leanne Garon
Lars Hallstrm
Tammy Hopper
Jacqueline Leighton
Mackenzie Martin
Mary Persson
Fahim Rahman
Ann Revill
Jeremy Richards
Christie Schultz
Arya Sharma
Kisha Supernant
Kimberly TallBear
Jane Traynor
Helen Vallianatos
Sheena Wilson





Dear Council Colleagues,

Usage levels and the number of claims are major drivers in the cost of group health and dental plans such as ours (they account for over 90% of the cost). Since the GSA's Health and Dental Plan is intended as a key benefit for our membership, we are pleased to see an increasing proportion of students taking advantage of it each year. However, this increased usage has resulted in the cost of the Plan for each student also increasing.

Our latest projections for 2016-17 show a 17% increase from what students currently pay. As soon as we learned of this projection, we invited Kristin Foster, the Director of Partnerships and Development for Studentcare, to attend the March meeting of GSA Council (Studentcare is our insurance broker; Desjardins Insurance is our current insurance provider). Kristin will be able to provide additional information on this issue, and field any questions you may have on it.

This is not the first time we have seen an increase to the cost of the Plan. For example, as some of you may recall (and as discussed in the "historical" section of the attached Outline of Issue), last year the cost of the Plan increased by 11%. This was covered by an 8% increase to the premium charged to students, as approved by GSA Council, with the remaining 3% covered by a drawdown of the GSA's Health and Dental Plan Reserve Fund (HDPRF). Without increasing our fee for next year, coverage levels will need to be cut.

To help inform the decision on how to move forward, the GSA Board asked Studentcare to conduct a phone survey of Plan members, taking their pulse with respect to the Plan's functionality and its associated costs. This survey was completed earlier this week, and Kristin will be able to speak to its results at Council.

Meanwhile, the GSA Board has discussed this matter extensively over the past two weeks, and now we would like to hear from you. I ask that you please consult with your colleagues on this very important issue. Some possible options, also noted in the Outline of Issue, include:

- GSA Council is able to approve increases in the fee not exceeding 15%; increases beyond 15% must be decided by referendum. Therefore, Council could approve a 15% increase, bridging the final 2% of the increase in Plan cost with the HDPRF. The fee per student for 2016-17 would then be \$492.95, and the HDPRF would be drawn down by about \$7.39 per student. At projected enrolment levels, this would reduce the size of the reserve fund by about \$40,472, from its current value of \$159,612.28. Some other combination could also be considered – a 13% increase in fee and a 4% drawdown, for example.
- GSA Council could attempt to align the fee paid by students with the actual cost of the Plan. This would happen by initiating a referendum of all students, asking to increase the fee by the full 17%. In this case, the fee paid by each student would be \$500.34, an increase of \$71.69 over the present fee.
- GSA Council could decide to change coverage levels. Some combination of increasing coverage in some areas and decreasing it in others could decrease the total increase in cost for 2016-17, or even hold the fee steady at its present level. GSA Council could even decide to *increase* coverage, though this would result in an increase beyond the currently forecast 17%.

While considering these or other options, please keep in mind that, barring any large, unforeseen changes in usage levels or the healthcare or insurance industries, fees will continue to increase substantially in the coming years. The latest Health and Dental Plan-related referendum was held thirteen years ago, in 2003. Should we decide to not pursue a referendum immediately in light of the current increase, it seems prudent to consider holding one relatively soon to hear the voices of all graduate students on this critical issue. One interesting idea is to move to a two-level plan, with different budgets and associated coverage levels, though I would love to hear any other ideas people may have.



In closing, I will be happy to answer any questions you have at the meeting, and also encourage you to send me questions before then as you consult with your colleagues.

Best,

Colin More, GSA President 2015-2016

Outline of Issue (GSA Council)

GSA Health and Dental Plan Fees for 2016-2017: For Discussion

Background:

CURRENT SITUATION: The key driver for cost increases to the Plan is usage (this accounts for over 90% of the cost). Graduate students are using the Plan at increasing rates (which is good news) and, for example, dental claims alone have increased by approximately 20%. There is an overall projected 17% increase in premiums for 2016-2017, resulting in a proposed fee increase of \$71.69 (bringing the fee to \$500.34). As per GSA Policy, GSA Council approves increases to the fee, but an increase above 15% requires a referendum. As a reminder, the last referendum on the Plan was held in 2003, when the GSA Health Plan was created and integrated with the existing GSA Dental Plan. **GSA Council is now asked to discuss this matter prior to a proposal being developed (this proposal will return to GSA Council in April for consideration).**

There are three main options:

- GSA Council is able to approve increases in the fee not exceeding 15%; increases beyond 15% must be decided by referendum. Therefore, Council could approve a 15% increase, bridging the final 2% of the increase in Plan cost with the HDPRF. The fee per student for 2016-17 would then be \$492.95, and the HDPRF would be drawn down by about \$7.39 per student. At projected enrolment levels, this would reduce the size of the reserve fund by about \$40,472, from its current value of \$159,612.28. Some other combination could also be considered – a 13% increase in fee and a 4% drawdown, for example.
- GSA Council could attempt to align the fee paid by students with the actual cost of the Plan. This would happen by initiating a referendum of all students, asking to increase the fee by the full 17%. In this case, the fee paid by each student would be \$500.34, an increase of \$71.69 over the present fee.
- GSA Council could decide to change coverage levels. Some combination of increasing coverage in some areas and decreasing it in others could decrease the total increase in cost for 2016-17, or even hold the fee steady at its present level. GSA Council could even decide to *increase* coverage, though this would result in an increase beyond the currently forecast 17%.

Kristin Foster (Director of Partnerships and Development, Studentcare) will attend the GSA Council meeting on March 21, 2016 meeting to further discuss this matter. Additionally, **Studentcare (as our broker, whereas Desjardins is our insurer) is currently surveying Plan members concerning this matter and will share the preliminary results of this survey with us on March 21.** The results of an earlier survey undertaken in 2013 indicated that 43.4% respondents supported increasing the cost of the Plan to increase coverage and 34.3% supported increasing the cost of the Plan to maintain the current level of coverage.

Additionally, below are some quotes on roughly equivalent coverage (although not as comprehensive) offered by publicly available plans. All information was gathered off the respective plan websites. Please note that rates will differ based on age, etc and so **these are estimates only**; likewise, travel coverage is not included but 10 days of coverage, versus the 120 days in the GSA Health and Dental Plan appears to be the norm. Finally, the coverage amounts of the GSA Health and Dental Plan do not include additional savings that can be achieved by utilizing the services of network providers.

Insurer	Prescription Drug Coverage (current GSA H&D Plan)	Dental Coverage (current GSA H&D Plan)	Vision Coverage (current GSA H&D Plan)
Blue Cross - \$690/year	70% (80%)	70% (80%)	None (\$70/2 yrs for exams; \$100/2 yrs for glasses, lenses; \$150/yr for laser eye surgery)
FlexCare - \$858/year	70% up to the first \$750, then 90% for the remaining \$4970 (80%, no cap)	50% up to \$1,150 in year 1, then 80% up to \$400 and 50% up to \$860 in years 2+ (80%, no cap)	\$50/2 yrs for exams; \$250/2 yrs for glasses, lenses (\$70/2 yrs for exams; \$100/2 yrs for glasses, lenses; \$150/yr for laser eye surgery)
AMA - \$848/year	70% up to \$350 in year 1, then 70% up to \$400 in years 2+ (80%, no cap)	70% up to \$350 in year 1, then 70% up to \$550 in year 2, then 70% up to \$700 in years 5+ (80%, no cap)	\$100 in years 1-2, \$150 in years 3-4, \$200 in years 5+ (\$70/2 yrs for exams; \$100/2 yrs for glasses, lenses; \$150/yr for laser eye surgery)

MOVING FORWARD: There has not been a referendum with respect to the GSA Health and Dental Plan since 2003, when the GSA Health Plan was created and integrated with the existing GSA Dental Plan. If a referendum is not pursued this year, and as both cost and usage of the Plan are only likely to increase, holding a referendum in the coming year (and potentially exploring additional increases to enhance coverage or introducing a two-level plan, with different budgets and associated coverage levels) will be considered. Likewise, the purpose and long-term management (and associated GSA Policy) of the HDPRF will be reviewed and discussed.

HISTORICAL: The GSA implemented the GSA Dental Plan through a referendum in 1994, and the GSA Dental Plan was administered in the GSA office at that time. The GSA Health Plan was implemented through a referendum conducted in March 2003. At this time, both the GSA Dental Plan and the GSA Health Plan 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 plan provider in Fall 2012. In 2014, following an increase in premiums, GSA Council approved a Motion that “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 GSA Health and Dental Plan Reserve Fund (HDPRF)” (GSA Council Motion, April 14, 2014). Additionally, **GSA Council approved, at its meeting of July 14, 2014, an increase to vision benefits.**

In 2015-2016 the cost of the Plan increased by 11% total and GSA Council voted to approve an increase of 8% and a draw down of the HDPRF by 3% in order to bridge the cost. At that time, it was reported to members that another fee increase would likely follow in 2016, as both usage of the Plan was likely in increase (which drives the cost) and as 3% of the cost was still being subsidized by the HDPRF, which is at a low point. While the GSA Financial Team and the GSA BFC, as per GSA Policy on the HDPRF, had developed a rolling plan in 2015 with respect to future use of the HDPRF, the new projected increases make that rolling plan no longer viable.

These are the usage figures:

Health Plan	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016*
Paid Claims	\$687,160	\$819,533	\$882,134	\$913,072	\$903,759	\$1,046,325	\$1,118,690	\$1,237,628.55
Enrolment	4,738	5,324	5,451	5,409	5,469	5,427	5,303	5,467
Per Capita Claims	\$145.02	\$153.94	\$161.83	\$168.80	\$165.24	\$192.79	\$210.97	\$225.90
Dental Plan								
Paid Claims	\$569,986	\$664,506	\$696,000	\$705,749	\$713,678	\$749,820	\$759,450	\$929,994.80
Enrolment	4,691	5,260	5,409	5,377	5,410	5,353	5,242	5,414
Per Capita Claims	\$121.51	\$126.34	\$128.67	\$131.25	\$131.92	\$140.07	\$144.87	\$171.41
Total								
Incurring Claims	\$1,257,146	\$1,484,039	\$1,578,134	\$1,618,821	\$1,617,438	\$1,796,145	\$1,878,141	\$2,167,623.35
Enrolment	5,292	4,715	5,430	5,393	5,440	5,390	5,278	5,438
Per Capita Claims	\$280.45	\$266.65	\$290.62	\$300.16	\$297.34	\$332.23	\$355.84	\$397.31

*Projected Claims Data

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 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	\$440.28	\$428.65	- \$11.63

- * 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

Jurisdiction:

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."

GSA Policy, GSA Health and Dental Plan and GSA Health and Dental Plan Reserve Fund, Section 6.1:

"The GSA Board is mandated to oversee the implementation, administration, and performance of the GSA Health and Dental Plan, and to make recommendations to GSA Council regarding the Plan (quoted in GSA Policy, Standing Committees, Section 2, GSA Board, 2.2.c)."

