

## GSA Council Meeting CONSOLIDATED AGENDA

Monday, October 24, 2016 at 6:00 pm  
2-100 University Hall, Van Vliet Complex

The GSA acknowledges that the University of Alberta is situated on the Traditional Territory of Treaty Six.

**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

A pizza dinner will be served at 5:15 pm.

#### OPEN SESSION

#### Attached Numbered Pages

1. Roll Call
2. Approval of the 24 October 2016 Agenda
3. Approval of the Minutes from the 26 September 2016 GSA Council Meeting  
*Attachment:*
  - i. Minutes from the 26 September 2016 GSA Council Meeting **3.0 - 3.11**
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*)

#### Councillor Announcements

5. Councillor Announcements

#### Action Items

6. GSA Council Quorum: Proposed Changes to GSA Bylaw and to the Standing Orders of GSA Council  
**Sarah Ficko (GSA President) will present the item.**

**GSA Governance Committee Members:** Sarah Ficko (GSA President and GSA GC Chair); Sasha van der Klein (GSA Vice-President Labour); Justin Leifso (Political Science GSA Councillor); Maryse Ndilu Kiese (Religious Studies GSA Councillor); Nicole Noel (Councillor-at-Large)

#### *Attachments:*

- i. Cover Letter **6.0**
  - ii. Outline of Issue **6.1 - 6.2**
  - iii. GSA Council Quorum Double Column **6.3 - 6.4**
7. GSA Board 2016-2017 Strategic Work Plan  
**Sarah Ficko (GSA President) will present the item.**

Prepared by J Tanguay and C Thomas for GSA Council 24 October 2016

Macintosh HD:Users:gsaad:Google Drive:320 - Council:Meetings:2016-2017:October 2016:Second Mailing:GSA Council 24 October 2016 Item 2 - Consolidated Agenda (Second Mailing).docx

*Attachments:*

- Cover Letter from the GSA President 7.0 - 7.1
- Outline of Issue 7.2
- GSA Board 2016-2017 Strategic Work Plan 7.3 - 7.18

**Elections, Appointments, Special Business, Updates:** None at this time

**For Discussion:** None at this time

**Reports**

8. President (**Sarah Ficko, GSA President**)
  - i. President's Report 8.0 - 8.4
  - ii. GSA Board 8.5
  - iii. GSA Budget and Finance Committee (**no meetings this reporting period**) 8.6
  - iv. GSA Governance Committee 8.6
9. GSA Nominating Committee
  - i. GSA Nominating Committee Report (**Radim Barta, GSA Nominating Committee Administrative Chair**) 9.0 - 9.2
10. Vice-President Academic (**Firouz Khodayari, GSA Vice-President Academic**)
  - i. Vice-President Academic's Report 10.0 - 10.1
11. Vice-President External (**Masoud Khademi, GSA Vice-President External**)
  - i. Vice-President External's Report 11.0 - 11.1
  - ii. GSA Awards Selection Committee 11.2
12. Vice-President Labour (**Sasha van der Klein, GSA Vice-President Labour**)
  - i. Vice-President Labour's Report 12.0 - 12.1
  - ii. GSA Negotiating Committee (**no meetings this reporting period**)
  - iii. GSA Labour Relations Committee (**no meetings this reporting period**)
13. Vice-President Student Services (**Alireza Talaei, GSA Vice-President Student Services**)
  - i. Vice-President Student Services' Report 13.0 - 13.1
  - ii. GSA Student Affairs Advisory Committee (Joint Chair: Vice-President External) (**no meetings this reporting period**)
14. Senator (**Jane Traynor, GSA Senator**)
  - i. Senator's Report (**no written report at this time**)
15. Speaker (**Sulya Fenichel, GSA Speaker**)
  - i. Speaker's Report (**no written report at this time**)
16. Chief Returning Officer (**Carolina Martinez, GSA Chief Returning Officer**)
  - i. Chief Returning Officer's Report 16.0
17. GSA Elections and Referenda Committee (**Leigh Spanner, GSA Elections and Referenda Committee Chair**)
  - i. GSA Elections and Referenda Committee Report 17.0
18. GSA Management (**Courtney Thomas, GSA Executive Director**)
  - i. Executive Director's Report 18.0 - 18.8

**Question Period**

19. Written Questions (**none at this time**)

**20. Oral Questions**

**Adjournment**

**GSA Council Meeting MINUTES**  
Monday, September 26, 2016 at 6:00 pm  
2-100 University Hall, Van Vliet Complex

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

Sarah Ficko (President)	Amy Reedman (Anthropology)	Lorna Sutherland (Elementary Education)	Cindy Ning Wu (Nursing)
Firouz Khodayari (VP Academic)	Michael Woolley (Art & Design)	Shaina Humble (English & Film Studies)	Kelsey Peterson (Occupational Therapy)
Sasha van der Klein (VP Labour)	Swai Mon Khaing (Biochemistry)	Neil Prather (History & Classics)	Radim Barta, Daniel Kryz (Oncology)
Ali Talaei (VP Student Services)	Francesca Jean; Michele DuVal (Biological Sciences)	Mohammed Abdul-Bari (Human Ecology)	Brabhjot Bedi (Paediatrics)
Sulya Fenichel (Speaker)	Andrew Williams (Biomedical Engineering)	Jocelyn Beyer (Humanities Computing)	Jay Worthy (Philosophy)
Darcy Bemister (DRO)	Trent Nabe (Business MBA)	Faisal Hirji (Lab Medicine & Pathology)	Andrzej Pokraka (Physics)
Michelle Campbell (Councillor-at-Large)	Boshen Qi (Business PhD)	Carla Lewis (Library & Info Studies)	Brayden Whitlock (Physiology)
Alicia Cappello (Councillor-at-Large)	Sahar Saadat (Chemical & Materials Engineering)	Falene Karey-McKenna (Linguistics)	Justin Leifso (Political Science)
Colin More (Councillor-at-Large)	Anis Fahandej-Sadi (Chemistry)	Michelle Michelle (Math & Statistical Sciences)	Michal Juhas (Psychiatry)
Nicole Noel (Councillor-at-Large)	Wai Man Wong (Civil & Environmental Engineering)	Hirad Soltani (Mech Eng)	Joshua Yong (Psychology)
Phil Oel (Councillor-at-Large)	Roshan Shariff (Computing Science)	Fahed Elian; Allison Lewis; Vanessa Carias (Medical Genetics)	Colin Reynolds (Public Health)
Robert Reklow (Councillor-at-Large)	Brette Harris (Earth & Atmo Sciences)	Melissa Silva (Medicine)	Owain Bamforth (Religious Studies)
Dasha Smirnow (Councillor-at-Large)	Melody Li; Jane Traynor (East Asian Studies)	Jay Friesen (MLCS)	Ryan Stanfield (Renewable Resources)
Ahmed Najjar (Councillor-at-Large)	Amanda Radil (Ed Psych)	David Parent (Native Studies)	Liam Li (Resource Economics & Environmental Sociology)
Nian Liu (AFNS)	Ryan Kisslinger (Electrical & Computer Engineering)	Mischa Bandet; Grant Norman (Neuroscience)	Tasha Jayatunge; Kelsi Barkway (Sociology)

Speaker Sulya Fenichel in the Chair.

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

S Fenichel noted that the GSA acknowledged that the University of Alberta is situated on the Traditional Territory of Treaty Six.

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

## 2. Approval of the 26 September 2016 Consolidated Agenda

Members had before them the 26 September 2016 Consolidated Agenda, which had been previously distributed on 23 September 2016. S Ficko **MOVED**; N Prather **SECONDED**.

Motion **PASSED**. One Opposed.

### Approval of Minutes

## 3. Minutes from the 18 July 2016 GSA Council meeting

Members had before them the 18 July 2016 GSA Council Minutes, which had been previously distributed on 16 September 2016. S Ficko **MOVED**; N Prather **SECONDED**.

Motion **PASSED**. B Whitlock Abstained.

### Changes in Council Membership

## 4. Changes in GSA Council Membership

### i. Introduction of New Councillors

This was the first meeting for a number of Councillors: N Liu (AFNS); A Williams (Biomedical Engineering); W Wai (Civil & Environmental Engineering); F Karey-McKenna (Linguistics); D Kryz (Oncology); A Pokraka (Physics); M Abdul-Bari (Human Ecology)

### ii. Farewell to Departing Councillors

### Councillor Announcements

## 5. Councillor Announcements

V Carias, Medical Genetics Councillor, noted that Let's Talk Science was in need of volunteers for their "School of Witchcraft and Wizardry" on Saturday, October 29, at which kids learned about science. She asked GSA Councillors to email [kcarias@ualberta.ca](mailto:kcarias@ualberta.ca) if they wanted to volunteer or had any questions!

J Leifso noted that Thursday was the 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Hurtig Lecture and that Dr. Samantha Nutt, founder of War Child Canada, would be speaking.

### Action Items, Elections, Appointments, Special Business, Updates

## 6. GSA Council Quorum: Proposed Changes to GSA Bylaw and to the Standing Orders of GSA Council

**MOTION BEFORE COUNCIL:** That GSA Council, on the recommendation of the GSA Board and the GSA Governance Committee, **APPROVE** the proposed changes to GSA Bylaw (Part III) and to the Standing Orders of GSA Council, as noted in the attached double column document and effective upon the second reading by GSA Council in the case of GSA Bylaw and the approval of GSA Council in the case of the Standing Orders of GSA Council.

S Ficko reminded GSA Council that at the February 2016 GSA Council meeting a motion from the floor asked GSA Governance Committee to re-consider GSA Council quorum. She also noted that GSA Governance Committee (GSA GC) held three meetings to consider GSA Council quorum. She added that GSA Board also discussed GSA Council quorum and that the GSA GC and GSA Board also held a joint meeting. She indicated that a consensus was reached to propose a GSA Council quorum of 30. She summarized that members of both committees were concerned that too high a number of GSA Council quorum might prevent GSA Council to conduct business but that too low a number was also not ideal and had implications regarding fairness of proceedings. She finally indicated that a set number was chosen rather than a percentage for the ease of Speaker and Minute Takers during meetings.

**MOTION:** That GSA Council, on the recommendation of the GSA Board and the GSA Governance Committee, **APPROVE** the proposed changes to GSA Bylaw (Part III) and to the Standing Orders of GSA Council, as noted in the attached double column document and effective upon the second reading by GSA Council in the case of GSA Bylaw and the approval of GSA Council in the case of the Standing Orders of GSA Council. S Ficko **MOVED**. J Leifso **SECONDED**.

Motion **PASSED** unanimously

## 7. GSA Council Elections

R Barta noted that there was one vacancy for the Dean of Science Review Committee and that all departmental GSAs were asked to forward names by the deadline. He added that two nominations were received, one from the department of Chemistry and one from the department of Computer Science. He indicated that both candidates were present. He noted that both candidates would be asked a question which had been provided in advance and that they would have 45 seconds to answer the question.