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

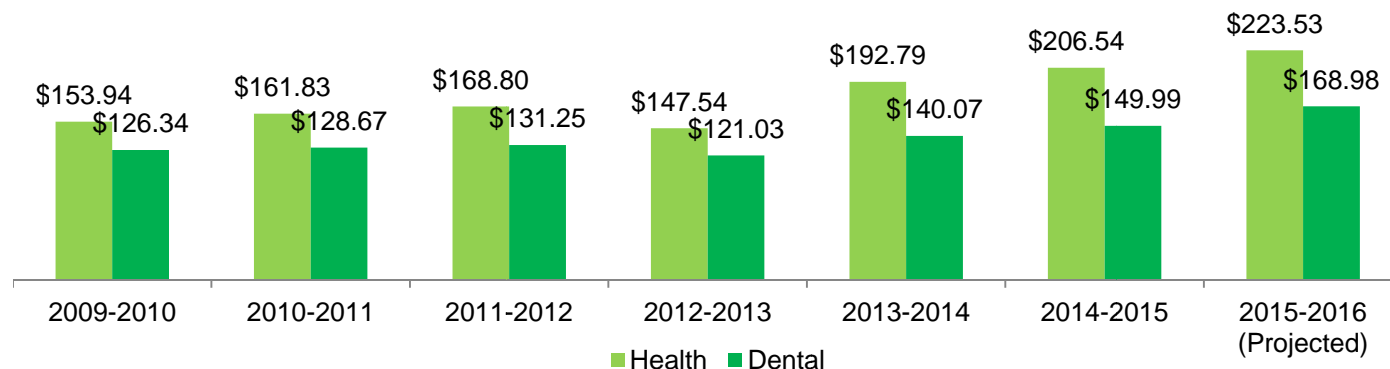
"Any increase in the Fee or modification of coverage must be approved by GSA Council on the recommendation of the GSA Board. Any increase in the Fee exceeding 15% of the previous year's Fee must also be put to a referendum."

U of A GSA Council: Health & Dental Plan Renewal Summary

- The insurance policy for the GSA Health & Dental Plan is renewed with the Plan insurer each policy year
- The projected renewal rate for the upcoming policy year is based on an analysis of the Plan's claims experience. Claims drive the cost of the Plan, representing 90% of the cost. All other costs are fixed.
- This background document is provided by Studentcare, to allow GSA Council to review and make required decisions in time to submit the Plan Fee to U of A Board of Governors, typically by late April.

Projections:

GSA Health & Dental: Per Capita Claims



Comparing the first 6 months of this policy year (Sept – Feb) to the same time period of the past policy year, Health Claims have increased 16% and Dental Claims have increase 21%.

Therefore, 2016-2017 Plan Premiums are projected to be significantly higher (**17%**) than the current Plan Fee:

2016-2017 PROJECTED COST ANALYSIS

	Health	Dental	Total
Projected Plan Premiums 2016-2017	\$ 287.78	\$ 212.56	\$ 500.34
Current Plan Fees 2015-16 (Subsidized*)	\$ 244.09	\$ 184.56	\$ 428.65
Difference between Current Fees and Projected Premiums	-\$43.69	-\$28.00	-\$71.69
Percentage Change with Full Fee Increase (no use of reserve fund)	18%	15%	17%

Note: Current Plan Fees are subsidized by a \$11.63 per member contribution from GSA Reserve Fund.

Options:

The GSA has multiple mechanisms available to manage the required **17%** increase in Projected Premiums:

- 1) Increase the Plan Fee by 17%, which would require a referendum conducted in April
- 2) Increase the Plan Fee by up to 15%, the maximum allowed by a motion of Council (per GSA Bylaws)
- 3) Partially subsidize the Fee using the Reserve Fund (based on current reserves: 3% - 4% maximum)
- 4) Decrease benefits (only benefits being used significantly will have a material impact when reduced)

Unless Option 1 is chosen, the GSA must utilize a combination of Options 2-4 to fund the Plan in 2016-17.



To help provide context and direction regarding the decision, the GSA asked Studentcare to survey the GSA membership about their priorities relating to the Plan cost versus coverage.

Survey Highlights: (Conducted March 1-8, 2016: by telephone using a randomly generated list)

- The survey was conducted using accepted methodology accurate within 5.4%, 19 times out of 20
- **50.4%** are in favour of increasing the Plan cost to maintain the current coverage
- **23.5%** preferred to decrease the coverage in order to maintain the Plan cost
- **21.7%** wished to increase the Plan cost by over \$80 to increase coverage

RESERVE FUND OPTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

	Health	Dental	Total
Option 1) 17% Increase to Plan Fees, No Reserve Fund, No Cuts	\$ 285.59	\$ 215.94	\$ 501.52
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires Immediate Referendum 			
Option 2) 15% Increase to Plan Fees + Reserve Fund, No Cuts	\$ 280.70	\$ 212.24	\$ 492.95
Option 3) 10% Increase Plan Fees + Reserve Fund + Benefit Cuts	\$ 268.50	\$ 203.02	\$ 471.52
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May not be enough to be sustainable over the long-term 			
Option 4) Combination: Increase Plan Fees, use Reserve Fund, Reduce Benefits			

Some Ideas for Discussion:

Difference between Projected Premium and Current Fee	17%
% to Increase Plan Fee, following established pattern	10%
% to Subsidize from Reserve Fund, for long-term stability	3%
Potential % Reduction in Benefits Required	4%

Potential Benefit Reductions to Consider: Prices as Estimate - Subject to Change

Benefit Changes	% Impact	Approx. Cost of Benefit Change
HEALTH: Implement a Dispensing Fee Cap @ \$8	-5%	\$ (14.09)
DENTAL: Reduce Preventive Services from 80% - 70%	-6%	\$ (13.28)
DENTAL: Reduce Preventive Services from 80% - 75%	-3%	\$ (6.64)

Note: Dental Claims are driving the need to increase premiums. Reducing benefits on the Dental side is the best option to control costs in the long-term.

Moving Forward:

- Determine Fee Increase, between 10% - 17%
- Determine sustainable amount to be subsidized from Reserve Fund, with a plan of reducing subsidy to zero within two years (as per plan initiated in 2014 with a goal of zero subsidy within 4 years)
- Decide upon "least-worst" benefit reductions, to be implemented only if required
- Lock in rate now, but closely monitor March claims data for improvements. If a lower premium is possible, this would reduce or eliminate the need for benefit reductions.

GSA NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Joint Position on the GSA Board/GSA Nominating Committee Vacancy: Newly-Elected Member**Suggested Motion for the 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.

Newly-Elected GSA Council Member on the GSA Board/GSA Nominating Committee:

1. **Radim Barta (Councillor, Oncology)**

Background:

This joint position was advertised via email to GSA Council on Wednesday, December 2, 2015 with a deadline of Friday, December 11, 2015. No nominations were received, and the GSA Nominating Committee (GSA NoC) began a directed search (as per their Terms of Reference). The vacancy was discussed at the February GSA Council meeting and one GSA Councillor came forward. A call for additional nominations went out on March 4, 2016 with a deadline of March 11, 2016 at 12:00 PM (noon). Since the GSA NoC did not receive any additional nominations, the nominee was declared elected.

Jurisdiction:GSA Policy, Nominating, Section 1.1

"If there are vacancies on the NoC, the Executive Director and Speaker will advertise those vacancies to Council and, after a reasonable amount of time has elapsed, will select individuals meeting the criteria set out in Section 2, Expectations, to fill those vacancies and submit their names to Council for ratification."

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 (noon) on Wednesday March 11, 2016 (GSA Policy, Nominating, 6.6). The nominee presented in this report is therefore declared **elected**.

GSA NOMINATING COMMITTEE: Vacancy: ONE MEMBER OF GSA COUNCIL**Nominating Committee Member Expectations from GSA Policy (Nominating, Section 2 Expectations):**

1. "Members of the NoC must have a demonstrated ability to be **neutral** and are expected to **act impartially**, including declaring conflicts of interest and rising above individual/departmental interests to ensure the best fit between nominees and vacancies.
2. The NoC is expected to fill vacant positions in a timely fashion to ensure that there is continuity in the graduate student "voice" on committees, Councils, and other bodies, thereby ensuring the best possible representation for graduate students."

GSA Board: Vacancy: ONE MEMBER OF GSA 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 Councilor 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 Councilors 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 Councilors 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: Syed Daniyal Israr (MBA) has resigned as he is completing his program.

GSA Council Members Staying on the GSA Board: Michele DuVal (Biological Sciences)

GSA Council Members Staying on the GSA Nominating Committee: Michele DuVal (Biological Sciences) and Ninad Mehta (Medical Microbiology and Immunology)

**GSA NOMINATING COMMITTEE
Election: GSA Deputy Speaker**

The GSA Nominating Committee (GSA NoC) advertised this position to all graduate students in the GSA Newsletter on March 4, 2016, and received **two (2)** nominations by the deadline of March 11, 2016 at 12:00 PM (Noon). The GSA NoC forwarded **ALL** bios and resumes received to GSA Council on March 14, 2016. GSA Council was invited to make additional nominations and no additional nominations were received by the deadline of Friday March 18, 2016 at 12:00 (Noon) (GSA Policy, Nominating, 6.6).

There will be a paper ballot vote held at the March 21, 2016 GSA Council meeting.

If you and your alternate are unable to attend the March 21, 2016, 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) BEFORE 3:00 PM on Monday, March 21, 2016, in order to cast your vote in advance of the GSA Council meeting.

Nominees are listed in alphabetical order and will be presented in reverse alphabetical order on the ballot. 'None of the Candidates' will also be displayed on each paper ballot:

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

GSA Policy governing the GSA NoC states, "the NoC will provide Council with nominations for the GSA Board, all GSA standing committees, Speaker, CRO, and Senator "(GSA Policy, Nominating, 6.6). **Biographies and brief resumes of the GSA nominees for Deputy Speaker are ATTACHED on page 8.3. Biographies and brief resumes have been attached as received (ie, not edited).**

GSA DEPUTY SPEAKER

Duties in Bylaw (Part IV Officers, Council-Elected Officers, Section 3.3.3)

"Duties of the Deputy Speaker (...) [is] to assist the Speaker [...] as needed..."

GSA Policy, GSA Council Attendance, Section 1.2.d

"If the Deputy Speaker or DRO cannot attend a meeting, they shall provide an advance written reason to the Speaker and the President. If the Deputy Speaker or DRO miss two (2) consecutive GSA Council meetings or a total of three (3) GSA Council meetings during their term, without an advance written reason acceptable to the Speaker and the President, the Speaker, in consultation with the President and the ED, will consider what action(s) should be taken."

Biographies and Resumes of Nominees in the Order in Which They Were Received:

1. Stephanie Ibsen

Stephanie Ibsen's Bio:

I completed my undergrad at MacEwan University in Biological Sciences and then took an internship position at the Helmholtz Centre for Environmental Research in Leipzig, Germany before starting my MSc with Dr. Scott Chang. I am attempting to defend my MSc thesis no later than May and will be immediately starting my PhD with Dr. Anne Naeth. While I have extensive volunteer experience, I am currently on the executive for the Renewable Resources (RenR) GSA and the graduate student representative for the Chair selection committee, a member of the Labour Relations Committee (LRC) and I volunteer for USchool. *All of my experience has allowed me to work with a variety of people, students and administrators, helped me develop strong communication skills, and gave me experience in various leadership roles.*

Stephanie Ibsen's Resume:

My current research is examining the effects of long-term nitrogen and sulfur depositions in the Athabasca Oil Sands Region on soil microbial communities. I am also the primary teaching assistant for the lab component of Dr. Chang's forest soils course (RenR 314) and have taught it for three semesters. I am interested in the position of Deputy Speaker because it would give me an opportunity to become more involved with the GSA beyond my current roles in the RenR GSA and the LRC and the ability to learn at a more in depth level by assisting the Speaker. I believe I am qualified for this position as I have good working knowledge of the GSA, I have presided over meetings and had to maintain order in a classroom setting. I am very organized and well-spoken making me confident I could fulfil the duties of this position. Additionally I would be able to meet the time requirements of this position.