The question was:

This committee is tasked with reviewing the current Dean for the Faculty of Science. Taking 45 seconds, please tell us, in your opinion, what the current issues in your department are that the Dean should continue to address, particularly with respect to graduate students?

After a draw, A Fahandej-Sadi left GSA Council room and C Pang responded to the question.

C Pang (Computing Science) introduced herself to GSA Council and responded that funding was the biggest issue facing graduate students in her department and that the Chair should secure funding to allow faculty and students to work effectively.

C Pang left the room and A Fahandej-Sadi responded to the question.

A Fahandej-Sadi (Chemistry) responded that the biggest issues facing students in his faculty were the increasing demands on Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTA) and these increasing demands limited their time to actually work on their thesis. He added that the number of graduate student should be increased to decrease the number of GTA hours required of each individual. He also noted that, in Chemistry, the masters program was longer than at other institutions.

R Barta thanked both candidates and asked GSA Council to cast their ballots.

i. Dean of Science Review Committee

Nominees for Dean of Science Review Committee

Anis Fahandej-Sadi (Chemistry)  
Candy Pang (Computing Science)

ii. Dean of Native Studies Selection Committee

**MOTION BEFORE COUNCIL:** That GSA Council **RATIFY** the appointment of the graduate student from the Faculty of Native Studies noted below to serve on the Dean of Native Selection Committee:

One nomination by the deadline

Nominees for Dean of Native Studies Selection Committee

Mike Dockman

**MOTION:** That GSA Council **RATIFY** the appointment of the graduate student from the Faculty of Native Studies noted below to serve on the Dean of Native Selection Committee. RB **MOVED**. Nicole meyer **SECONDED**.

Motion **PASSED**. D Parent and J Yong Opposed. R Barta Abstained.

iii. GSA Standing Committees

a. GSA Awards Selection Committee

**MOTION BEFORE COUNCIL:** That GSA Council **DECLARE ELECTED** to the GSA Awards Selection Committee the graduate students below:

Nominees for GSA Awards Selection Committee:

Yingzhou Li (Earth and Atmospheric Science)  
Wade Michaelchuk (Physical Education and Recreation)

Preshit Verma (Civil and Environmental Engineering)

R Barta explained that the GSA Nominating Committee (GSA NoC) ran an ad for 5 to 7 vacancies on the GSA Awards Selection Committee and three nominees came forward. C More asked why GSA Council did not see the bio and resume for all the nominees put forward. R Barta explained that these were circulated to GSA NoC and then voted on. He added that if GSA Council wanted to see those it could be a possibility going forward. M DuVal (former Administrative Chair of the GSA NoC) pointed out to GSA Council that the package they received to read in advance of GSA Council was already very large and additional materials would make it more cumbersome. She added that the purpose of GSA Standing Committees which have specific mandates approved by GSA Council, such as the GSA NoC, is to do specialized work for GSA Council. She also noted that GSA Council needed to trust that the GSA Standing Committees are effectively meeting their mandates as the alternative would be for GSA Council to do all the work itself. A Najar requested that the GSA worked on outreach to faculties that are not represented in GSA Standing Committees.

**MOTION:** That GSA Council **DECLARE ELECTED** to the GSA Awards Selection Committee the graduate students below.  
R Barta **MOVED**. T Jayatunge **SECONDED**.

Motion **PASSED** unanimously.

b. GSA Governance Committee

R Barta explained that there was one vacancy on the GSA GC and that the GSA NoC received two nominations two nominees came forward. He indicated that both candidates were present. He noted that both candidates would be asked a question which had been provided in advance and that they would have 45 seconds to answer the question.

The question was:

Taking 45 seconds, please tell us why you'd like to serve on the GSA Governance Committee and specifically, what does governance mean to you?

After a draw, R Reklow left GSA Council room and N Noel responded to the question.

N Noel responded that governance kept things structured, regulated, and accountable. She added that the GSA GC was frequently evaluating GSA Bylaw and Policy to maintain clarity and relevance. She also noted that the GSA GC was a chance to be active in the GSA and in the graduate student community. N Noel indicated that she believed she would be a valuable member because she was interested, motivated, and willing to learn.

N Noel left the room and R Reklow responded to the question.

R Reklow responded that he ran as a GSA Councillor-at-Large to influence his own graduate degree and to give back to the GSA. He noted that as a GSA Councillor-at-Large, he had had an active voice but the GSA GC would require a greater contribution. He indicated that for him governance was analogous to the inner gears in a machine; when properly positioned and well maintained the machine operates efficiently.

R Barta thanked both candidates and asked Council to cast their ballots.

Nominees for GSA Governance Committee:  
Robert Reklow (Councillor-at-Large; Physiology)  
Nicole Noel (Councillor-at-Large; Biological Sciences)

B Whitlock asked if it would be possible for GSA Councillors to sign in and then roll call could be removed of the GSA Council Agenda. GSA Speaker noted that it had been discussed in the past and it could be discussed again if need be.

**For Discussion:**

**8. GSA Health and Dental Plan**

S Ficko presented the item. She noted that the GSA Plan was established by referenda in 1994 for the dental portion and the GSA added a Health portion in 2003. She noted that the GSA Plan is designed to cover “extras” and to fill gaps in provincial healthcare. She also noted that the GSA Health and Dental is the largest service provided by the GSA in terms of money. She pointed out that Studentcare has been our broker since 2003 and that since 2012 Desjardins Insurance is our insurer. She mentioned that about 5400 GSA members out of 7200 are enrolled in the Plan. She also indicated that the Plan is regularly reviewed by the GSA Board and that GSA Council approved the GSA Health and Dental Plans’ fees every year. S Ficko noted that Insurance businesses aimed to build up a large reserve of money and hoped that no one filed claims to access this reserve. She explained the depletion of this reserve was what drove the costs up in order to replenish the insurance company’s reserve. She explained that the cost of our plan was the result of the insurance premium and the cost of Studentcare for administering the Plan. She added that the premium, the insurance rates, could be understood as the risk or the cost associated with paying out claims. She then explained that this risk is assessed on the group as a whole and that information such as claims history and demographics was taken into account. S Ficko mentioned that Studentcare fees were fixed. She finally noted that given an increasing number of GSA members use the Plan, the cost of the Plan increased annually. She then noted that one way to manage the cost of the Plan could be to cut benefits.

S Ficko presented on the current coverage of the Plan. She then noted that it was hard to compare the Plan coverage and its associated cost to any other Plan as cost was driven by claims and that each group claimed differently.

S Ficko presented a table comparing the GSA Health and Dental Plan with individual plans from Blue Cross, FlexCare, and Alberta Motor Association. She then noted that group plans are usually more advantageous because they are based on the average member claim history and that in this perspective insurance companies could give a better deal as some members made more minimal claims.

D Smirnow asked if it was possible to have a break down of the cost increase for how the cost increased for a particular service. A Talaei responded that the cost of dental services in Alberta was one of the highest in the country. As a follow-up, D Smirnow asked if, in an attempt to keep the cost down, ab-GPAC could lobby the government for a better regulation of dental services prices. S Ficko noted that she would bring it to the ab-GPAC but emphasized that this kind of measure would take time to have an impact. A Talaei added that inflation was not the main driver of the Plan cost.

T Nabe asked when the GSA changed to Desjardins Insurance. S Ficko noted that the GSA switched to Desjardins Insurance in 2012 at a time where Desjardins Insurance was trying to enter the insurance market in the West of Canada and they offered the GSA a good deal. She also noted that Studentcare did not recommend the GSA go look for a new insurer as there are no incentives for insurance companies to offer the GSA an advantageous deal. A Talaei added that changing insurers was extensively discussed at the GSA Board and that GSA Board decided that it was not desirable at this time to change insurers. A Cappello also added that the GSA used a broker and that the GSA broker, Studentcare, was acting in the best interest of GSA members. A Talaei noted that Studentcare had established a network of practitioners that would give you a discount if students mentioned that they are insured through Studentcare. It was added that all the information about the Studentcare Networks was on their [website](#).

D Bemister asked about the cost of the Plan in other institutions with graduate students in the province such as the University of Calgary and the University of Lethbridge. S Ficko noted that University of Calgary could not be used as a comparative as their coverage was far beyond what the GSA Plan covered. She noted that she did not know about the University of Lethbridge.

S Ficko presented possible options for the modification of the Plan: retention of the current Plan structure, an enhanced Plan (Plan that offered more coverage and a higher cost), a basic plan (Plan that offered less coverage and a lower cost), creation of a two-tiered Plan (with a basic Plan and an enhanced Plan), and the creation of the three-tiered Plan (with a basic Plan, the current Plan, and an enhanced Plan). S Ficko then invited GSA Council to participate in small group discussion to rank the options presented and provide further feedback. B Whitlock asked what were the downsides of having more options. S Ficko replied that the question was more would it be worth all the work to modify the GSA Health and Dental Plan if the current Plan is satisfactory. She added that the GSA Board was looking for guidance on what the next steps should be. A Talaei noted that having a plan with many options meant more administrative work, which could lead Studentcare to increase their administrative fee. S Ficko handed out a guide designed by Studentcare of what the coverage, and its associated estimated costs for a basic plan and an enhanced plan could be. Also listed was the current Plan coverage and its costs.

GSA Council broke up in small groups and asked to rank the options presented. After a certain amount of time elapsed, groups were asked to share their rankings, shared below along with summarized group comments. The most desirable plan appears first.



Group 1

1. Three-tiered Plan
2. Two-tiered Plan
3. Current Plan
4. Enhanced Plan

N Meyer, noted that the enhanced Plan did not make much sense as some person would not be able to pay for it.

Group 2

1. Current Plan
2. Two-tiered Plan
3. Three-tiered Plan

F Karey-McKenna, as the spokesperson for this group, noted that an enhanced Plan would be too expensive.

Group 3

1. Current Plan with an increased in vision coverage
2. Two-tiered Plan
3. Three-tiered Plan

Group 4

1. Current Plan
2. Two-tiered Plan
3. Three-tiered Plan

Group 5

1. Three-tiered Plan
2. Two-tiered Plan
3. Enhanced Plan
4. Basic Plan

R Reklow, as the spokesperson for this group, noted that offering GSA members choices would be beneficial and that his group felt that cutting services for all (basic Plan) was not what students wanted.

Group 6

1. Current Plan
2. Two-tiered Plan
3. Three-tiered Plan
4. Enhanced Plan
5. Basic Plan

A Lewis, as the spokesperson for this group, noted that they were not keen on any of the options and that the enhanced was getting expensive.