2. Leigh Spanner

Leigh Spanner's Bio:

I have extensive experience in student politics, having been an executive member of my previous GSA at Memorial University of Newfoundland. I have continued my service to graduate student politics and university administration since I arrived here in 2012 because I believe it's incredibly important to participate in your communities and to exercise your voice. At the GSA I am the chair of the Elections and Referenda Committee, the GSA Senator and a Councilor-at-Large. In my home department of Political Science I am the VP Finance; I have been an executive member of my department GSA since my first academic year. I have sat on four search committees at the University of Alberta, most recently for the Dean of Students. I have also participated in the GSAs Awards Committees and Student Services Granting Committee. I embrace new service opportunities, and thank you for your consideration for the position of Deputy Speaker.

Leigh Spanner's Resume:

I am Ph.D. Candidate in the Department of Political Science, doing research in the subfield of Feminist International Relations. Specifically my research interrogates the relationship between Canadian military families, gender and the Canadian state.

My interest in the position of Deputy Speaker stems from a desire to enrich my volunteer experiences. My experiences as Senator, a non-voting member on council, and as Chair of ERC, which requires me to be neutral in relation to elections and to practice Roberts Rules of Order when I run meetings, positions me well for this role. While I am away for March Council, as I will be out of the country, I will be in attendance to the subsequent meetings. I also regularly attend GSA Board meetings, so this aspect of the role wouldn't be much of a change. Thank you again for considering my nomination.

Outline of Issue (GSA Council)

General Election 2016 Results: To Receive For Information For Purposes of Transferring Banking Signing Authority

Suggested Motion for 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

NOTE 1: The General Elections 2016 official results were announced by the CRO on Friday, February 26, 2016.

NOTE 2: GSA Council is now asked to *receive for information* the results, to be set out in the Minutes. The GSA's bank requires that the names of the newly Directly-Elected Officers appear in the Minutes in order to transfer signing authority on 1 May, 2016.

Jurisdiction:

GSA Policy, Budget Principles, Practices and Procedures, Section 3.1:

"Signing Authority

- a. *Financial documents related to the Unrestricted Operating Budget requiring signature, including but not limited to cheques and investment instructions, require two (2) signatures: either any two (2) Directly-Elected Officers, or any one (1) Directly-Elected Officer and one Director.*
- b. *The President, at least two (2) Vice-Presidents, and at least two (2) Directors shall each as individuals have authority as signing officers for the GSA.*
- c. *Wherever possible, it is preferable for one of the signatories to be the President."*

GSA Policy, Elections, Section 9.1:

"Upon completion of the ballot count, the CRO shall announce provisional results, ie results that are subject to appeal for twenty-four (24) hours from the time the provisional results are released and which may, in addition, be affected because of earlier complaints not yet resolved. Results will be made official only when the GSA's process of dealing with alleged breaches of Elections Bylaw and Policy and any appeals within that process are exhausted."

Outline of Issue (GSA Council)

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

Background:

See the first page of the attached Executive Summary for relevant background information. As “the senior administrative authority of the GSA as delegated to it by Council” (GSA Policy, Standing Committees, Section 2.2.a), the GSA Board received for information and forwarded to GSA Council the results of the survey at their meeting of March 2, 2016 and remains engaged with respect to reviewing the recommendations developed in the Executive Summary.

Jurisdiction:

GSA Policy, Standing Committees, Section 2.2.a

“The GSAB is the senior administrative authority of the GSA as delegated to it by Council.”

SECTION 1: RESPONSE RATES AND OVERVIEW OF FEEDBACK RECEIVED

The GSA negotiates for a number of different services for graduate students. In accordance with the GSA Board 2015-2016 Strategic Work Plan, the GSA will “regularly review, monitor, and negotiate all GSA services to ensure that students are getting the highest value possible.”

At the October 2015 meeting of GSA Council (following earlier notification of the timing of the survey), a hardcopy survey with respect to GSA services was distributed to members. Members were instructed to either complete the survey immediately or to return it to the GSA office before November 30, 2015. Concurrently, an online survey utilizing Google Forms was distributed to all graduate students on a recurring basis via the GSA newsletter. The online survey also closed on November 30, 2015. **Both surveys were anonymous and did not collect personal information** (with respect to the online survey, graduate students’ email address and CCID were not recorded).

While the number of participants was relatively low (53 copies of the survey were submitted to those in attendance at GSA Council in October and 44 responses were returned, a response rate of 83%, and 7,227 graduate students receive the GSA newsletter and 157 responses were submitted, a response rate of 2%), **GSA services were generally ranked as high value, especially with respect to major services such as the Health and Dental Plan and the U-Pass.** A total of 201 copies of the survey were completed and submitted to the GSA.

The comments received in the survey are reflective of several themes:

Need to enhance awareness of GSA services. This was a recurring theme in many of the submitted comments. In addition to continuing to disseminate information via orientation, departmental orientations, the GSA agenda/handbook, and the GSA website, providing two brief Services 101 presentations to GSA Council will be explored. Additionally, information about services will be featured more regularly on the GSA’s social media platforms moving forward. Members of GSA Council can assist in this effort by encouraging their colleagues and constituents to learn more about GSA services.

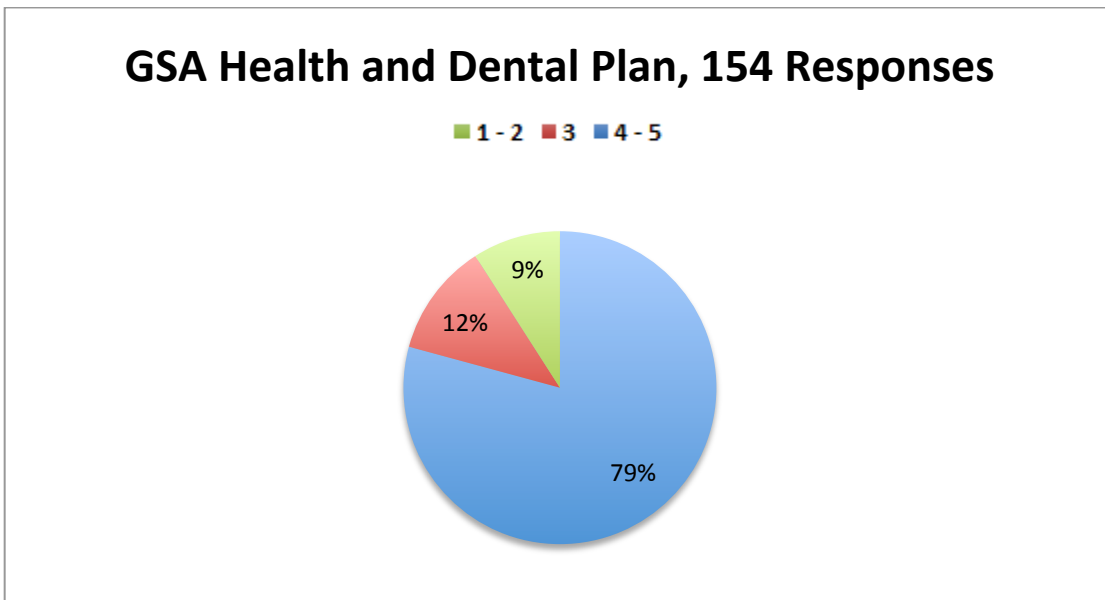
Provide additional information about the GSA Health and Dental Plan and explore enhanced coverage. Based on the provided comments, the GSA website and in GSA orientation and departmental orientation presentations will include information with respect to how the GSA Health and Dental Plan differs from basic Alberta healthcare and about how it provides mental health services over and above those provided by the University. Additionally, while increases to coverage will come with a corresponding cost (with the cost increasing based on the level of coverage provided), the GSA will work with Studentcare, as the Plan administrator, to collect information on possible coverage increases. As noted in GSA Policy (GSA Health and Dental Plan and GSA Health and Dental Plan Reserve Fund, Section 7.1), “any increase in the Fee exceeding 15% of the previous year’s Fee must also be put to a referendum.” With respect to comments regarding increased coverage, 5 related to medical coverage (including massage therapy and mental health resources), 10 related to dental coverage, 6 related to vision coverage, and 3 were general statements regarding a desire for increased coverage in all areas.

Enhance clarity with respect to the source of funding for GSA grants, awards, and bursaries. Some comments suggest that graduate students believe their fees support GSSF funding. The GSA website, GSA agenda/handbook, and various orientation slides will be reviewed to ensure that there is clarity surrounding the reality that these are negotiated funds and the associated funding programs are not supported by graduate student dollars. Again, members of GSA Council can assist in this effort by speaking with their colleagues and constituents about this funding.

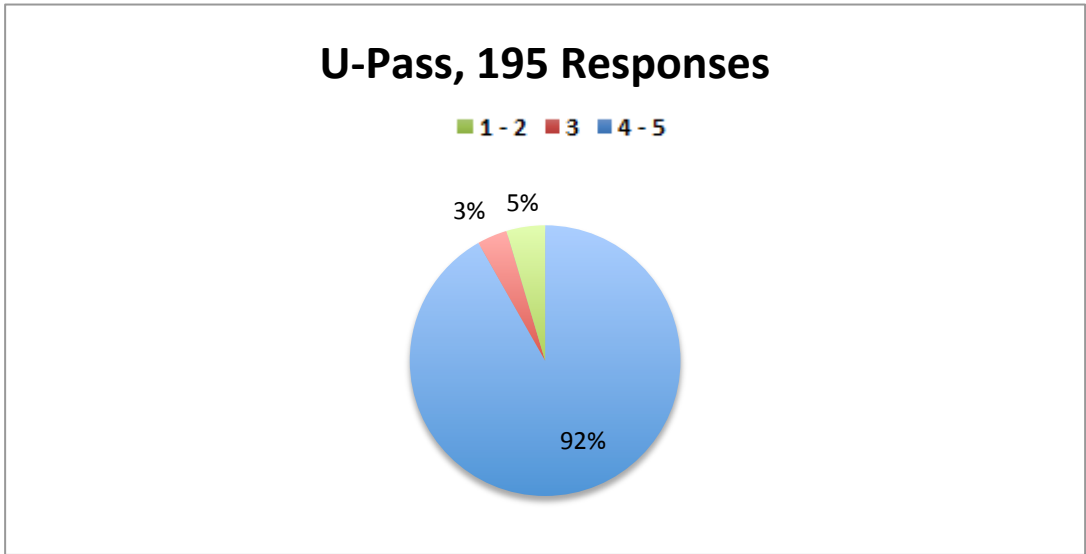
Increase awareness about GSAP. Specifically, work collaboratively with members of GSA Council (in addition to presenting information on the GSA website, GSA agenda/handbook, and various orientation slides) to stress that GSAP offers additional services to those offered by the University and the GSA Health and Dental Plan and that the program offers services aside from those geared toward mental health.