Group 7

1. Three-tiered Plan
2. Current Plan
3. Two-tiered Plan
4. Enhanced Plan
5. Basic Plan

Group 8

1. Three-tiered Plan
2. Current Plan
3. Two-tiered Plan
4. Enhanced Plan
5. Basic Plan

## Group 9

1. Three-tiered Plan
2. Current Plan

## Group 10

1. Three-tiered Plan
2. Current Plan
3. Two-tiered Plan

## Group 11

1. Basic Plan
2. Enhanced Plan
3. Three-tiered Plan
4. Current Plan
5. Two-tiered Plan but being comprised of the Current Plan and an Enhanced Plan

GSA Council moved back to general discussion.

A Lewis noted that she was uncomfortable to pay for some of the services such as naturopathy as they do not have any scientific basis.

In response to a question by M Juhas regarding why was the GSA Council having this discussion and whether or not a referendum was inevitable, S Ficko noted that this discussion of the GSA Health and Dental Plan arose from a Motion made at the April 2016 GSA Council. She added that the GSA does not have the preliminary projection of the cost for 2017-2018 and hence it was hard to predict what would happen.

T Nabe asked about providing a spending account and S Ficko noted that this question was discussed with Studentcare and that it would be expensive and not worth its price.

S Ficko reminded GSA Council of the last GSA Health and Dental Town Hall on the Friday, September 30, at 1:00 PM in Triffo Hall and she invited GSA Council to email her or A Talaei with any questions.

### 9. Right to Strike Consultation

S Ficko presented the item. She started by noting that she would give some background information as to why this was a discussion for GSA Council and that this would be followed by a small group discussion. She then asked if there were any members of GSA Council who lived through a strike before, she asked these members to split in different groups in order to share their experience.

S Ficko noted that the Alberta Government, in order to be compliant with a recent Supreme Court of Canada decision making the right to strike fundamental to the collective bargaining process, is currently working on legislation that will affect labour relations at post-secondary institutions. She noted that this could result in significant changes for graduate students covered under the Graduate Student Assistantship Collective Agreement, as currently there is no right to strike. She explained that, to this date, for post-secondary institutions labour relations had been under the *Post-Secondary Learning Act* (PSLA) and that collective bargaining processes had been embedded in this rather than being part of the labour legislation like in other jurisdictions in Canada. She added that the PSLA mandated compulsory binding arbitration to resolve dispute that occur during collective bargaining and that this prohibits strikes and lockouts, a practice now contrary to the Supreme Court of Canada decision.

S Ficko noted that last fall the provincial government approached the ab-GPAC and other advocacy groups asking them to explain how the right to strike would affect them. She added that the deadline was really short and that the ab-GPAC replied that they would prefer the *status quo*. S Ficko noted that the case was made that graduate students should be treated differently as they were a hybrid category, part students and part employees. She added that the ab-GPAC argued that lockouts could have significant impact on graduate students. She then explained that the government agreed that the *status quo* was desirable however, upon further legal advice, the government stated that this solution would not satisfy the ruling of the Supreme Court of Canada.

S Ficko indicated that in late August the government distributed a new discussion guide on the subject with a desire to consult more widely. She noted that individuals and associations had until October 17 to provide feedback to the government.

S Ficko noted that she had had discussions regarding the guide with the GSA Board, the management team, ab-GPAC, and GU15 (a group consisting of graduate student representatives from the 15 biggest research Universities in Canada). She also noted that she spoke with a labour lawyer who offered her service *pro bono* to the GSA.

S Ficko gave some definitions. She noted that a strike was the cessation or refusal to work, to compel the employer to agree to terms or conditions of employment. She noted that a lockout was closing of a place of work/suspension of work to compel the employees to accept terms or conditions of employment. She noted that a binding arbitration was taking to an individual or a panel the items that cannot be agreed upon during collective agreement. She added that there are two kinds of binding arbitration. She then noted that the binding arbitration written into the Graduate Student Assistantship Collective Agreement (GSA CA) was to have the arbitrator select one of the presented positions for inclusion in the Agreement. She added that this kind of arbitration usually meant that both parties came with more moderate demands. She noted that the alternative for arbitration is to have the arbitrator write the disputed clause, taking into account the submissions by both parties. She added that it was possible, during collective bargaining, to change the kind of binding arbitration included in the GSA CA.

S Ficko explained the steps necessary to go on strike. First she noted that to start a strike parties need to be in collective bargaining over a collective agreement that has expired and the parties must have first tried mediation. She then noted that 12 days after receiving the mediation report (that period is called the cooling-off period), the parties could chose to have a vote to determine to take strike or lockout actions. She indicated that the next step, if the vote was successful was to serve notice to the other party at least 72 hours before the start of any actions.

S Ficko then summarized the feedback received by the lawyer that she consulted. She noted that the lawyer concurred that the situation of graduate students was very peculiar and that she noted that overlaying labour relations legislation on the PSLA could not be perfect in the case of graduate students. She noted that the lawyer's recommendation was to have the GSA remain the bargaining agent and to argue for mandatory arbitration. S Ficko noted two reasons provided by the lawyer for the latter recommendation: one, was that due to the short period of graduate students contract the students voting for the strike might not be the ones actually going on strike; second, the beneficial collegial relation based on communication and cooperation that the GSA had had with the University could be affected. S Ficko also mentioned that the strike/lockout model could impact the capacity of Student Leaders to attend and participate in the Board of Governors and General Faculties Council as it could be seen as a conflict of interest.

S Ficko noted that the right to strike could be very polarizing and that she personally prefers a collegial environment but that she could also see the benefits of the right to strike. She noted that her biggest concerns were that graduate student engagement is very low, that resources could be an issue, and that financial impacts on certain graduate students could be very damaging.

N Prather asked if all graduate students would be on strike or only the ones with a graduate student assistantship. S Ficko replied that only the students employed under the GSA CA would be on strike. N Prather also asked if the students would continue to be students. S Ficko noted that that was her understanding.

Following a question by P Oel, S Ficko specified that both during a strike and a lockout, graduate students would not be able to complete their assistantship tasks and that the difference is that the lockout is initiated by the employer (ie the University) and that the strike is initiated by the employees (ie the graduate student assistants)

S Ficko then invited GSA Council to discuss in small group the following questions:

1. What are things you would be willing to fight for?
2. Given the information presented on possible impacts of a strike/lockout, how do you feel about the possibility of a strike/lockout?
3. How long could you go without funding?
4. What excites you about the consultation on labour legislation changes?
5. What are you most concerned about?
6. Do you have any other questions for me or the government?

GSA Council broke up in small groups after a certain amount of time elapsed group were asked to share their thoughts. Below are the responses to the questions shared by each group along withany comments they made.

## Group 1

1. Not many things that we would be ready to go on strike for.
2. That it could be very damaging for graduate students
3. It is hard to generalize as it is highly dependent on each student's funding.
4. The possibility of the status quo.
5. That the changes are made in a rush and that the new legislation outlined a not well thought out process
6. What advice did the government receive that made the *status quo* not a viable solution?

## Group 2

1. Dramatic change in work environment
2. This answer depend on who you ask as some graduate students have less collegial feeling toward the University
4. Changes can be beneficial and the GSA could gain some new rights
5. Graduate student's engagement

## Group 3

1. Health and safety and drastic decrease in funding
2. Apprehensive
3. Highly dependant
4. There is not much that we could see as a benefit
5. The fact the option is on the table might change the discussion
6. Would the Graduate research Assistant Fellowship (GRAF) be affected?

## Group 4

1. Relationship with supervisors
2. When does the tinkering stop
3. For some students a strike could potentially have really bad consequences

N Prather, as the spokesperson for this group, noted that sometimes going on strike is easy to defend to the members of the bargaining unit but harder to explain to the general public. He also raised the question of should the GSA be attentive of the needs of the most disadvantaged and that student engagement would be really important for a strike to be successful.

## Group 5

1. Wages, working hours, and safety
2. It is important that graduate students have choices however awareness and educations around this choice is very important.
4. The education opportunity
5. That some powers might be taken away from the GSA

## Group 6

5. The power imbalance between graduate students and professors

K Barkway noted, as the spokesperson for this group, that it would be interesting to hear more about specific numbers for things such as unions dues. She also noted that it was possible to fill in the government survey online as an individual.

## Group 7

1. Wages and basic human rights

L Sutherland noted, as the spoke person for this group, their group had been concerned with the question of would it be beneficial to have a union. She also noted that it would be interesting to see data from other universities on how strikes had affected graduate students studies. She indicated that sometimes strikes could be beneficial with respect to benefits, remuneration and alleviate a feeling of powerlessness. A Cappello, a member of that group, added that in their group there was a lot of discussion of what it would like if there was competing union/multiple unions at play in labour action/disputes.

## Group 8

1. Safety concerns
2. Impact on your degree and your relationship with your supervisor
3. Not for a very long time

4. A potential to better improve working conditions
6. What are the chances that the government would get involved if a strike lasts for a long time?

#### Group 9

M Juhas noted, as the spokesperson for this group, that their group saw strike/lockout as unfavorable and that if the right was implemented there should be a lot of education done. He also added that it would be interesting to learn what other universities find beneficial about the right to strike.

#### Group 10

R Barta noted, as the spokesperson for this group, that they had similar discussion including what happened to GRAF category of the GSA CA, the impact on degree completion times, and how the students' research would be impacted.

S Fenichel thanked GSA Councillors for participating in the conversation

S Ficko mentioned that graduate students could provide feedback directly to the government at <http://PSLALabourRelations.alberta.ca> until October 17 and noted several town hall events that were being hosted at the U of A and at the U of C. She encouraged graduate students with questions to email her at [gsa.president@ualberta.ca](mailto:gsa.president@ualberta.ca).

#### For Information

**None at this time**

#### Reports

##### **10. President**

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

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 23 September 2016. The report stood as submitted. In addition, S Ficko noted that most of her report focused on the GSA Health & Dental Town Halls, which had already been discussed. S Ficko noted that she presented the Graduate Assistantship Collective Agreement at the Dean's Council for the first time, as well as to the Graduate Program Administrators Committee. She added that these presentations had reached about 100 different senior administrators on campus so awareness of the Graduate Assistantship Collective Agreement was increasing. S Ficko also welcomed C Thomas as the new GSA Executive Director.

###### **ii. GSA Board**

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 23 September 2016. The report stood as submitted.

###### **iii. Budget and Finance Committee**

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 23 September 2016. The report stood as submitted.

###### **iv. GSA Governance Committee**

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 23 September 2016. The report stood as submitted.

##### **11. GSA Nominating Committee**

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 23 September 2016. The report stood as submitted. In addition R Barta stated that the GSA NoC had been busy with lots of elections. He added that M DuVal had stepped down as Administrative Chair of the GSA NoC but that she would stay the GSA NoC. R Barta additionally pointed out two current vacancies: one for a GSA Councillor on the Student Library Advisory Committee and multiple positions on FGSR Council. He encouraged GSA Council to apply for these positions or to forward the information to graduate students in their department.