SECTION 2: SYNTHESIS OF RATINGS PROVIDED IN ALL THREE SURVEYS (to Departmental Councillors, to other members and guests of GSA Council, and to all graduate students via the GSA newsletter)

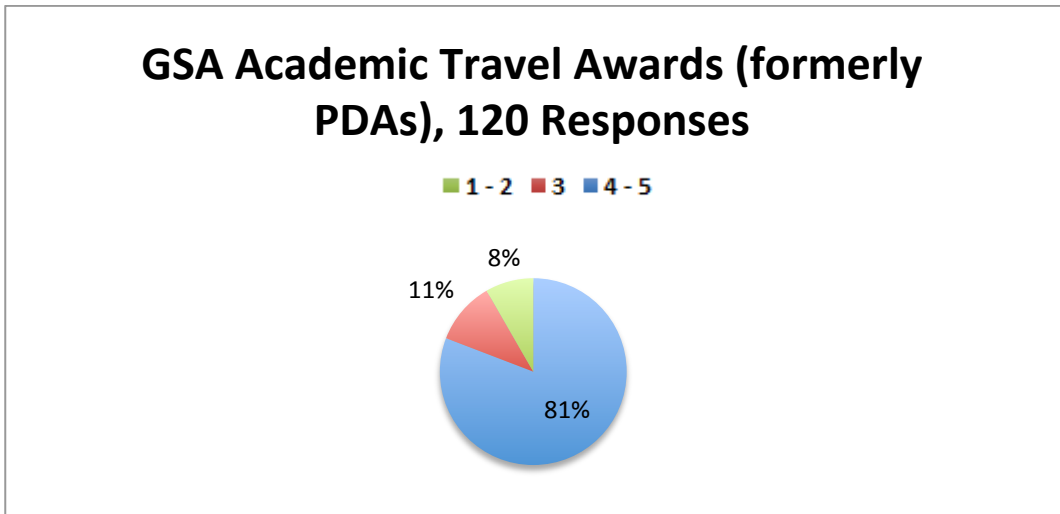
A total of 201 copies of the survey were completed and submitted to the GSA. Not all participants filled out all parts of the survey. Furthermore, Departmental Councillors were asked to consult with their departmental colleagues and base their responses on the feedback they received and so their responses, while provided singularly, may reflect the input of others. Additionally, only the online survey provided the option to select "I have never utilized this service before." The collected data as presented below accordingly has removed that ranking and associated responses. Likewise, respondents did not necessarily complete all portions of the survey and so each section below provides an individual response rate.



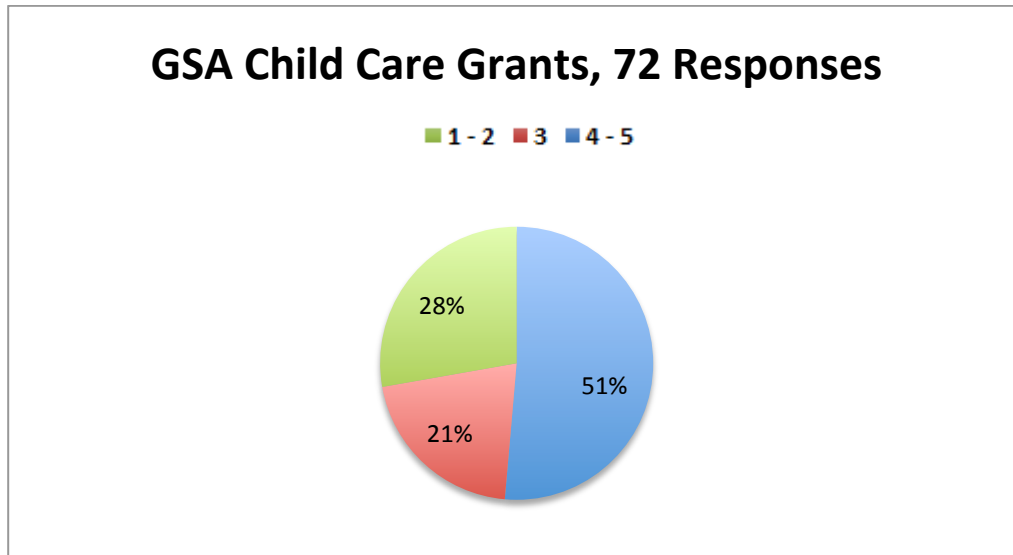
GSA H/D PLAN RANKING (5 = "high value" and 1 = "low value")	GSA H/D PLAN NUMBER OF RESPONSES (154 total)
4 – 5	122
3	18
1 – 2	14



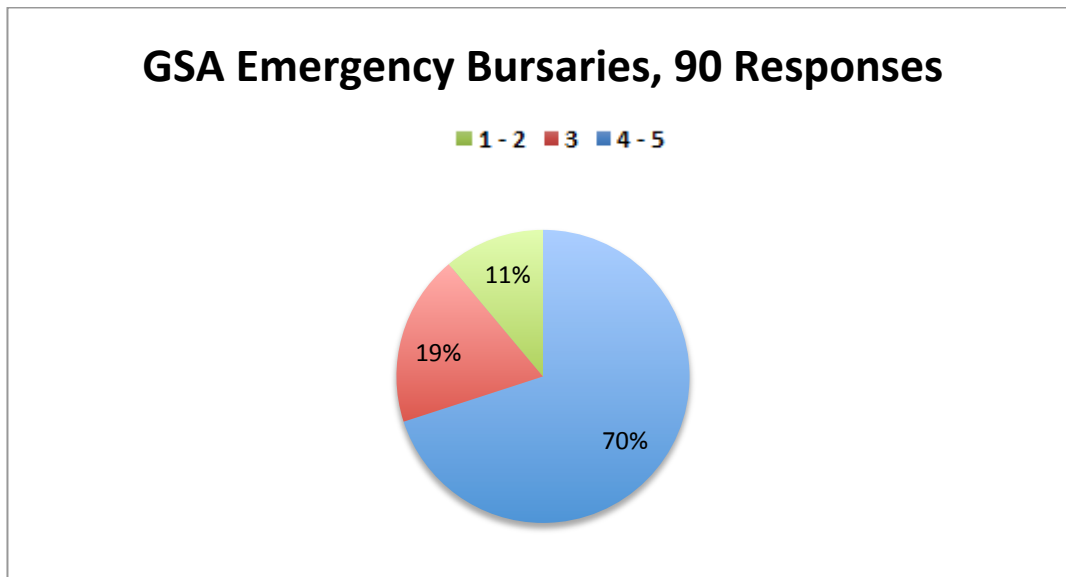
U-PASS RANKING (5 = "high value" and 1 = "low value")	U-PASS NUMBER OF RESPONSES (195 total)
4 – 5	179
3	7
1 – 2	9



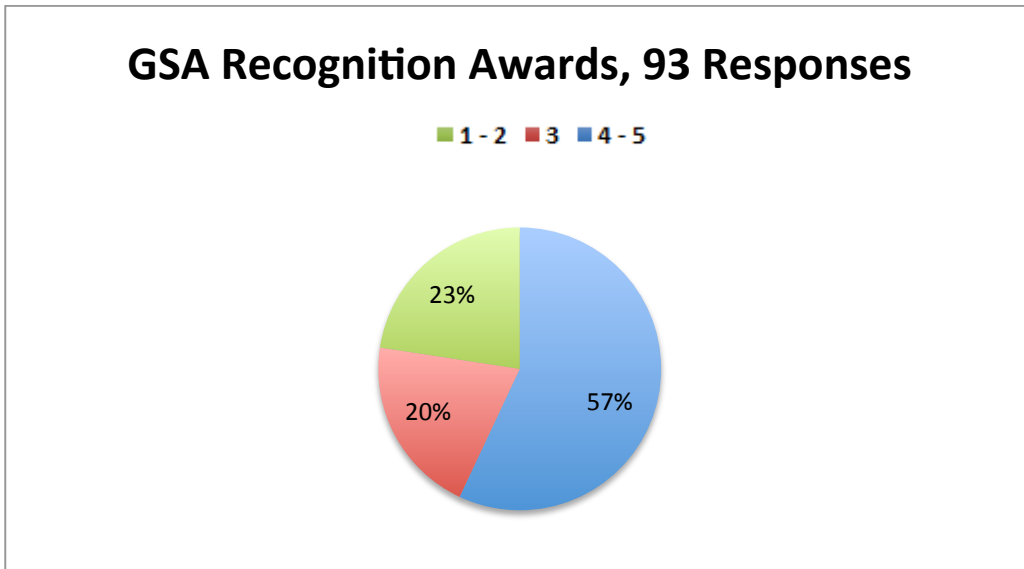
GSA ATA RANKING (5 = "high value" and 1 = "low value")	GSA ATA NUMBER OF RESPONSES (120 total)
4 – 5	97
3	13
1 – 2	10



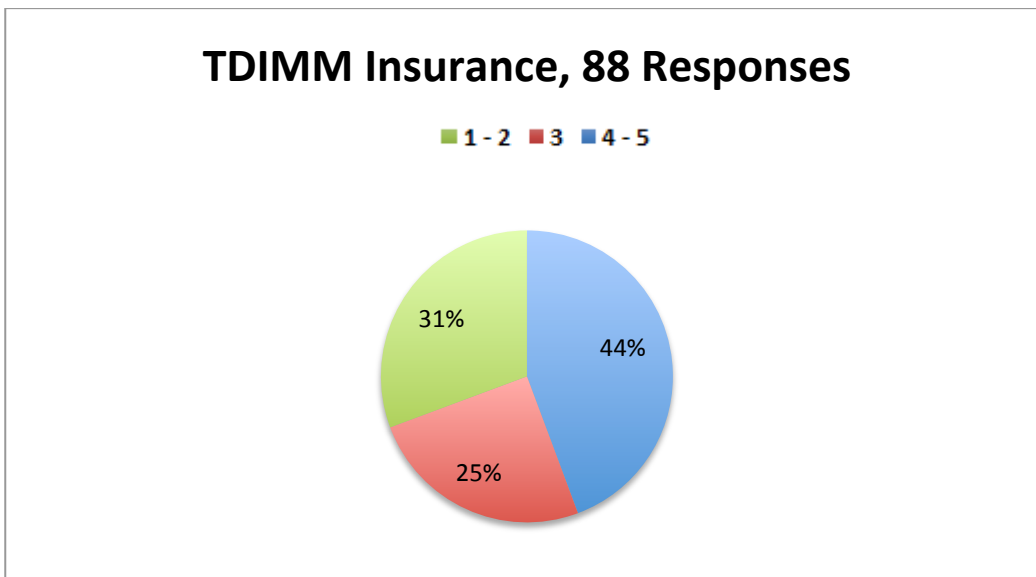
GSA CCG RANKING (5 = "high value" and 1 = "low value")	GSA CCG NUMBER OF RESPONSES (72 total)
4 – 5	37
3	15
1 – 2	20



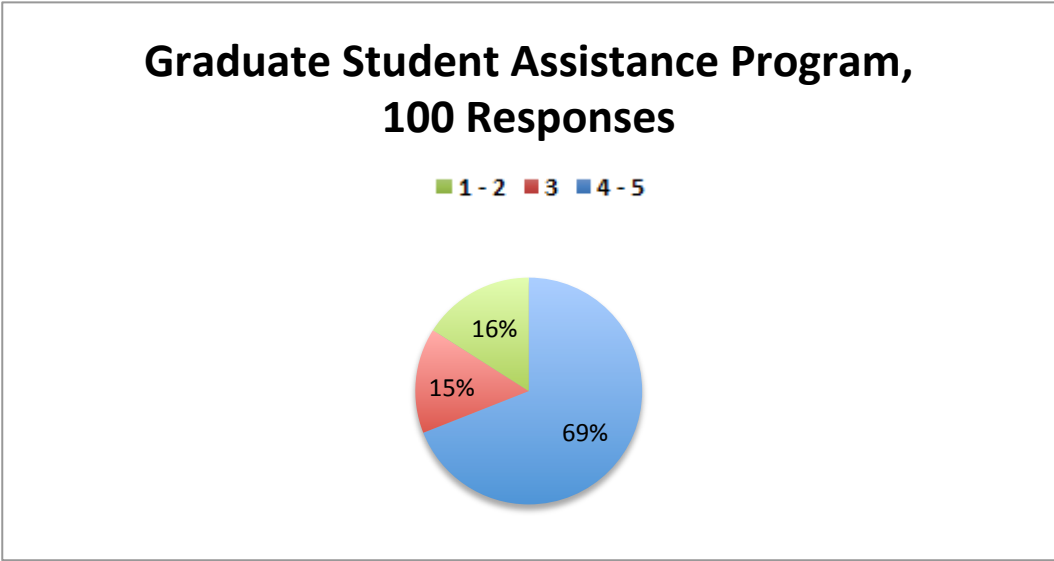
GSA EB RANKING (5 = "high value" and 1 = "low value")	GSA EB NUMBER OF RESPONSES (90 total)
4 – 5	63
3	17
1 – 2	10



GSA RECONGITION AWARDS RANKING (5 = "high value" and 1 = "low value")	GSA RECOGNITION AWARDS NUMBER OF RESPONSES (93 total)
4 – 5	53
3	19
1 – 2	21



TDIMM INSURANCE RANKING (5 = "high value" and 1 = "low value")	TDIMM INSURANCE NUMBER OF RESPONSES (88 total)
4 – 5	39
3	22
1 – 2	27



GSAP RANKING (5 = "high value" and 1 = "low value")	GSAP NUMBER OF RESPONSES (100 total)
4 - 5	69
3	15
1 - 2	16

GSA President
Report to GSA Council for the March 21, 2016 Meeting

To: GSA Council
From: Colin More
Date: March 18, 2016

Happy apparently early spring!

It's been a busy month at the GSA, so I'll get right to it! Let me begin with events we've been involved with outside the university.

First and foremost, some of you may be interested to hear that I participated in a province-wide conference call with the new Minister of Advanced Education, Marlin Schmidt, on Tuesday. The purpose of the call was to inform all the stakeholders in the province's adult education system of the consequences of Bill 4. This bill, which as of yesterday (March 17) was in its second reading at the Legislature, is entitled "An Act to Implement a Supreme Court Ruling Governing Essential Services." It does pretty much what it says on the label: implement a Supreme Court ruling on provincial employees with regards to their right to strike. That said, the government has decided to handle the post-secondary system somewhat separately from Bill 4 -- faculty and graduate student associations, who are currently governed by the rules of the *Post-Secondary Learning Act*, are unaffected by the Bill and have not gained the right to strike. However, the Ministry of Advanced Education will be conducting further consultations with stakeholder groups over the spring and summer, hoping to "wrap up the process by the fall." So, change is coming, just not this month. In truth, the best part of that phone call was hearing fifty people trying to say hello and goodbye at the same time.

Also in the sphere of provincial politics, a few words on our own advocacy group. As you may recall, the Alberta Graduate Provincial Advocacy Council, or ab-GPAC, was formed last summer to represent graduate students from the University of Alberta, University of Calgary, University of Lethbridge, and Athabasca University to the provincial government. As an organization still in its infancy, we are currently in the process of creating a strategic plan and a website. The former item is being handled mainly by the Chair of ab-GPAC, Calgary's VP External. The website is being handled mainly by me, and I'm pleased to say it is progressing. We have recently hired a web designer, and hopefully the site will come together relatively quickly in the next month or two!

A final item on external advocacy: Sarah Ficko and I met with the federal Minister of Democratic Institutions, Maryam Monsef, along with other students and representatives of administration several weeks ago. While Maryam's role is not directly health-related, she is a strong advocate for better mental wellness for all Canadians, including on university campuses. She had some suggestions on how students could lobby the federal government on the topic, and what steps the government is already taking. On a not-entirely-unrelated note, it was clear that Maryam is extremely driven and passionate; it's refreshing to see that in a senior politician!

Moving the focus of this report to inside the U of A, much of my time this month has been taken up by three items. The largest of these was the bombshell we received several weeks ago from Studentcare with respect to the projected cost of our Health and Dental Plan. The fallout of that has been well-documented elsewhere for this Council meeting, and no doubt will be/was discussed at length at the meeting, so I will not delve further into it here. Suffice to say that it has caused a lot of thought and effort at the GSA!

Second, there has been progress on negotiating with the University for a new Collective Agreement. However, since those efforts are headed up by the VP Labour, Sarah Ficko, I will defer to her for any updates.

Finally, the proposal put forward by the GSA, SU, and administration on restructuring how the University handles the collection and oversight of Mandatory Non-Instructional Fees. The proposal has now passed through all the various committees, and I'm pleased to announce that, as of this morning, it is official! The Board of Governors passed it unanimously. This was gratifying for me personally, as it's been a particular project of mine for nearly three years, ever since my early days as the GSA VP Academic.

To finish this report off, I should mention some minor but important points, most of which have to do with food.

First, I represent graduate students on the search committee for the new Chancellor. The process is proceeding as scheduled, and I must say that there are some really outstanding individuals who have put their names forward! I'm very optimistic that whoever is eventually elected will be well-positioned to fill the rather large footprints left by our current Chancellor, Ralph Young.

Second, a new Chair of the U of A Board of Governors was announced only fifteen days ago. Michael Phair is a well-respected figure in the Edmonton area. I have met him now on a number of occasions now, and I couldn't be more pleased with the provincial government's choice! In particular, Sarah Ficko (as incoming GSA President), Navneet Khinda (as current SU President), and Fahim Rahim (as incoming SU President) had lunch with him last week, and I had the opportunity to speak with him again at a Board of Governors dinner last night.

Finally (and really finally this time!), the dinner I just mentioned was more than just a normal Board of Governors dinner. It was, in fact, an annual event designed to bring Board members together with the executive teams of both the academic and the non-academic staff associations. In the past, the university's relations with both groups has been, at times, rather... tense. Events like these serve to really humanize the other, who may easily be viewed as something less than a full person in the course of adversarial negotiations. This serves as a nice reflection as I near the end of my presidency: we should never forget that everyone we deal with at the university, whether fellow students or professors or support staff or administrators, are people with their own hopes and dreams and ambitions and flaws. If we remember that, I hope that we can also work together to make this university even better than it already is.

Until next month!

Colin More, GSA President

11.2

Please find below a list of meetings I attended between February 23, 2016 to March 21, 2016. The meetings were accurate at the time of printing.

February 23	Director of Partnerships and Development, Studentcare (K Foster)
February 24	General Faculties Council Academic Planning Committee (GFC APC)
February 25	Graduate Student Discussion with a Professor
February 26	Mental Health with the Honourable Maryam Monsef
February 26	Campus Food Bank Fundraiser
February 29	GSA Governance Committee (GC)
February 29	Board University Relations Committee (BURC)
February 29	Board Learning and Discovery Committee (BLDC)
February 29	Chancellor Search Committee
March 1	Student Groups with the Students' Union (SU)
March 1	Board Finance and Property Committee (BFPC)
March 2	Disbursement Renewal Agreement
March 3	Dean of Students (R Everall)
March 3	Sexual Assault Review
March 3	Dean of Students (Robin Everall)
March 3	Central Support for TAs
March 4	VP (Finance and Administration) and VP (Facilities and Operations) Portfolio Review
March 7	Collective Agreement Internal Negotiations Meeting
March 7	Physical Activity and Wellness Strategic Operating Committee (PAW SOC)
March 7	Chancellor Search
March 8	Alberta Graduate Provincial Advocacy Council (ab-GPAC)
March 9	Lunch with the Board Chair (M Phair)
March 10	Meeting with a student
March 8	Alberta Graduate Provincial Advocacy Council (ab-GPAC) website
March 14	GSA Budget and Finance Committee (BFC)
March 14	Collective Agreement Negotiations Meeting
March 14	Chancellor Search Committee
March 17	Reception with the Board Chair (M Phair)
March 17	La Bruyère-Eccles-MacLaren Dinner
March 18	Board of Governors
March 21	General Faculties Council (GFC)

**GSA Board (GSAB)
Report to GSA Council for the March 21, 2016 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: 18 March, 2016

The GSA Board (GSAB) reports regularly to GSA 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 GSA Council meeting. Also see the weekly Management Reports to the GSAB in Item 22 (Executive Director's Report to GSA Council) on pages 22.1 – 22.3.

24 February 2016 GSA Board Meeting

Main Agenda Items:

Attendance at GU 15, April 12-15, 2016, in Vancouver, BC: Estimated Expenses; GSA President's Citation: 2016 Proposed Recipients; Student Advisors' Conference: Request for an External Grant; Special Meeting of GSA Council to Considered Ratification of the Memoranda of Settlement Related to the AEGS Collective Agreement and the Graduate Student Support Fund; GU 15 April 12-15, 2016: Discussion Topics; Health and Dental

Motions and Agreements:

Members **AGREED** to approve the Agenda of February 24, 2016, which had been previously distributed after adding "Health and Dental Plan" as a Discussion Item. SF **MOVED**. ANA Seconded. **CARRIED**.
 Members **AGREED** to approve the Minutes of February 17, 2016, which had previously been distributed after the addition of Sulya Fenichal to the attendees. SF **MOVED**. AT Seconded. **CARRIED**.
 That the GSA Board **APPROVE** the estimated expense for four (4) representatives of the GSA to attend GU 15 in Vancouver, BC, April 12-15, 2016. CM **MOVED**. HT Seconded. **CARRIED**.
 That the GSA Board **APPROVE** the awarding of a GSA President's Citation to an individual(s) from the attached list of proposed recipients. CM **MOVED**. SF Seconded. **CARRIED**.
 That the GSA Board **APPROVE** an external grant of the amended amount of \$250 for the 2016 Student Advisors' Conference, as requested in the attached letter from B Epperson, Graduate Ombudsperson. SF **MOVED**. AT Seconded. **CARRIED**.
 That the GSA Board **REQUEST** that the GSA Speaker call a special meeting of GSA Council on Monday, April 4, 2016 for the purpose of considering ratification of the Memoranda of Settlement Related to the AEGS Collective Agreement and the Graduate Student Support Fund. SF **MOVED**. CM Seconded. **CARRIED**.

2 March 2016 GSA Board Meeting

Main Agenda Items:

Executive Summary of the Survey on GSA Services Undertaken in October-November, 2015; TD Insurance Meloche Monnex Semi-Annual Report for the Period Ending December 31, 2015; Movies for Mental Health at Health Week: Request for an External Grant from the Health and Wellness Movement Student Group; GSA Health and Dental Plan Fees for 2016-2017

Motions and Agreements:

The GSA Board is asked to **RECEIVE FOR INFORMATION AND FORWARD TO GSA COUNCIL**, for information, the attached Executive Summary of the survey on GSA services undertaken in October-November, 2015. AT **MOVED**. SF Seconded. **CARRIED**.
 That the GSA Board **RECEIVE FOR INFORMATION** the attached semi-annual participation report, as provided by TD Meloche Monnex Insurance. CM **MOVED**. AT Seconded. **CARRIED**.
 That the GSA Board **APPROVE** an external grant of \$250 as requested from Yasmin Rafiei, on behalf of the Health and Wellness Movement Student Group, for Mental Health Week. SF **MOVED**. CM Seconded. **CARRIED**.

9 March 2016 GSA Board Meeting

Main Agenda Items:

GSA Health and Dental Plan Fees for 2016-2017; Funding Received by the GSA From the Studentcare Continuum Program; Unwind Your Mind Grant 2016-2017

Motions and Agreements:

Members **AGREED** to approve the Agenda of March 9, 2016, which had been previously distributed, after moving HT's report after AT's report. AT **MOVED**. ANA Seconded. **CARRIED**.

16 March 2016 GSA Board Meeting

Main Agenda Items:

University of Alberta Institutional Strategic Plan; GSA Health and Dental Plan Fees for 2016-2017

Motions and Agreements:

Members **AGREED** to approve the Minutes of March 9, 2016, which had previously been distributed after adding "Incoming" before "VP Student Services" and "VP Labour" in the VP Labour's report. SF **MOVED**. AT Seconded. **CARRIED**.

GSA Budget and Finance Committee (GSA BFC)
Report to GSA Council for the March 21, 2016 Meeting

To: GSA Council
From: Colin More
Date: March 21, 2016

Dear Council Colleagues,

The GSA BFC met on March 14, 2016 to discuss the GSA's investment strategy and investment management. At this meeting, members also supported moving the GSA's banking from BMO to ATB (with whom the GSA's investments are managed).