##### **12. Vice-President Academic**

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

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 23 September 2016. The report stood as submitted.

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

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 23 September 2016. The report stood as submitted.

**ii. GSA Awards Selection Committee's Report**

No meetings this reporting period.

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

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 23 September 2016. The report stood as submitted. In addition, S van der Klein reported that she recently attended Forensic Experiential Trauma Interview (FETI) Sexual Assault Workshop. She also relayed a recent experience where she was approached by a man at the gym and interrupted during her workout. She added that, despite her clearly expressed disinterest, the man would not leave her alone until she accepted his phone number. S van der Klein later wondered if she had been rude and spoke to S Ficko who vehemently supported her conduct. T Nabe thanked S van der Klein for sharing her experience and suggested that she report the incident to Protective Services for the purpose of tracking statistics. S Ficko noted that the Students' Union was starting an anti-harassment campaign at the gym because such behaviour was a common happening.

**ii. GSA Negotiating Committee**

No meetings this reporting period.

**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 23 September 2016. The report stood as submitted. In addition, A Talaei stated that they were making progress on the U-Pass negotiations and that the University had extended their support and agreed to continue their U-Pass subsidy for the next four years. He added that the University of Alberta was the only post-secondary education participating in the U-Pass program offering a subsidy to the U-Pass fee.

A Talaei also reminded GSA Council that the GSA was holding Coffee Breaks in different departments to get to know more graduate students.

**ii. GSA Student Affairs Advisory Committee**

No meetings this reporting period.

**16. Senator****i. Senator's Report**

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 23 September 2016. The report stood as submitted.

**17. Speaker****i. Speaker's Report**

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 23 September 2016. The report stood as submitted.

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

No written report at this time.

**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 23 September 2016. The report stood as submitted. L Spanner was not present; questions could be sent to her directly. It was noted that the GSA Elections and Referenda Committee was meeting the following day.

**20. GSA Management**

**i. Executive Director's Report**

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 23 September 2016. The report stood as submitted.

**Question Period**

**21. Written Questions**

None at this time.

**22. Oral Questions**

**Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:03 pm.



Dear GSA Council Members,

September 16, 2016

Beginning in February of 2016, the GSA Governance Committee and the GSA Board have been involved in extensive discussions concerning the quorum (currently set at 14 voting members) of GSA Council. Some of you may recall that this matter was referred to the GSA Governance Committee by GSA Council early in 2016. For a brief history of these discussions, please refer to the attached Outline of Issue and double column document of proposed changes.

At the joint GSA Board and GSA Governance Committee meeting on August 3, 2016, members came to a consensus to recommend that quorum for GSA Council be increased to 30 voting members. The rationale behind this is set out in the attached double column document.

In arriving at this decision, both committees identified and discussed the potential risks inherent in increasing the quorum of GSA Council (such as the risk of not having quorum at crucial meetings such as when the budget or the Collective Agreement are considered). However, based on historical data concerning attendance, the provision currently in GSA Bylaw and the Standing Orders of GSA Council concerning the calling of Special Meetings (if, for example, quorum was not achieved and pressing business needed to be attended to before the next regularly scheduled meeting), and members' feelings that the current quorum of 14 was simply not high enough, and after much careful consideration, I am pleased that we have arrived at the suggested quorum of 30 members. As with any change to our Bylaws and Policies, we will continue to closely monitor (in this case) attendance levels at GSA Council on a regular basis and, should this increased quorum prove problematic, we will review this matter again.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sarah Ficko'.

Sarah Ficko  
GSA President and Chair of the GSA Governance Committee and the GSA Board

cc  
Sulya Fenichel, GSA Speaker



## Outline of Issue (GSA Council)

### GSA Council Quorum: Proposed Changes to GSA Bylaw (Part III) and to the Standing Orders of GSA Council

#### Suggested Motion:

That GSA Council, on the recommendation of the GSA Board and the GSA Governance Committee, **APPROVE** the proposed changes to GSA Bylaw (Part III) and to the Standing Orders of GSA Council, as noted in the attached double column document and effective immediately.

**NOTE:** The force of this Motion is to increase the quorum of GSA Council from 14 to 30 voting members.

#### Background:

At its meeting of September 26, GSA Council had the first reading of this item and, as changes to GSA Bylaw require two readings by GSA Council, the changes will take effect should members now vote to approve them. Changes to the Standing Orders of GSA Council may be amended following a simple majority vote by GSA Council and the proposed changes will be made accordingly should GSA Council vote in favour of them.

Please see the "rationale" column in the attached double column document for a brief summary of the history of discussion on this matter, as well as an explanation as to why a quorum of 30 (as opposed to another number) is recommended.

GSA Bylaw, Part III, GSA Council, Section 3.4, addresses quorum and it is also repeated in the Standing Orders of GSA Council (a recommendation to change quorum will require two readings in the case of GSA Bylaw and a simple majority vote in the case of the Standing Orders of GSA Council).

#### Historical Data on GSA Council Attendance

<u>2013-2014</u>	May 2013	May 2013 (SM)	Jun 2013	Jul 2013	Sept 2013	Oct 2013	Nov 2013	Jan 2014	Feb 2014	Mar 2014	Apr 2014
ATTENDANCE TOTAL (of 88 voting seats)	32	29	39	41	61	56	52	61	49	47	45

<u>2014-2015</u>	May 2014	Jun 2014	Jul 2014	Aug 2014 (SM)	Sept 2014	Oct 2014	Nov 2014	Dec 2014	Jan 2015	Feb 2015	Mar 2015	Apr 2015
ATTENDANCE TOTAL (of 88 voting seats)	42	40	43	28	53	50	51	41	46	41	36	45

<b>GSA COUNCIL ATTENDANCE POLICY IN EFFECT FROM JUNE 2015 ONWARDS</b>											
<u>2015-2016</u>	May 2015	Jun 2015	Jul 2015	Sept 2015	Oct 2015	Nov 2015	Jan 2016	Feb 2016	Mar 2016	Apr 2016	
ATTENDANCE TOTAL (of 86 voting seats)	31	46	45	60	59	59	62	60	57	54	

<u>2016-2017</u>	May 2016	Jun 2016	Jul 2016	Sept 2016	Oct 2016	Nov 2016	Dec 2016	Jan 2017	Feb 2017	Mar 2017	Apr 2017
ATTENDANCE TOTAL (of 86 voting seats)	57	54	52								

*\*With respect to the GSA Council Attendance Policy, which took effect in **June of 2015**, attendance levels have moderately improved and there has been enhanced communication regarding vacancies and advance notice of absences\**

**\*\*The lowest number of members to attend out of all 32 meetings for which attendance data is presented above is 28 members\*\***

**Please see the attached cover letter and double column document of proposed changes for additional information.**

Prepared by C Thomas for GSA Council 24 October 2016

Macintosh HD:Users:gsaad:Google Drive:320 - Council:Meetings:2016-2017:October 2016:First Mailing:GSA Council 24 October 2016 Item 6a - Outline of Issue GSA Council Quorum.docx

**Jurisdiction:**

FOR THE GSA BOARD: GSA Policy, Standing Committees, Section 2.2.a.

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

FOR THE GSA GC: GSA Policy, Standing Committees, Section 3.2.a.i

The GSA GC will *"advise Council on the GSA Bylaws, matters of policy not in the purview of any other Standing Committee, or other governing issues and provide a report on recommended changes at the next scheduled Council meeting."*

FOR GSA COUNCIL: GSA Bylaw, Part I, Section 1.2 and Part III, Section 3.5.1

GSA Bylaw, *"may be amended by two two-thirds majority votes of Council held on seven calendar days' notice of motion and no less than one week apart."*

*"GSA Council has the authority to make alterations to the Standing Orders of GSA Council by a simple majority vote at one (1) meeting of GSA Council."*

## Proposed Changes to GSA Bylaw (Part III) and GSA Standing Orders of GSA Council

Current GSA Bylaw (deletions noted by a strikethrough) and Proposed Changes (additions underlined)	Rationale/Background
<b>GSA Bylaw, Part III, GSA Council</b>	
1. Mandate	<i>No change.</i>
2. GSA Council Composition	<i>No change.</i>
3. Meetings	<i>No change.</i>
3.1 – 3.3 ...	<i>No change.</i>
3.4 Quorum for any GSA Council meeting shall consist of <del>fourteen (14)</del> <u>thirty (30)</u> voting members of GSA Council.	<p><i>At its February 22, 2016 meeting, GSA Council approved a Motion to refer the matter of the quorum of GSA Council to the GSA Governance Committee (GSA GC) and asked that the committee discuss potential changes.</i></p> <p><i>GSA GC discussed quorum and other matters at length during their February 29, April 5, and June 24, 2016 meetings. The GSA Board also discussed the matter at their meetings of June 29 and July 6, 2016. The GSA Board and the GSA GC then met jointly on August 3, 2016 and agreed to propose that quorum be set at 30 voting members. This proposal was agreed upon after extensive analysis of data related to GSA Council attendance over the past several years (summarized in the Outline of Issue associated with this item). The specific number of 30 was arrived at as follows:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>The current number of voting seats on GSA Council is 86. However, GSA Board and GSA GC members agreed that Medical Sciences and Interdisciplinary Studies should be removed from the membership of GSA Council. This is because, as per GSA Bylaw, Part III, Section 2.1.3, the composition of GSA Council includes “one (1) graduate student elected from each department, faculty, or extra-departmental unit at the University that offers a graduate program.” However, Interdisciplinary Studies is not a stand-alone department that offers a graduate program. Rather, it involves the combining of two or more academic disciplines into one activity (ie those in Humanities Computing or Religious Studies programs are a part of Interdisciplinary Studies but their programs (and these units have seats on GSA Council) are Humanities Computing or Religious Studies. Likewise, Medical Sciences is an umbrella of various departments. Medical Sciences is composed of seven departments, and each has a seat already on GSA Council. Medical Sciences is thus also not a stand-alone department that offers a graduate program. Finally, neither Interdisciplinary Studies nor Medical Sciences has ever had a representative on GSA Council (because they are not stand-alone departments that offer graduate programs and all their constituent departments or units are already represented with individual seats on GSA Council).</i></li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>When Interdisciplinary Studies and Medical Sciences are removed, the total number of voting seats is 84; however, a seat for the new graduate program in the Department of Women’s and Gender Studies has been added (this new graduate degree program welcomed its first students this fall), taking the number of voting seats to 85.</i></li> <li>• <i>30 constitutes 35% of the total number of voting seats (85). This percentage was felt to be broadly representative of the total number of seats on GSA Council (and certainly more so than the current quorum of 14), while at the same allowing for quorum not to be set at an overly high number that could impede GSA Council’s ability to move important business matters (such as the GSA’s budget) forward. Members also felt that it was better to use a fixed number for quorum, rather than a rolling percentage, so as to reduce confusion and the need to re-calculate quorum on a rolling basis.</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Additional Information:</b> <i>The Interdisciplinary Studies is unit that includes Humanities Computing and Religious Studies graduate programs while Medical Sciences is comprised of Obstetrics and Gynecology, Radiology and Diagnostic Imaging, Ophthalmology, Dentistry, Laboratory Medicine and Pathology, Medical Genetics, Pediatrics (please note that while the FGSR website lists eight programs, one of those listed is in fact a post graduate program).</i></p>
3.5 ...	No change.
<b>No further changes.</b>	

<b>Current Standing Orders of GSA Council</b> ( <i>deletions noted by a strikethrough</i> ) and <b>Proposed Changes</b> ( <i>additions underlined</i> )	<b>Rationale/Background</b>
Standing Orders of GSA Council	
Meetings of GSA Council: (...) Quorum for any GSA Council meeting shall consist of <del>fourteen (14)</del> <u>thirty (30)</u> voting members of GSA Council.	<i>See above.</i>
<b>No further changes.</b>	



Dear GSA Council Colleagues,

October 21, 2016

As many of you are aware, each spring and summer the Directly-Elected Officers (DEOs) of the GSA produces a rolling Board Strategic Work Plan (SWP). The SWP serves to identify key priorities and initiatives, direct the GSA's efforts for the coming year, and identify areas where we can work with others in the University community.