Additionally, at this meeting, and as I reported to you at last month's meeting, GSA BFC members recommended to GSA Council a proposal to change GSA Bylaw and GSA Policy to utilize a three-year time span, as opposed to five years, with respect to the GSA's rolling budget and business plan. This shorter time span will allow for greater accuracy in forecasting. This proposal will come before GSA Council in the coming months.

Finally, the GSA BFC discussed the 2016-2017 Health and Dental Plan fee, as well as the GSA Health and Dental Plan Reserve Fund.

Sincerely,
Colin More, GSA President and Chair, GSA Budget and Finance Committee

GSA Governance Committee (GSA GC)
Report to GSA Council for the March 21, 2016 Meeting

To: GSA Council
From: Colin More
Date: March 18, 2016

Dear Council Colleagues,

The GSA GC met on February 29, 2016. At this meeting members discussed a first draft of an integrated version of GSA Bylaw and GSA Policy as well as the matter of the quorum of GSA Council, which GSA Council had referred to the committee at the February 22, 2016 GSA Council meeting. Members asked that some historical data on attendance at GSA Council meetings be compiled in order to further this discussion. Accordingly, the GSA GC will meet again on April 5, 2016 to continue discussion on the quorum of GSA Council and the draft integrated version of GSA Bylaw and GSA Policy.

Finally, at the February 29 meeting, GSA GC members voted to rescind part of a previously approved GSA GC Motion (August 9, 2013) delegating authority to the Chair and Vice-Chair of the GSA GC to approve “purely editorial” changes. Members approved the rescission of “factual errors” as an element of “purely editorial” changes. Accordingly, “purely editorial” changes are now constituted by: punctuation, italicization of Latin terms, capitalization, spelling, font, and re-numbering.

Sincerely,
Colin More, GSA President and Chair, GSA Governance Committee

**GSA Nominating Committee (GSA NoC)
Report to GSA Council for March 21, 2016 Meeting**

To: GSA Council
From: Michele DuVal
Date: March 18, 2016

Dear Council Colleagues,

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

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

Sincerely,

Michele DuVal, Administrative Chair, GSA Nominating Committee

GSA Council-Elected Officers

1) 2016 GSA Deputy Speaker (1 Graduate Student Position)

GSA Deputy Speaker Roy Coulthard resigned as Deputy Speaker in January 2016. Nominations for the GSA Deputy Speaker opened on Friday, March 4, 2016. The deadline for the first call for nominations was March 11, 2016. We received two applications. A call for additional nominations was sent to GSA Council on March 11, 2016, with a deadline to receive any additional nominations of Friday, March 18, 2016 at 12:00 PM (Noon). No additional nominations were received. **SEE ITEM 8ii – NOMINEES FOR GSA DEPUTY SPEAKER, PAGES 8.2 - 8.3.**

GSA Standing Committees

1) Joint Position on the GSA Board/GSA Nominating Committee (1 GSA Councillor Position)

Syed Daniyal Israr has stepped down from his joint position on the GSA Board and the GSA NoC. This joint position was advertised via email to GSA Council on Wednesday, December 2, 2015 with a deadline of Friday, December 11, 2015. No nominations were received, and the GSA NoC began a directed search (as per their Terms of Reference). The vacancy was discussed at the February GSA Council meeting and one GSA Councillor came forward. A call for additional nominations went out on March 4, 2016 with a deadline of March 11, 2016 at 12:00 PM (noon). Since the GSA NoC did not receive any additional nominations, the nominee was declared elected. The graduate student declared elected to serve on the GSA NoC and GSA Board is **Radim Barta (Masters Program, Oncology)**. See Item 8i for more information.

Bodies External to the GSA

1) General Faculties Council – (14 Graduate Student Positions)

The GSA NoC ran an advertisement in the GSA Newsletter Friday, February 26, 2016, for various General Faculties Council (GFC) Standing Committees. These ads included:

- The GSA NoC advertised for graduate student-panelist positions on GFC Academic Appeals Committee (AAC) and University Appeal Board (UAB). The GSA NoC has no further involvement in recruitment for these two committees.

- The GSA NoC advertised graduate student positions on five (5) GFC Standing Committees. The GSA NoC made recommendations to the GFC Nominating Committee (GFC NC) on the nominations received, but GFC NC votes on who to elect. The GSA NoC recommendations for the 2016-2017 representatives are:
 - o GFC Academic Planning Committee – Brayden Whitlock (Physiology)
 - o GFC Committee on the Learning Environment – Maikel Farhan (Experimental Medicine)
 - o GFC Campus Law Review Committee – Sarang Gumfekar (Chemical Engineering)
 - o GFC University Teaching Awards Committee – Vanessa Marensi (Physiology)
 - o Council on Student Affairs – Alicia Cappello (Humanities Computing/MLIS)

Current Vacancies:

1) GSA Councillor-at-Large (1 Graduate Student Position)

After the 2016 GSA General Election, there remains one (1) vacancy on GSA Council for a Councillor-at-Large (CAL). This vacancy was advertised in the March 11, 2016 GSA Newsletter. The deadline for the first call for nominations is March 29, 2016, at which point a call for additional nominations will be sent to GSA Council. The election of the new CAL will take place at the April 18, 2016, GSA Council meeting in time for the new CAL's term to begin on May 1, 2016.

2) GSA Board (1 GSA Councillor Position)

Monty Bal has stepped down from his position on GSA Board, leaving one non-voting position vacant for a member of GSA Council. The GSA NoC has decided that it will have an election for the GSA Board vacancy at the May GSA Council meeting. The position will be advertised in the GSA Newsletter soon.

3) GSA Appeals and Complaints Board (1 GSA Councillor, Alternate, or Recent-Former Position)

One position remains open for a Departmental Councillor, alternate, or recent-former Departmental Councillor on the GSA ACB. The GSA NoC will interview candidates and forward their names to GSA Council with a call for additional nominations, aiming to elect a new member in the coming weeks.

GSA VP Academic
Report to GSA Council for the March 21, 2016 Meeting

To: GSA Council
From: Harsh Thaker
Date: March 18, 2016

Dear Council Colleagues,

Firstly, I'd like to congratulate all the individuals who were elected at the end of last month to serve as Directly-Elected Officers and Councillors-at-Large for the GSA in 2016-17. The last few weeks have been both extremely busy and also very productive. Thank you to Steven Dew (Provost & VP Academic) for presenting the draft institutional strategic plan at GSA Board last week and GSA Council earlier today. I would like to remind everyone that if you have any comments/concerns about the draft, please send an email to engage@ualberta.ca. I would like to highlight a couple of the meetings I have attended in the past month.

FGSR Policy Review Committee

This committee had a walkthrough of the new 2016-17 University Calendar that is now available in a mobile-friendly, online environment. The finalized language for laddering graduate certificates into a course-based master's degree will be coming forward for a vote at the next FGSR Council meeting. The language FGSR has created should serve as a minimum framework from which departments can build on to develop their specific criteria for how a certificate would be recognized during admissions to a degree-granting program. The policy review committee is also exploring the idea of adding another category of leave to the three existing options for graduate students (maternity/parental, medical and compassionate). This new category would be for students wanting to take on a professional experience (eg. internships) during their graduate degree program. This is an ongoing discussion and you will likely hear more about it in the weeks and months to come.

GFC Committee on the Learning Environment

At the last meeting, this group approved Terms of Reference for a subcommittee of CLE to do some preliminary research to explore the idea of adding a teaching tenure stream within the University. We are also moving forward with a discussion on developing University Student Ratings of Instructions (USRIs) that are specifically targeted to project-based courses and courses that are taught 100% online. A third topic of discussion at CLE has been about what kind of technology is required in the classroom for optimal instruction during lectures and seminars.

It appears that I still have time for a shameless plug! Sooo....if you or any of your colleagues would like to serve on either FGSR Council (monthly meetings) or General Faculties Council (5 meetings/year), please keep an eye out for the vacancies that will be advertised in the GSA Newsletter. We are always looking for strong graduate student voices to be a part of strategic decision-making at both the faculty and academy levels.

As always, I am happy to answer any questions you may have regarding these items or about any of the other meetings I attended this past month.

Thanks,

Harsh Thaker, GSA Vice-President Academic

Please find below a list of meetings I attended between February 23, 2016 to March 21, 2016. The meetings were accurate at the time of printing.

February 23	Board Safety, Health and Environment Committee (BSHEC)
February 24	FGSR Council
February 25	General Faculties Council (GFC) Exec Working Group
February 26	Campus Food Bank Fundraiser
February 29	GSA Governance Committee
March 1	Office of the Registrar Student Advisory Committee (ORSAC)
March 2	General Faculties Council Committee on the Learning Environment (GFC CLE)
March 3	General Faculties Council Academic Standards Committee Subcommittee on Standards (GFC ASC SoS)
March 7	Collective Agreement Internal Negotiations Meeting
March 7	General Faculties Council (GFC) Exec
March 8	The Landing Ambassador Breakfast
March 8	Policy Review Committee (PRC)
March 9	Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL) Director Search Committee
March 14	Collective Agreement External Negotiations Meeting
March 17	General Faculties Council Academic Standards Committee (GFC ASC)
March 21	General Faculties Council (GFC)

**GSA Vice-President External
Report to GSA Council for the March 21, 2016 Meeting**

To: GSA Council
From: Alphonse Ndem Ahola
Date: March 18, 2016

Dear Council Colleagues,

I hope all goes well for you as we approach the end of the semester.

Since last Council, I attended meetings discussing issues concerning graduate students' experience, future in the province, and within the University of Alberta.

With Public interest Alberta (PIA), we discussed key issues that PIA is advocating for, and wants our support, that include:

- Quality post-secondary education should be recognized and supported as a public good.
- Access to post-secondary education should be increased to at least the national average.
- The Government must reverse its policy of transferring the cost of post-secondary education onto students and their families, and return to more affordable tuition.

All these issues are of great interest for graduate students and GSA Board is discussing different ways of cooperating with PIA on these subjects.

I reported before on the issue of fees collection in Residence Associations. This time the SU wants the Board of Governors to direct the University to collect fees on behalf of the Residence Associations. SU will be responsible for receiving the primary cheque (of the collected membership fees for all associations), auditing financial statements provided by associations and disbursing funds to respective Residence Associations. GSA members would be invited to sit in the process of auditing for graduate residences. We will surely give more details on this in the upcoming days, depending on the Board of Governors' decision.

Sincerely,
Alphonse Ndem Ahola, GSA Vice-President External

Please find below a list of meetings I attended between February 23, 2016 to March 21, 2016. The meetings were accurate at the time of printing.

February 25	Public Interest Alberta Post-Secondary Education (PIA PSE) Task Force
February 25	Council of Student Associations (COSA)
February 26	Aboriginal Student HUB-Town Hall Consultation
February 26	Campus Food Bank Fundraiser
March 1	Student Groups with the Students' Union (SU)
March 1	Meet a student re Student Award
March 3	GSA Labour Relations Committee (LRC)
March 7	Physical Activity and Wellness Strategic Operating Committee (PAW SOC)
March 8	Alberta Graduate Provincial Advocacy Council (ab-GPAC)
March 8	2016 Residence Community Awards
March 15	Alumni New Program Development
March 16	North Power Plant Tour
March 19	Alumni Council Major Session

**GSA VP Labour
Report to GSA Council for the March 21 2016 Meeting**

To: GSA Council
From: Sarah Ficko
Date: March 18, 2016

Hi Everyone,

Today is the second day of spring and I'm very excited about the longer days and the sunshine we've had lately! I hope you've had a fantastic month including eating pie on March 14, and can now begin to see the light at the end of the tunnel for classes, marking, experiments, writing, etc.

This month has been extremely busy with meeting with students, negotiations, and starting to learn the role of the GSA President following the elections. As you can notice in my summary of meetings, I've met with a lot of students this month in person and through email (as well as several professors and grad coordinators) to discuss questions and issues with contracts, compliance with the Collective Agreement, and support for students addressing issues of employment or in residences. It has been a lot of work, but I'm proud that the GSA supports students going through mentally and emotionally stressful situations as it means they have an advocate and another resource to draw on for information.

One of the issues I've noticed this year is lack of knowledge and information about the Collective Agreement. On March 3, the GSA Labour Relations Committee met to continue discussing how to educate graduate students, as well as identify other important groups with whom to coordinate information. In addition, one initiative that I started this month is to begin to meet with Councillors informally to discuss graduate employment in each department. At the moment, I hear about cases on an individual basis (sometimes multiple issues from one department or faculty), but it would be more useful to have a broader understanding of how grads are employed across the University and their general work conditions. If you haven't received an email yet, please keep an eye out for it in the next few months, and I or my successor Sasha van der Klein will be happy to go out for a chat over a beverage!

In terms of negotiations, as Colin notes, the GSA Negotiating Committee met last week with the Administration's team and our team is now waiting for an ask-related response from them. As I mentioned last month, we will possibly have a Special Council meeting for ratification of the Collective Agreement. This meeting is currently booked for April 4, though it may be brought to the April Council or later, depending on when a Memorandum of Settlement is signed.

This month, my Collective Agreement Fun Fact is:

Article 6.03.01: "The appointment of an AEGS will be made by the Appointing Officer following a recommendation by the Assistantship Supervisor. The appointment of an AEGS shall be evidenced by the Letter of Appointment, following the required template outlined in Appendix A of this Agreement. The Letter of Appointment constitutes the entire formal appointment between the AEGS and the University."

Note: this letter is NOT the same letter as your letter of offer from FGSR and/or your department when you started your grad studies, though that letter may detail your annual funding expectations. Please see Appendix A (http://www.gsa.ualberta.ca/en/~media/gsa/CollectiveAgreement/2014-2016_AEGSA_CA.pdf) for what the letter should include (e.g. Assistantship Supervisor, dates, hours per

week/pay scale, type of appointment, stipend rates). Please don't accept an assistantship without a letter of appointment!

As I've mentioned previously, please continue to bring forward general or specific issues with your own RA/TAs or other issues in your departments as you will likely hear about it before I do, and at a point where it could potentially be more easily resolved. I would be happy to present to departmental GSAs on the Collective Agreement and assistantships, so please ask! We're also still collecting copies of letters of offers, contracts and assistantship appointment letters that have been received by graduate students.

Happy Spring!

Sarah Ficko, GSA Vice-President Labour

Please find below a list of meetings I attended between February 23, 2016 to March 21, 2016. The meetings were accurate at the time of printing.

February 23	Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research (FGSR) Council Caucus
February 24	FGSR Council
February 24	Adolescent/young adult Connections to Community-driven, Early, Strengths-based and stigma-free Services (ACCESS) Project Working Group
February 25	Graduate Student Discussion with a Professor
February 26	Research re Inquiring Minds Program (K Dobson)
February 26	Meeting with a Student
February 26	Mental Health with the Honourable Maryam Monsef
February 26	Campus Food Bank Fundraiser
February 29	GSA Governance Committee
February 29	Academic Initiatives in Sustainability
March 1	Meeting with a Student
March 1	Meeting with Students
March 1	Meeting with Student and Grad Chair
March 2	Meeting with a Student and Ombudsperson
March 2	Meeting with a Student
March 3	GSA Labour Relations Committee (LRC)
March 3	Health Centre Advisory Group (HCAG)
March 4	Meeting with the Incoming VP Labour
March 7	Meeting with Students
March 7	Collective Negotiation Internal Meeting
March 7	Meeting with the Incoming VP External
March 7	Meeting with the Incoming VP Academic
March 8	Meeting with a Student and Professor
March 9	Meeting with a Professor re Compliance
March 9	Lunch with the Board Chair (M Phair)
March 10	Phone call from University President (D Turpin)
March 11	D Smirnow re Collective Agreement Negotiations
March 14	GSA Budget and Finance Committee (BFC)
March 14	Collective Agreement Negotiations Meeting
March 15	Associate Dean FGSR
March 16	Meeting with a Student

March 17	Dean of Students (R Overall)
March 18	Board of Governors
March 18	University's Strategic Institutional Plan (FGSR)
March 18	Incoming Team Transition
March 21	VP University Relations (D Pozega Osburn)
March 21	Meeting with Councillors

GSA Negotiating Committee (GSA NC)
Report to GSA Council for the March 21, 2016 Meeting

To: GSA Council
From: Sarah Ficko
Date: March 18, 2016

Dear Council Colleagues,

The GSA Negotiating Committee met internally on February 16 and March 14, 2016, and jointly with the University's negotiating team on February 16 and March 7. As was the case when I reported last month, the negotiating process remains ongoing until a memorandum of settlement is reached for ratification by the respective parties.

Also, as noted at the last meeting, the GSA Board has approved a Motion (as per the Standing Orders of GSA Council), to have a special meeting of GSA Council with the AEGS Collective Agreement as the only item on the agenda. **This meeting is currently set for April 4, 2016 at 6:00 PM.** Pending the conclusion of negotiations, this meeting might be cancelled or moved. Be assured that we will give you as much notice as possible if that should happen.

Sincerely,
Sarah Ficko, Chair of the GSA Negotiating Committee and GSA Vice-President Labour

**GSA Labour Relations Committee (GSA LRC)
Report to GSA Council for the March 21, 2016 Meeting**

To: GSA Council
From: Sarah Ficko
Date: March 18, 2016

Dear Council Colleagues,

The GSA Labour Relations Committee (GSA LRC) met on March 3, 2016 to discuss education, compliance, and communication to graduate students with respect to the Collective Agreement. At this meeting I also showed members the Powerpoint presentation I delivered to GSA Council at the January meeting. We had an excellent discussion and the group will be meeting again in the coming months to continue the conversation.

I am happy to answer any questions.

Sincerely,
Sarah Ficko, GSA Vice-President Labour and Chair, GSA Labour Relations Committee

**GSA Vice-President Student Services
Report to GSA Council for the March 21, 2016 Meeting**

To: GSA Council
From: Ali Talaei
Date: March 18, 2016

Dear Council Colleagues,

Hope you are all doing good and ready for the beautiful spring. Coming to the end of winter, it was not the most wonderful winter I was hoping for, mainly for two reasons. Professionally, my research focuses on climate change mitigation and you could see from the warm winter we had, I have not been successful so far. Personally speaking, I was planning to learn skiing and the winter was not cold enough to feel the real sense of skiing downhill. I hope yours was more exciting. ;)

In addition to the excitement of the election, for which I would like to gratefully thank the GSA ERC, GSA CRO, GSA DRO, and all the candidates who brought a great dynamic to this year's election, the past month has been both challenging and exciting for the GSA community:

- As Colin reports, we have been informed by Studentcare that the usage of the H&D Plan has increased dramatically in the past year. More precisely, the usage of Dental Plan has increased by around 20%, which is both good and bad news. It is good news as it shows that students are actually finding the Plan useful and beneficial to them. On the other hand, this means that the Health and Dental Plan fees are to increase, as the main driver of the fees is usage. We have had extensive discussion at the GSA Board and with Studentcare representatives to analyze the situation more comprehensively. Studentcare agreed to conduct a survey among students about the Plan, the results of which will be presented by Kristin Foster (our Studentcare rep) during GSA Council. We have come up with alternative pathways to deal with the situation for which we will need your feedback on at the meeting.
- Since last GSA Council meeting, I have received several emails regarding the GSA Academically-Related Student Group Award (which I talked about last month) and I had a meeting with a departmental GSA about it. Two things about this phenomena; it confirms that the results of the survey about services were quite reliable and students are not aware of the GSA services as much as they could be, and secondly, you, as councilors, are doing a great job in informing your departments about what happens at GSA Council and being a good representative for your department.
- I am concluding my report with two items of good news. The first one is regarding the Campus Food Bank (CFB). I have been confirmed as a Board member and look forward to many productive discussions (for your information, recent statistics from the CFB show that over 57% of CFB's clients are graduate students).
- The second good news is about the Prayer and Meditation space (PaMs). After months of advocacy from student groups (mainly GSA and SU) and with the great support of University Administration, the project will begin soon. I have got the confirmation for this from both Dean of Students and from Facilities and Operations.

Sincerely,

Ali Talaei, Vice-President Student Services

16.1

Please find below a list of meetings I attended between February 23, 2016 and March 17, 2016. The meetings were accurate at the time of printing.

February 23	Director of Partnerships and Development, Studentcare (K Foster)
February 26	University Research Policy Committee (URPC)
March 1	Student Groups with the Students' Union (SU)
March 3	Health Centre Advisory Group (HCAG)
March 3	Dean of Students (Robin Overall)
March 9	Campus Food Bank Board Meeting
March 16	Meeting with Departmental GSA
March 17	U-Pass Admin
March 17	Dean of Students
March 18	Incoming Team Transition

GSA Senator
Report to GSA Council for the March 21, 2016 Meeting

To: GSA Council
From: Leigh Spanner
Date: March 18, 2016

Dear Council Colleagues,

At the beginning of the month I attended Senate's winter plenary meetings. The first day's meetings were held at International House, which concluded with a multicultural celebration of food and music and dance. We also heard from the President of the Banff Centre, as well as the Dean of Business, about the work they are doing and their relationship with the U of A in general.

I also attended the Honorary Degree Committee, where we reviewed a number of nominations. The particular details of this committee meeting are confidential.

I am out of the country during this month's council meeting, so I am happy to answer questions/concerns over email at gsasemat@ualberta.ca

Best,

Leigh Spanner, GSA Senator

**GSA Chief Returning Officer
Report to GSA Council for the March 21, 2016 Meeting**

To: GSA Council
From: Virginia Pimmett
Date: March 18, 2016

Hello everyone,

As I'm sure you've noticed, we have concluded the 2016 GSA General Elections.

This year we had 7 candidates for Directly Elected Officer positions; the races for Vice President External and Vice President Student Services were contested by two candidates. There were also 9 candidates for the 10 available Councilor-at-Large positions.

The All Candidates' Meeting was held on 8 February 2016, where there were presentations by Brent Epperson (Graduate Ombudsperson) from the University Ombuds Office on promoting communication, as well as Rob Munro from Environmental Health & Safety on recognizing dangerous spaces within the University. Following this, candidates were all given copies of the relevant elections bylaw and policy, and had the opportunity to ask questions, which were clarified in consultation with the Elections and Referenda Committee.

The All-Candidates forum took place immediately prior to the February Council meeting and was moderated by Hamman Samuel, last year's Chief Returning Officer. The event was also videotaped and put on the website for graduate students to access.

The vote took place on 23-25 February. This is earlier in the year than last year, as ERC decided they wanted to eliminate overlap between the GSA elections and the SU elections. We also used a modified version of last year's Google Forms ballot system, by including all eligible graduate students in a Google Group such that only graduate students would be able to access the ballot form. This was undertaken with some technical assistance from Tawheed Sadiq from IST, as well as our own GSA IT Consultant Robin Sawh and GSA Associate Director Julie Tanguay. The Google Groups + Forms combination was quite successful and we had only one graduate student contact me because they were unable to access the ballot; this access issue was quickly resolved.

We had a relatively high turnout of graduate student voters this year, with 10.8% of graduate students submitting a ballot (701 ballots from 6886 graduate students). This is an increase over last year's turnout of 5.8% (404 ballots from 6925 graduate students).