As many of you are, likewise, aware, in developing this year's Board SWP we embarked on a broad consultative effort (inspired by the extensive consultation process conducted for the Institutional Strategic Plan) to hear directly from graduate students with respect to the issues they face and the actions they would like to see the GSA advocate for on their behalf. My team and I began the development of the 2016-2017 Board SWP with a facilitated workshop involving the incoming and outgoing teams of GSA DEOs in late April, and followed this by a brainstorming session in June in our Council. Over the summer, we then hosted a few follow up conversations in the form of "silent discussion" sessions in Council, discussed the Board SWP extensively at our weekly GSA Board meetings, and hosted two roundtable discussions open to all graduate students.

As I am sure you can imagine, all these efforts to hear directly from graduate students, and enhance their engagement in the process of developing the SWP have resulted in a plethora of feedback and ideas! The GSA Board spent a lot of time reflecting on all this feedback and my team and I are proud to now be presenting the 2016-2017 Board SWP to you, prior to its broader release among the University community.

I would like here to draw your attention to some of the main features of our Plan:

- We have restructured the Board SWP around the core themes of "advocate," "engage," "support," and "sustain." Additionally, we have reordered the content of the Plan into the headings of "strategic objectives" and "2016/2017 action steps." Our hope is that this will result in a Board SWP that provides both enhanced clarity and concrete actions for us to engage in over the next year, as well as provide long-term guidance to future GSA DEO teams on long-standing items affecting graduate students.
- At the core of the SWP is a desire to strive for an equitable and welcoming campus community where all graduate students feel encouraged to actively learn and participate, and are provided reasonable supports and accommodations, when necessary, to ensure their success. A key component of this is our ongoing commitment to advocate for the development of a supervisory training program for both incoming students and supervisors, and the development of an accountability structure to reward quality supervision while creating incentives to improve poor supervision.
- During the consultation process, many graduate students indicated that lack of consistent, predictable, and sufficient funding is a serious issue affecting their health and wellness, their ability to conduct quality research, and their experience at the U of A, with over 50 % of Campus Food Bank users being graduate students. We believe that the U of A can be a leader in fostering a healthier graduate student work and learning environment by offering sustainable living funding packages (determined by the cost of living and tuition rates) to all thesis-based graduate students, independent of their supervisor, that adequately compensate graduate students for the knowledge and work they conduct and create on behalf of the University, as junior colleagues of the professoriate.
- The 2016-2017 Board SWP asserts our commitment to continuing to work with the University (including but not limited to the Office of the Provost and the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research (FGSR)) on compliance, education, and dispute resolution associated with the Collective Agreement governing graduate student assistantships.



- We continue to be committed to meaningful engagement and advocacy on issues of graduate student tuition and fees. Our GSA will lobby the provincial government through our provincial lobby group, the Alberta Graduate Provincial Advocacy Council, to provide predictable and sustainable funding to all academic institutions in the province, including funding for mental health initiatives, that upholds a high standard of accessible and supportive, world-class education in Alberta.
- The Board SWP asserts our longstanding commitment to increasing and diversifying professional development and internship opportunities for graduate students through collaboration with the FGSR and other parties. With respect to professional development, we will again partner with the FGSR and the Alumni Association to host professional development events for graduate students.
- Effective engagement with our constituents will be a major feature of this year's Board SWP. We will work on enhancing the strategies we utilize to communicate with graduate students, and increasing recognition and awareness of the GSA and GSA services. To this end, we will be hosting an array of forums and events this year which will give my team and I more opportunities to directly connect with, and hear from, graduate students.
- We will regularly review GSA services and services subsidized by the GSA to ensure that graduate students are getting the highest value possible. To this end, we did a survey of our members last year on GSA services and we followed up this year by hosting roundtable discussions over the summer and, in the fall, town halls focused on the GSA's Health and Dental Plan.
- Finally, we will remain engaged on several ongoing initiatives of importance to the graduate student community, such as the creation of additional prayer and meditation space on campus (we are pleased that renovations are nearing completion, and we will participate actively in the steering group associated with it), improving conditions in University residences (including advocating for enhanced transit service to Michener Park and participating in the Residences Task Force), advocating for enhanced financial supports (including scholarships, awards, and bursaries) available to all graduate students, and strengthening and expanding resources for international students (including advocating provincially and federally to facilitate graduate student applications for Permanent Residency).

Along with the GSA Vice-Presidents, I am looking forward to a productive and engaging year working closely with the University's administration team, our compatriots on campus (including the SU, AASUA, NASA, and the PDFA), and other stakeholders, as we pursue these goals on behalf of our graduate student constituents. I encourage you all to read the full Board SWP, and look forward to discussing it in more detail at our October meeting.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sarah Ficko'.

Sarah Ficko, 2016-2017 GSA President

## Outline of Issue (GSA Council)

### GSA Board 2016-2017 Strategic Work Plan

#### **Suggested Motion for GSA Council:**

That GSA Council, on the unanimous recommendation of the GSA Board, **RECEIVE FOR INFORMATION** the GSA Board 2016-2017 Strategic Work Plan, as attached.

#### **Background:**

Please see the attached cover letter for background information.

At the October 12, 2016, meeting of the GSA Board, members **APPROVED AND FORWARDED TO GSA COUNCIL** the GSA Board 2016-2017 Strategic Work Plan.

#### **Jurisdiction:**

Post-Secondary Learning Act (PSLA) 94(3):

*“The graduate students association of a university shall provide for the administration of graduate student affairs at the university, including ... the promotion of the general welfare of the graduate students consistent with the purposes of the university.”*

GSA Policy, Standing Committees, Section 2.2.a:

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

### University of Alberta Graduate Students' Association Board Strategic Work Plan – 2016/2017

*The GSA respectfully acknowledges that it is located on Treaty 6 territory.*

**VISION:** The Graduate Students' Association (GSA) advocates for an engaging environment that is safe, respectful, supportive, healthy, accessible, and inclusive, and that empowers graduate students to be agents of change during their time at the University of Alberta, and beyond.

**MISSION:** Recognizing the multi-faceted roles played by graduate students at the University of Alberta, the GSA: advocates for comprehensive, timely, and excellent supports for all graduate students from both the University and the Alberta Government; negotiates a collective agreement that equitably supports graduate students who are employed by the University; works with University administration and faculties to ensure compliance with the Collective Agreement; engages graduate students and supports their endeavours; and works to sustain the excellent reputation of the GSA.

The GSA believes that a healthy organization is nurtured through effective relationships with all stakeholders, including constituent groups of the academy.<sup>1</sup> Nonetheless, an organization that evolves over time must be prepared to take steps at critical junctures that may or may not be endorsed by all its stakeholders. The GSA sees this as a living document, shifting directions as needed, as the provincial, federal, and University landscape changes. It is developed by both the previous and current teams of Directly-Elected Officers (DEOs) and provides a planning document for this and future years. Our overall goal is to create a campus community where all graduate students feel encouraged to learn and are provided with reasonable supports (and accommodations, when necessary) to ensure their success.

#### **OUR IDEAL DEFINITION, SITUATION, AND EXPERIENCE FOR ALL GRADUATE STUDENTS:**

A graduate student is a junior colleague who contributes to their field of study in pursuit of an advanced degree through collaborative work with the professoriate and senior colleagues in research, teaching, administrative, and learning environments of the University. These contributions may be accomplished through: extensive coursework, for which students pay tuition; many hours of assistantships, for which students are paid; the co-creation and writing of scholarly work; the securing of academic funding; presentations, conferences, and community engagement; and capstone projects, theses, or dissertations. This multi-faceted position takes place in an environment of mutual respect and fairness to develop skills and knowledge for future careers.

---

<sup>1</sup> Stakeholders include: individuals, groups, and offices that can affect or are directly affected by, the GSA and its initiatives. Constituent groups of the academy include: faculty, graduate students, undergraduate students, and non-academic staff – all of which are represented on the General Faculties Council. The Postdoctoral Fellows' Association is also included as a group empowered to "communicate with the U of A on all issues of general importance to the Postdoctoral Fellow Community."



### ADVOCATE

**GOAL 1:** Work with the University and government to ensure graduate students receive affordable tuition, funding packages, and access to bursaries, scholarships and awards.

Post-secondary education plays an important role in a prosperous society. Graduate students' success is dependent upon access to sustainable living funding packages for the duration of their programs so they can focus on their studies and research. The GSA will advocate that, through strategic investments and reallocation of central funding, all graduate students should be offered baseline funding. The GSA will also advocate for greater financial supports, including: higher salaries for assistantships; more scholarships, awards and bursaries; and increases to the Graduate Student Support Fund (GSSF).

Strategic Objectives	2016/2017 Action Steps
1. <b>Advocate</b> for a sustainable living funding package for all thesis-based graduate students for the duration of their program that enables a reasonable standard of living, based on the cost of living in Edmonton and current tuition costs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Meet with key stakeholders who helped develop previous graduate student funding reports to assess the current level of research and information available.</li> <li>b. Articulate, to the President, Provost, and Dean of the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research (FGSR), the need for an internal review of graduate student funding and support, similar to the review of undergraduate student financial support which began in 2016.</li> <li>c. Discuss with the Dean of the FGSR and the Provost how to create financial packages that correspond with realistic times to completion.</li> <li>d. Meet with Deans to discuss the current types of funding available and collaborate with the Deans and the Provost to assess the gaps in funding for graduate students.</li> <li>e. Present, to the Board Human Resources and Compensation Committee, on the effect of no minimum funding on graduate students and the potential negative impacts to the University.</li> <li>f. Advocate to the Minister of Advanced Education with respect to the significant contributions of graduate students to the quality of education and research offered at comprehensive, research intensive universities, and the need for a provincial funding model that specifically recognizes graduate students and their research, and ensures quality graduate programs and sustainable living funding packages for all graduate students.</li> </ul>
2. <b>Advocate</b> to decouple graduate student funding directly from graduate supervisors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Create a briefing memo outlining how funding tied to a supervisor increases the power imbalance between graduate students and their supervisors.</li> <li>b. Share our concerns regarding the impact of pay discrepancy between graduate students, including the lack of transparency in the way funding is allocated to faculties and within departments.</li> </ul>
3. <b>Advocate</b> , to the FGSR, on the need to include clear and concise contract terms in letters of offer to the University, and make these letters available to graduate students well in advance of deadlines for offers of admission.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Review the current documentation provided to new graduate students upon an offer of admission.</li> <li>b. Request that specific expectations and requirements for graduate assistantships during a program be outlined in the letter of offer.</li> </ul>
4. <b>Negotiate</b> for increased graduate assistantship funding in the Collective Agreement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Educate graduate students, faculty members, and University administrators on the new Graduate Student Assistantship Collective Agreement effective September 2016 to August 2018.</li> </ul>

	b. Track issues and other information in order to prepare for future negotiations.
5. <b>Advocate</b> for the inclusion of international graduate students in the eligibility requirements for existing scholarships, awards, and bursaries.	<p>a. Propose, to GU15, to create a white paper recommending that international graduate students have access to Tri-Council Agency funding.</p> <p>b. Collaborate with ab-GPAC (Alberta Graduate Provincial Advocacy Council) to develop a position paper outlining issues and necessary improvements for international graduate student tuition and funding in Alberta.</p>
6. <b>Advocate</b> for assistance, support, and encouragement for all graduate students to apply for internal, provincial, and federal awards, grants, and scholarships.	<p>a. Promote the FGSR and departmental workshops designed to assist graduate students with the application process.</p> <p>b. Encourage graduate students to take advantage of the FGSR searchable database of scholarships, awards, and bursaries.</p> <p>c. Work with departments to provide sufficient notice to graduate students of application internal deadlines.</p> <p>d. Advocate for transparency of scholarship allocations awarded within the University.</p>
7. <b>Advocate</b> for new quality measures, funding models, and graduate student management plans that do not favour some faculties or departments over other faculties or departments, to create more equitable graduate experiences.	<p>a. Ensure graduate students are involved in any reform discussions associated with quality measures, funding models, or graduate student enrolment management plans.</p> <p>b. Participate in committee meetings, the FGSR Council, and the General Faculties Council (GFC) regarding quality measures, funding models, and graduate student management plans.</p> <p>c. Request graduate student representation on the Graduate Enrolment and Funding Advisory Committee.</p> <p>d. Create opportunities to discuss the University's decentralized model and how it creates significant disparities in program expectations and requirements, funding options, and time to completion for graduate students.</p>
8. <b>Advocate</b> for a tuition model that ties graduate student tuition increases to the Alberta Consumer Price Index and opposes across-the-board graduate student tuition increases.	<p>a. Encourage ab-GPAC to review international graduate student tuition and develop recommendations for inclusion of international student tuition fees in the province's Tuition Fees Regulation to increase fee predictability.</p> <p>b. Maintain the GSA's past stance in opposition to across-the-board tuition increases for all graduate students.</p> <p>c. Advocate for a review of the current Tuition Fees Regulation.</p>
9. <b>Advocate</b> against the introduction of new market modifiers or other fees that are not currently a part of an agreed upon regulatory framework.	<p>a. Monitor all fees being implemented for graduate students to ensure they include consultation with graduate students before implementation.</p> <p>b. Ensure graduate students are being assessed fees correctly under the Mandatory Non-Instructional Fee formula.</p>

**ADVOCATE**

**GOAL 2:** Work to develop supportive and respectful relationships between graduate students and their supervisors.

Graduate student success relies on quality supervision and mentoring throughout a degree program. The GSA will build on work by previous executive teams and collaborate, with the FGSR and senior University administrators, to follow through on For the Public Good, the new institutional strategic plan, and make quality graduate student supervision an institutional priority.

<b>Strategic Objectives</b>	<b>2016/2017 Action Steps</b>
1. <b>Advocate</b> for the development of mandatory supervisor training program for both incoming graduate students and supervisors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Collaborate, with the FGSR, on the implementation of recommendations from the Quality of Graduate Student Supervision Report and other similar initiatives.</li> <li>b. Promote a better understanding of the roles and responsibilities of both graduate students and supervisors to provide expectations for both groups.</li> <li>c. Develop a list of recommended professional development workshops for graduate students that help promote a more effective graduate student-supervisor relationship.</li> <li>d. Promote a restorative justice and mediation process to encourage prompt resolution of any graduate student-supervisor conflicts.</li> </ul>
2. <b>Advocate</b> for the development of an accountability structure that rewards quality supervision and mentoring while creating incentives to improve poor supervision.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Host the annual GSA Awards night to reward deserving graduate students, faculty and staff for excellence in teaching, supervision, research, service, and leadership.</li> <li>b. Work with the FGSR to develop a program to track the quality of the graduate student-supervisor relationship over time.</li> <li>c. Collaborate, with the FGSR, to create a regular feedback process from graduate students regarding experiences with their supervisors.</li> </ul>
3. <b>Advocate</b> for departments to develop a means by which graduate students can report concerns regarding their supervisors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Encourage graduate students to seek assistance from the GSA with respect to supervisory concerns.</li> <li>b. Encourage all Deans to develop a website form for disclosure of anonymous supervisor concerns to better track the level and types of concerns over time, and discuss ways to address any systemic issues that emerge.</li> </ul>
4. <b>Advocate</b> for realistic ‘time to completion’ rates in order for both graduate students and supervisors to develop reasonable expectations regarding the length of the degree program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Develop a ‘cheat sheet’ for prospective graduate students that lists suggested questions to ask a potential supervisor before starting a graduate degree program.</li> <li>b. Collaborate, with the FGSR, on ways to mitigate systemic ‘time to completion’ problems.</li> <li>c. Collaborate, with the FGSR, to develop a survey to assess current ‘time to completion’ expectations of both existing and potential graduate students.</li> <li>d. Encourage the FGSR to develop metrics that track faculty adherence to program timing and requirements which allows them to proactively intervene if problems arise.</li> <li>e. Discuss, with the FGSR, the development of a common program milestone form for all graduate students and supervisors, regardless of department, that automatically tracks and flags graduate students not meeting their milestones.</li> </ul>

**ENGAGE**

**GOAL 1:** Develop and maintain relationships with all GSA stakeholders internal and external to the University to support graduate student success.

Graduate students play unique and multifaceted roles in a university environment. The GSA will advocate for further resources to support graduate students by reinforcing strong relationships with key players to create a common vision of excellence for all graduate students at the University, as well as across Alberta and Canada.

<b>Strategic Objectives</b>	<b>2016/2017 Action Steps</b>
1. <b>Engage</b> with the Students' Union (SU), the Academic Staff Association (AASUA), the Postdoctoral Fellow's Association (PDFA), and the Non-Academic Staff Association (NASA) to identify shared priorities and maintain strong partnerships.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Meet regularly with SU counterparts to discuss mutual priorities such as residences, academic governance, and mental health.</li> <li>b. Arrange annual meetings with all partner associations to discuss common issues and priorities.</li> </ul>
2. <b>Engage</b> with the President, Provost, Deputy Provost, Vice Presidents, Board of Governors' members, University Governance, Dean of the FGSR, Dean of Students, Senators, the Alumni Association, service providers, and other key partners to determine shared priorities and maintain effective and collaborative relationships.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Meet regularly with the Dean of the FGSR and the Dean of Students to discuss specific issues affecting graduate students.</li> <li>b. Maintain graduate student representation on the Alumni Association and the Senate.</li> <li>c. Arrange meetings with senior University administration, when needed, to discuss key issues for graduate students.</li> <li>d. Attend Board of Governors' dinners, special events, and other functions to build relationships with key stakeholders.</li> <li>e. Attend all meetings scheduled with representatives of the provincial government.</li> </ul>
3. <b>Engage</b> with our provincial lobby group to ensure the priorities of University of Alberta graduate students are heard by the provincial government.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Participate in all ab-GPAC meetings to ensure the needs of University of Alberta graduate students are included in ab-GPAC activities.</li> <li>b. Take an active role in the ab-GPAC executive team and important working groups/committees, as needed, to support University of Alberta graduate student priorities and ensure a solid internal governance structure.</li> <li>c. Advocate for international PhD students to be included in the provincial nomination program to increase points if applying for permanent residency.</li> <li>d. Investigate attending advocacy meetings of other lobby groups in order to observe, learn, and gather information.</li> </ul>
4. <b>Engage</b> with the GSAs from other comprehensive and research intensive universities in Alberta and across Canada to share information, discuss best practices, and collaborate on common issues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Meet annually with Members of Parliament (MPs) and Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) from all major parties to advocate for graduate students.</li> <li>b. Attend GU15 meetings to share information, determine best practices, and maintain relationships.</li> <li>c. Sign a petition advocating for the creation of a fast-track PhD stream to accelerate application for permanent residency status by international graduate students.</li> </ul>

## ENGAGE

**GOAL 2:** Increase graduate student awareness of and participation with the GSA and its services.

The GSA believes engagement occurs from the time someone asks for information about the graduate student application process through to the end-point of convocation. The GSA supports continuing graduate student engagement through University governance, networks in residence and elsewhere, professional development, and in social settings, all places where friendship and research collaboration can occur. While the GSA offers fall and winter orientation sessions, many graduate students continue to remain unaware of the GSA and the services it offers; the GSA also aims to increase voter turnout. The GSA will investigate effective communication methods that will create opportunities for graduate student awareness and engagement.