The successful candidates are as follows:

GSA President: Sarah Ficko
GSA VP Academic: Firouz Khodayari
GSA VP External: Masoud Khademi
GSA VP Labour: Sasha van der Klein
GSA VP Student Services: Alireza Talaei

GSA Councillors-at-Large for 2016-2017 are:

- Monty Bal
- Michelle Campbell
- Alicia Cappello
- Colin More
- Nicole Noel
- Phil Oel
- Ned Onwugbufor
- Robert Reklow
- Dasha Smirnow

There were a few complaints filed during this election. Per GSA bylaw and policy, there was extensive consultation with ERC during this process, which resulted in some excellent collaborative outcomes.

I would like to extend my deepest thanks to all candidates in this election for putting their names forward and campaigning -- it's not an easy thing to do and I appreciate all of the work everyone put in. As well, thank you to all of the members of the GSA Elections and Referenda Committee for their thoughtful and rapid contributions to all of the questions I put forward for them, as well as the GSA staff for patiently working with me to keep the elections process on track.

Moving forwards, we will soon be having an ERC meeting to discuss this election and any changes we feel need to be made to improve future elections.

I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

Virginia Pimmett, GSA Chief Returning Officer

**GSA Elections and Referenda Committee (GSA ERC)
Report to GSA Council for the March 21, 2016 Meeting**

To: GSA Council
From: Leigh Spanner
Date: March 18, 2016

Dear Council Colleagues,

Since the last Council meeting the GSA Elections and Referenda Committee (GSA ERC) has been supporting the GSA Chief Returning Officer (GSA CRO) in all matters pertaining to the GSA General Elections 2016 (as per GSA Policy, Standing Committees, Section 9.1.a, "The GSA ERC shall advise the CRO on all matters pertaining to elections"). You can find more information about the GSA General Elections 2016 in the GSA CRO's report.

The GSA ERC will meet in the upcoming weeks to debrief the GSA General Election 2016.

Sincerely,
Leigh Spanner, Chair of the GSA Elections and Referenda Committee

**GSA Appeals and Complaints Board (GSA ACB)
Report to GSA Council for the March 21, 2016 Meeting**

To: GSA Council
From: Chris Chen
Date: March 18, 2016

Dear Councillors,

As many of you will recall, the GSA Council established the GSA Appeals and Complaints Board (GSA ACB) at its 20 July 2016 meeting. The Policy surrounding this Board now brings the GSA into compliance with our legal duty to observe fair process in hearing appeals of CRO decisions and/or in hearing complaints against Officers.

The ACB is comprised of 8 graduate students and 4 Councillors. We've had two vacancies thus far; one has been filled so far. All of us have gone through two rounds of training: one session on procedural fairness and one on writing reasons for our decisions. The slides of both sessions procedural fairness were based on advice from our lawyers, experience of other universities/jurisdictions, and were led by Executive Director Ellen Schoeck, who served as the administrator of the University's three appeal boards for many years. All of us found this training instructive.

In addition, some of us attended a lunch with Professor Emeritus Lewis Klar, a former Dean of law but more importantly a former Chair of the University Appeals Board. He gave us practical tips and also prepared written advice for us on the actualities of chairing a hearing that meets the tests of procedural fairness: the right to be heard (on paper or orally) and the right to an unbiased hearing.

May I say that preceding all this, each ACB member was interviewed by the GSA Nominating Committee members, where we reacted to a scenario that drove directly to the right to be heard in an unbiased fashion.

Now that elections are over, I can tell you that each ACB member put themselves in a kind of "bubble" during the campaign and voting periods in case we were called upon to hear an appeal of a CRO decision. We were not called upon, but are ready to serve if need be.

I will be happy to answer any questions.

Sincerely,
Chris Chen, Chair of the GSA Appeals and Complaints Board

**GSA Executive Director
Report to GSA Council for the March 21, 2016 Meeting**

To: GSA Council
From: Ellen Schoeck, GSA Executive Director
Date: March 18, 2016

Dear Council Colleagues,

These reports to you are my one opportunity each month to talk about what the office is doing at the GSA. A large percentage of our budget – as is the case with all not-for-profits – goes to staffing.

The GSA carries out all the functions under the *Post-Secondary Learning Act* that the SU does – expect that we do not run businesses. We *did* run a business once, and went bankrupt. We won't do that again until we have the right staff in place.

So what are we doing, here in Triffo Hall? I will highlight just the major issues:

Events: after a successful Professional Development event, we are now headed to **Awards Night**. You are all invited. The Minister will be there, the Dean of FGSR as well and the Deputy Provost. This is our opportunity to highlight the successes of grad students and grad student groups as well as those close to grad student life – eg supervisors.

Transition to the new Elected Team: Each year we turn the complex GSA over to a new team. Each of the five who are now elected have either been in an elected position with the GSA or have gone through Early Call. Organized by GSA NoC Admin Chair Michele du Val, Councillor for Bio Sci, Early Call seeks out any grad student interested in running for office. For those who respond, we train them in the basics, and they get to know us and vice-versa.

Health and Dental: H/D is always a challenge for the GSA because the timing of when we go to the Board of Governors with our fees differs from the timing of insurers. Thus we go with only a half-year of claims known to us instead of a full-year of claims before going to the Board with concrete numbers. Plus – claims keep going up and so does the cost.

These are just but highlights from a tight team that pales in comparison with the 200 employees of the SU.

As always, very happy to answer any questions.

Ellen

Management Report to the GSA Board, February 24, 2016

Dear All,

The following issues have dominated management's attention in the week since the last GSA Board meeting on February 17, 2016:

Strategic

- **Main Issues Dealt With in the Past Week:** GSA General Election 2016 (consulting with the CRO with respect to compliance to GSA Policy, planning for the All Candidates' Forum, and preparing for the voting period – began on Tuesday at 10 AM), GSA Council, training for members of the GSA ACB, GSA report to the Board of Governors, preparing for a GSA Governance Committee meeting and a GSA Labour Relations Committee meeting, residence issues, Collective Agreement, migration of the GSA website to Sitecore, review of IT, planning for transition, Health and Dental fee for 2016-2017.
- **Bylaw and Policy Review:** a review of all Bylaws and Policies for inconsistencies and errors and integration of the two (a draft has been prepared and a meeting of the GSA Governance Committee is upcoming).
- **Graduate Student Groups:** creation of an alcohol liability waiver (upcoming discussion with the new manager, Office of Insurance and Risk Assessment) and several other matters on the backburner. Will shortly be discussing some matters related to student groups with the SU.

Grants and Operations

- **Social Media:** Facebook = 741 likes (up 1 from February 17). Our Facebook posts reached 429 users this week and our "post engagement" count was 10. Twitter = 556 followers (up 8 from February 17). Our tweets earned 4,834 "impressions" over the last week.
- Planning for **GSA Awards Night**.
- **Grants processing** (period runs January 1 to March 31, period is 58% completed).

	Total Amount Available This Period	Total Amount Remaining This Period	Number of New Applications Since Last GSAB	Total Number of Applications This Period
ATA	\$79,684.38	\$59,469.45	9	44 (12 pending processing)
CCG	\$85,176.60	\$0 CLOSED	60	60 (0 pending processing)
ASGA	\$6,142.50	\$0 CLOSED	2	7 (4 pending processing)
EB	\$147,351.87* (no periods)	\$34,632.37* (no periods)	0	36 (0 pending processing)

Week in Review – Office Operations:

- Supporting the work of the GSA NoC and providing support for the General Election.
- Assistance with planning for Awards Night.
- Support for GSA Council.
- Grants processing.

Management Report to the GSA Board, March 9, 2016

Dear All,

The following issues have dominated management's attention in the week since the last GSA Board meeting on March 2, 2016:

Strategic

- **Main Issues Dealt With in the Past Week:** Health and Dental Plan fee for 2016-2017, Transition, preparing for a GSA Budget and Finance Committee meeting, Collective Agreement, GSA confidentiality agreements, GSA Council attendance historical data, Campus Food Bank, residence matters (fee collection, etc), Unwind Your Mind final report and new application, PAW Strategic Operating Committee meeting, staff training, GSA Nominating Committee meeting.
- **Bylaw and Policy Review:** a review of all Bylaws and Policies for inconsistencies and errors and integration of the two (a draft has been prepared and a meeting of the GSA Governance Committee is upcoming).
- **Graduate Student Groups:** creation of an alcohol liability waiver (upcoming discussion with the new manager, Office of Insurance and Risk Assessment) and several other matters on the backburner. Recent meeting with the SU to discuss some matters related to student groups.

Grants and Operations

- **Social Media:** Facebook = 746 likes (up 3 from March 2). Our Facebook posts reached 544 users this week and our "post engagement" count was 14. Twitter = 567 followers (up 4 from March 2). Our tweets earned 4,797 "impressions" over the last week. According to our analytics, posts with images reach more people and this will be kept in mind for future posts.
- Planning for **GSA Awards Night** (space walk through, etc).
- **Grants processing** (period runs January 1 to March 31, period is 73% completed).

	Total Amount Available This Period	Total Amount Remaining This Period	Number of New Applications Since Last GSAB	Total Number of Applications This Period
ATA	\$79,684.38	\$49,019.45	13	67 (13 pending processing)
CCG	\$85,176.60	\$0 CLOSED	60	60 (0 pending processing)
ASGA	\$6,142.50	\$0 CLOSED	0	7 (0 pending processing)
EB	\$147,351.87* (no periods)	\$34,632.37* (no periods)	0	36 (0 pending processing)

Week in Review – Office Operations:

- Supporting the **work of the GSA NoC** and assisting with the preparation of minutes following a GSA Governance Committee meeting.
- Assistance with planning for **Awards Night**.
- Assistance with **planning for Transition**.
- Grants processing.

Management Report to the GSA Board, March 16, 2016

Dear All,

The following issues have dominated management's attention in the week since the last GSA Board meeting on March 9, 2016:

Strategic

- **Main Issues Dealt With in the Past Week:** Health and Dental Plan fee for 2016-2017, Transition, GSA Budget and Finance Committee meeting, Collective Agreement, GSA Council attendance historical data, residence matters (fee collection, issues in Michener Park, etc), Unwind Your Mind final report and new application, staff transition and training, GSA Council handbook, graduate student group discussions, election of a new Occupational Therapy Councillor to GSA Council, meeting with FGSR re CCIDs for an election, meeting with FGSR re communications.
- **Bylaw and Policy Review:** a review of all Bylaws and Policies for inconsistencies and errors and integration of the two (a draft has been prepared and a meeting of the GSA Governance Committee, at which it will be reviewed for the second time, is upcoming).
- **Graduate Student Groups:** creation of an alcohol liability waiver (upcoming discussion with the new manager, Office of Insurance and Risk Assessment) and several other matters on the backburner.

Grants and Operations

- **Social Media:** Facebook = 750 likes (up 4 from March 9). Our Facebook posts reached 524 users this week and our "post engagement" count was 9. Twitter = 574 followers (up 7 from March 9). Our tweets earned 4,948 "impressions" over the last week.
- Planning for **GSA Awards Night** (confirming attendance, finalizing the program, drafting the script, etc).
- **Grants processing** (period runs January 1 to March 31, period is 81% completed).

	Total Amount Available This Period	Total Amount Remaining This Period	Number of New Applications Since Last GSAB	Total Number of Applications This Period
ATA	\$79,684.38	\$39,836.03	21	88 (22 pending processing)
CCG	\$85,176.60	\$0 CLOSED	60	60 (0 pending processing)
ASGA	\$6,142.50	\$0 CLOSED	0	7 (0 pending processing)
EB	\$147,351.87* (no periods)	\$30,287.37* (no periods)	2	38 (1 pending processing)

Week in Review – Office Operations:

- Supporting the **work of the GSA NoC** (recommending graduate students to serve on GFC Standing Committees, election of a new Occupational Therapy Councillor to GSA Council, CALs, Deputy Speaker, President's Standing Committee on Convocation)
- Assistance with planning for **Awards Night**.
- Assistance with **planning for Transition**.
- Grants processing.