Strategic Objectives	2016/2017 Action Steps
1. <b>Engage</b> all graduate students across all University of Alberta campuses through social media and the GSA newsletter more effectively.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Continue the GSA’s review of its communication practices with an eye to assessing how to better reach graduate students.</li> <li>b. Post, on social media, a minimum of one (1) photo per week of a GSA activity and aim to include at least one (1) DEO.</li> <li>c. Assess different communication styles on social media to increase viewership.</li> <li>d. Develop methods to use social media to educate graduate students about services offered by the GSA – including information regarding graduate student rights and ways the GSA can assist all graduate students.</li> <li>e. Assess alternative templates for the GSA newsletter to increase readership.</li> <li>f. Complete the GSA website’s transition to Sitecore 3 and the associated redesign.</li> </ul>
2. <b>Engage</b> with graduate students through workshops about important services and University governance structures.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Discuss innovative new methods to promote awareness of the GSA among graduate students to increase participation in GSA activities and events.</li> <li>b. Develop a survey to understand the impact of labour legislation changes on graduate students.</li> <li>c. Continue to host roundtable discussions, town halls, and 101 sessions to educate graduate students about University governance and other important issues.</li> <li>d. Devise methods to increase voter turnout in the annual GSA General Election.</li> </ul>
3. <b>Engage</b> graduate students by promoting activities and events to increase participation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Meet with graduate student groups and departmental GSAs to better understand how to assist their members.</li> <li>b. Meet the Vice-President (Facilities and Operations) to follow up on the 2010 Memorandum of Understanding with the University regarding the North Power Plant.</li> <li>c. Lobby for space for the exclusive use of graduate students to encourage collaboration, idea sharing, and informal meetings.</li> <li>d. Provide three (3) events throughout the academic year to support social engagement and reduce stress amongst graduate students.</li> <li>e. Discuss creating GSA branded products and prizes to incentivize graduate students to participate in contests, events, and activities.</li> </ul>

**SUPPORT**

**GOAL 1:** Ensure all graduate students have access to sufficient resources to meet the basic necessities of life.

The GSA is a vigilant voice for the graduate student experience, including funding, housing, and services. In order for graduate students to have a positive experience at the University of Alberta, key infrastructure pieces must be in place before graduate students even register. The current unpredictable and unsustainable funding model can create situations where graduate students cannot afford safe housing and/or sufficient food. The lack of graduate student funding creates significant strain on mental health and leads to: increased drop-out rates; increased draws on Health and Wellness services; and a decreased focus on studies and research productivity. The potential for achievement can be lost as graduate students must find alternative funding sources through loans and jobs in order to support themselves and their families.

Strategic Objectives	2016/2017 Action Steps
1. <b>Support</b> the Campus Food Bank (CFB) in its mission to ensure the delivery of adequate food for students and their families.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Maintain GSA representation on the CFB Board.</li> <li>b. Continue to review the CFB's annual audited financial statements, usage statistics with respect to graduate students, and budget in accordance with the GSA's fiduciary duties concerning the use of graduate students' fees.</li> </ul>
2. <b>Support</b> access to healthier food options on campus, including for those with dietary restrictions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Meet with Ancillary Services to advocate for a wider variety of healthy food options on campus, including options for those with dietary restrictions.</li> </ul>
3. <b>Support</b> the need for sustainable, affordable, and well-maintained graduate student housing to prevent homelessness and ensure a positive experience at the U of A for graduate students and their families.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Advocate for flexible and transparent residence rental contracts between the University and graduate students that use 'plain language.'</li> <li>b. Meet with potential advocates and sponsors regarding the issue of graduate student homelessness, including Chaplains, Senators, and the Alumni Association, to brainstorm potential solutions to short-term and chronic homelessness amongst graduate students.</li> <li>c. Discuss the on-going issue of mold and general unhealthy living conditions at Michener Park with senior administration and advocate to improve the quality of life for graduate students and their families.</li> <li>d. Collaborate with Community Social Workers to make the GSA's presence and services better known to graduate students living in residences.</li> <li>e. Advocate for affordable and high quality graduate residences that are easily accessible via public transit.</li> <li>f. Ensure graduate student representation on the Residence Life Task Force.</li> <li>g. Collaborate with the SU to advocate for more compassionate responses from Residence Services to ensure the needs of all students in residence are met.</li> </ul>
4. <b>Support</b> and assist graduate students living in residences, and their Residence Associations, to ensure students are living in safe conditions and receiving excellent services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Collaborate with Residence Associations to survey graduate students living in residence about their key issues and concerns.</li> <li>b. Assist graduate students living in residence to ensure their concerns are addressed by Residence Services in a timely manner.</li> <li>c. Meet with Residence Associations each term to hear their concerns and help raise those issues with senior administration.</li> </ul>

## SUPPORT

**GOAL 2:** Strive for a positive experience that meets the needs, and furthers the development of, graduate students.

The GSA supports and encourages an empowering environment for all graduate students so they can thrive academically and professionally. The GSA supports an increase to the number and diversity of professional development opportunities being implemented for graduate students. The GSA will continue to collaborate with the FGSR to ensure graduate students are able to develop the skills and knowledge necessary for future careers. The GSA will work with stakeholders to pursue the development of a mentorship program. The GSA will also maintain its support of University services that benefit graduate students, including advocating for the ability of graduate students to present their research to the academic community inside and outside the U of A.

Strategic Objectives	2016/2017 Action Steps
1. <b>Support</b> a variety of high quality professional development (PD) and internship opportunities for graduate students in recognition of the diverse future career paths ahead of graduate students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Support the professional experience leave policy being advanced by the FGSR.</li> <li>b. Meet with Internship and PD Directors each term to hear program updates and to discuss feedback from participants.</li> <li>c. Meet with stakeholders, such as the FGSR and the Career Centre, to discuss the support of entrepreneurship opportunities for graduate students.</li> <li>d. Develop and host two (2) PD events for graduate students.</li> <li>e. Participate in PD4Grads meetings to assist with the development of PD workshops and events.</li> </ul>
2. <b>Support</b> workshops and services that assist graduate students with academic progress and professional development opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Subsidize and support graduate student workshops, courses, and sessions offered by the Career Centre and the Student Success Centre.</li> <li>b. Evaluate annually the effectiveness of services subsidized by the GSA for graduate students.</li> <li>c. Continue to promote workshops and services for graduate students through the GSA newsletter, the GSA website, and the handbook.</li> <li>d. Evaluate current GSA Policy for supporting graduate student groups to ensure accessibility and equity of support.</li> </ul>
3. <b>Support</b> graduate students throughout the application process for internal, provincial, and federal grants, fellowships, and other opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. As noted above, discuss, with the FGSR, the current opportunities available to graduate students who are applying to scholarships, grants, and awards to ensure the FGSR's complete support throughout the application process.</li> </ul>
4. <b>Support</b> graduate students financially so that they can attend local, regional, national, and international conferences to promote their work and develop new academic networks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Offer GSA Academic Travel Awards to as many graduate students as GSSF funding permits.</li> <li>b. Compare and contrast funding for academic travel available to graduate students at other universities in preparation for collective bargaining.</li> </ul>
5. <b>Support</b> the expansion of a mentorship program available to graduate students in partnership with the FGSR, the Alumni Association, the City of Edmonton, and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Discuss current graduate student mentorship availability with the FGSR.</li> <li>b. Discuss new graduate student mentorship opportunities with partners such as the Alumni Association.</li> </ul>

the Government of Alberta.	
6. <b>Support</b> cross-disciplinary and cross-institutional research and learning opportunities for graduate students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Advocate for easier transfer of credits for graduate students between other universities and the University of Alberta.</li> <li>b. Investigate the possibility of obtaining a seat on the provincial Academic and Credit Transfer Committee for either the University of Alberta or ab-GPAC.</li> <li>c. Research departmental credit transfer policies to determine inconsistencies and areas for improvement.</li> <li>d. Meet with at least two (2) Deans or Department Chairs to discuss the issues of transferring credits and strategize how to overcome barriers.</li> </ul>
7. <b>Support</b> opportunities for graduate students to have international research and study opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Participate in the FGSR Policy Review Committee, and other similar University committees, to promote interdisciplinary and alternative learning opportunities, including international exchanges, for graduate students.</li> <li>b. Meet with GoAbroad and Mitacs to discuss opportunities to promote and expand international educational experiences available to graduate students.</li> </ul>
8. <b>Support</b> the need for high-quality graduate-level programs and courses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Participate in the Universal Student Ratings of Instruction review process which will assess the effectiveness of the current evaluation system and recommend improvements.</li> <li>b. Assess graduate student satisfaction levels and areas of improvement outlined in the Canadian Graduate and Professional Student Survey.</li> <li>c. Participate in Campus Alberta Quality Council reviews of graduate student programs.</li> </ul>



**SUPPORT**

**GOAL 3:** Continue to build a safe, respectful, supportive, and appreciative learning and work environment for all graduate students that is compliant with the GSA's Collective Agreement governing graduate student assistantships.

All graduate students are entitled to a safe and respectful work environment, free from harassment, discrimination, and bullying. For graduate students with assistantships, the Collective Agreement is a legally binding document between the GSA and the Board of Governors that outlines the expectations for fair compensation and a beneficial work environment. The GSA will build upon the advances it has made to assist graduate students with Collective Agreement issues, and ensure University-wide awareness and compliance of the Collective Agreement.

Strategic Objectives	2016/2017 Action Steps
<p>1. <b>Support</b> graduate students and build upon advances made by previous GSA teams in resolving issues associated with the Collective Agreement.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Collect example letters of appointment from as many departments as possible in order to examine compliance with the Collective Agreement.</li> <li>b. Discuss the Collective Agreement in all orientation presentations by the GSA.</li> <li>c. Distribute a clear and concise fact sheet regarding the Collective Agreement at all GSA orientation presentations and events.</li> <li>d. Present, to the Board Human Resources and Compensation Committee, the types of Collective Agreement issues addressed by the GSA to demonstrate the impact of these issues on the University.</li> <li>e. Track issues associated with the Collective Agreement to discuss during subsequent collective bargaining with the University.</li> </ul>
<p>2. <b>Support</b> the development of partnerships with Departmental Councillors and Departmental GSAs to track systemic Collective Agreement compliance issues.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Be available to meet with Departmental Councillors, Departmental GSAs, and individual graduate students to better understand the range of issues and experiences across campus.</li> <li>b. Develop a tracking system for all issues discussed with Departmental Councillors, Departmental GSAs, and individual graduate students.</li> <li>c. Plan to meet with all departmental Councillors prior to the end of December 2016.</li> <li>d. Develop an annual meeting schedule between the GSA and Departmental Councillors for use by future GSA teams.</li> </ul>

<p>3. <b>Support</b> and advocate for graduate students who have experienced issues related to the Collective Agreement, and for those who face issues outside of the Collective Agreement.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Advocate, on behalf of graduate students, for the prompt resolution of ongoing and systemic issues associated with the Collective Agreement.</li> <li>b. Meet with any graduate student who experiences an issue associated with the Collective Agreement to develop methods to resolve the issue in a timely manner.</li> <li>c. Develop a tracking system of individual graduate student issues worked on by the GSA.</li> <li>d. Continue to advocate for and assist graduate students who face issues aside from those associated with the Collective Agreement and aid them in navigating University structures.</li> </ul>
<p>4. <b>Support</b> partnerships with the FGSR and the Office of the Provost to ensure a better understanding of the GSA's Collective Agreement within the University.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Maintain ongoing relationships with the appropriate members of the Office of the Provost.</li> <li>b. Review, in collaboration with the Office of the Provost, the Collective Agreement Information Sheets.</li> <li>c. Use social media to highlight the Collective Agreement.</li> <li>d. Discuss, with the FGSR and the Office of the Provost, the way information regarding the Collective Agreement is shared with incoming professors, graduate coordinators, and graduate chairs.</li> <li>e. Attend the Deans' Council, Graduate Program Administrators Committee, and meetings of other groups to present information about the GSA's Collective Agreement.</li> </ul>

**SUPPORT**

**GOAL 4:** Enhance supports for international graduate students.

The University's community of international graduate students is a vital part of the overall graduate programs offered at the University of Alberta. The GSA will support, and advocate for, initiatives and programs that specifically support international graduate students in all aspects of their lives.

Strategic Objectives	2016/2017 Action Steps
<p>1. <b>Support</b> the GSA's partnership with University of Alberta International (UAI) and student groups who represent international graduate students.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Promote the UAI peer mentoring program via the GSA newsletter and on social media.</li> <li>b. Meet with UAI at least two (2) times per year to discuss issues faced by international graduate students.</li> <li>c. Meet with the Vice Provost and Associate Vice President (International) to discuss issues faced by international graduate students.</li> <li>d. Meet annually with international student groups to discuss opportunities for collaboration.</li> <li>e. Advertise University educational support programs that can be used by international graduate students.</li> <li>f. Investigate if there is sufficient need to broker a service to assist international graduate students with applying for permanent residency.</li> </ul>

**SUSTAIN**

**GOAL 1:** Maintain the GSA's excellent reputation and culture of respect, tolerance, and professionalism.

The GSA aims to be the best managed graduate student association in Canada, with effective and well-trained elected leadership supported by a professional and engaged management team. To be effective, the GSA needs to maintain a viable staffing infrastructure and an engaged office support team.

Strategic Objectives	2016/2017 Action Steps
1. <b>Sustain</b> a supportive, respectful, professional, and enjoyable work environment for GSA DEOs and support the Executive Director's work to ensure a similar environment within the GSA office.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Ensure the use of effective communication skills to address conflict or issues as quickly as possible.</li> <li>b. Ensure everyone's time is respected.</li> <li>c. Create opportunities to show appreciation for assistance or for a job well-done.</li> <li>d. Work collaboratively with the Executive Director to enhance the GSA's health, stability, and reputation in all areas over time.</li> </ul>
2. <b>Sustain</b> the commitment to strategic planning, regular follow-through on goals and action steps, and regular reporting to the GSA Council.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Update the Board Strategic Work Plan (SWP) and annual action steps with each new group of DEOs.</li> <li>b. Develop effective methods to demonstrate progress and success of the Board SWP action steps.</li> <li>c. Review and regularly update the recently-developed GSA Councillor Handbook to assist Councillors to better understand their roles and responsibilities.</li> <li>d. Create opportunities for all Councillors to provide input on key items presented and discussed at GSA Council in new or innovative ways.</li> <li>e. Develop a survey for GSA Councillors to facilitate their engagement with the GSA, and ability to represent their departments or constituents.</li> </ul>
3. <b>Sustain</b> a proactive search for talent through the Early Call for Talent and Training initiative, and a commitment to provide elected officials with training and professional development opportunities relevant to their portfolios.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Effectively advertise the annual Early Call for Talent and Training program.</li> <li>b. Maintain an effective Nominating Committee who can work towards placing graduate student representatives on various councils and committees.</li> <li>c. Develop an annual transition plan to prepare incoming DEOs for their annual responsibilities.</li> <li>d. Review and update the annual training plan for DEOs to ensure delivery of training deemed necessary for them to effectively perform their duties.</li> <li>e. Discuss with the Dean of the FGSR the option of requesting academic relief for the GSA President under the professional experience leave category.</li> </ul>
4. <b>Sustain</b> a regular review of GSA Bylaw and Policy to ensure good governance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Continue with review of GSA Bylaw and Policy (eg combined version, editorial updates, officer portfolios, etc)</li> <li>b. Implement GSA Council-approved updates to Bylaw and Policy as needed following review.</li> <li>c. Communicate during transition of future teams of DEOs the necessity for on-going review.</li> </ul>
5. <b>Sustain</b> reasonable workloads for all DEOs by reallocating roles and responsibilities to meet the changing University environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Conduct, at minimum, an annual review of DEO portfolios and the division of responsibilities.</li> <li>b. Assign DEOs to committees in a manner that ensures the best use of talent while aiming for an equitable distribution of the overall workload.</li> </ul>

**SUSTAIN**

**GOAL 2:** Continue to offer high-quality, affordable services to all graduate students.

The GSA will continue to offer a wide variety of beneficial services that are available to all graduate students. The GSA will also continue to negotiate for affordable health, dental and transit programs for graduate students based on graduate student needs and wants.

Strategic Objectives	2016/2017 Action Steps
<p>1. <b>Sustain</b> and develop on-campus and GSA negotiated and subsidized services to obtain the highest value possible for graduate students.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Develop opportunities to gain insight and feedback from graduate students regarding the services offered by the GSA.</li> <li>b. Conduct a comprehensive review of the GSA's Health and Dental Plan in order to select the plan that best meets the overall needs of graduate students.</li> <li>c. Develop a proposal for a drop-in child care centre on campus that can be utilized by graduate students.</li> <li>d. Work to ensure the U-Pass remains cost effective for graduate students.</li> <li>e. Lead the discussion on creation of a direct bus route between Michener Park and North Campus.</li> <li>f. Discuss, with other Edmonton-based universities, negotiating for a discounted U-Pass rate for spouses and dependents of students in future.</li> <li>g. Finalize the agreement between the GSA and the SU regarding the Physical Activity and Wellness (PAW) Centre food service area.</li> <li>h. Maintain relationships with our partners and sponsors of events and activities.</li> </ul>

## SUSTAIN

**GOAL 3:** Promote a welcoming, equitable, sustainable, and healthy campus for all members of the University community.

The GSA supports a University that values continuous learning and development and measures success, both through traditional metrics and alternative, less competitive and more collaborative, methods. The GSA supports the development of critical thinking skills, opportunities to fail without punishment, assignments that develop self-awareness of strengths, and opportunities to give back to the community. The GSA will continue to: foster a culture of inclusion and acceptance; responsibility for the use of finite resources; and support health and wellness initiatives that aim to increase work-life balance.

Strategic Objectives	2016/2017 Action Steps
1. <b>Sustain</b> a respectful and welcoming environment for all indigenous peoples.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Acknowledge we are on Treaty 6 land in all official meetings and on all official documents produced by the GSA.</li> <li>b. Examine the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s report to determine how the GSA can implement the Calls to Action.</li> <li>c. Host an Elder to lead a smudging ceremony at the start of GSA Council.</li> <li>d. Advocate for learning environments within the University that honour indigenous approaches to living and learning.</li> <li>e. Collaborate with the Indigenous Council to advertise and participate in traditional events and activities to increase graduate student knowledge and understanding of indigenous cultures.</li> <li>f. Discuss with the Deputy Provost current strategies being implemented by the University for indigenous peoples on campus and identify areas affecting graduate students.</li> <li>g. Investigate whether the current infrastructure provided to indigenous undergraduate students also meets the needs of indigenous graduate students.</li> </ul>
2. <b>Sustain</b> working relationships with stakeholders to ensure a campus free from discrimination, harassment, and bullying for all members of the University community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Identify vulnerable and at-risk graduate student populations and setup meetings each term to discuss concerns and issues.</li> <li>b. Participate, through the sexual assault policy committee, in the development of definitions for sexual violence on campus.</li> <li>c. Participate in the Sexual Assault Response Implementation Committee.</li> <li>d. Attend the Forensic Experiential and Trauma Interview training to learn trauma-informed ways of assisting graduate students.</li> <li>e. Work with Ancillary Services to increase the number of gender neutral bathrooms on campus.</li> <li>f. Advocate for a family-friendly campus that includes an increase in the number of breastfeeding rooms on campus and a change to the policy regarding bringing children to class.</li> </ul>
3. <b>Sustain</b> the development of alternative dispute resolution techniques to help address power imbalances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Collaborate with the FGSR, the Graduate Student Ombudsperson, and the Office of Safe Disclosure and Human Rights to develop a graduate student rights document.</li> </ul>

<p>and to nurture peace and productivity within the University environment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>b. Train DEOs in restorative and mediation practices that can help encourage a prompt resolution of conflicts and issues.</li> <li>c. Encourage training for Graduate Chairs in restorative and mediation practices to help resolve conflicts within a department.</li> <li>d. Work to increase awareness of alternative dispute resolution techniques and practical communication skills for graduate students, administrators, and professors.</li> <li>e. Discuss developing alternative methods to address serious allegations about supervision issues, other than the Article 16 process, to effect change and improve graduate student experiences.</li> </ul>
<p>4. <b>Sustain</b> campus-wide health and wellness initiatives to support and promote the improvement of mental health for graduate students.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Organize eight (8) Coffee Breaks during the academic year to provide mental health breaks and networking opportunities for graduate students, to support flourishing mental health.</li> <li>b. Encourage graduate student participation in local and provincial mental health meetings, events and summits.</li> <li>c. Promote resources that address the stigma of mental health to change the culture of isolation and fear that can inhibit success.</li> <li>d. Collaborate with the University of Calgary to bring the Inquiring Minds anti-stigma mental health workshop to the University of Alberta.</li> <li>e. Encourage ab-GPAC to maintain pressure on the provincial government to guarantee long-term equitable funding for mental health programs.</li> <li>f. Obtain monthly updates from the Vice-President (Facilities and Operations) regarding the progress on the campus's new Interfaith Prayer and Meditation Space.</li> <li>g. Participate in committee meetings to develop a fair and equitable system for booking the Prayer and Meditation Space.</li> <li>h. Participate in campus-wide, on-going health and wellness initiatives.</li> <li>i. Advocate to maintain a psychologist in Triffo Hall for graduate students.</li> </ul>
<p>5. <b>Sustain</b> leadership towards environmental sustainability and stewardship.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Evaluate GSA events to determine their environmental impact and work with the Office of Sustainability to reduce that impact.</li> <li>b. Limit printing of documents by encouraging the use of laptops and projectors at meetings.</li> <li>c. Promote the University's sustainability initiatives.</li> <li>d. Encourage the Vice-President (Facilities and Operations) to build net zero energy buildings to reduce the long-term environmental impact of the University.</li> </ul>

**GSA President  
Report to GSA Council for the October 24, 2016 Meeting**

To: GSA Council  
From: Sarah Ficko  
Date: October 21, 2016

Dear Councillor Friends and Colleagues,

Welcome to... Winter? Fall? Spring? Today seems to be back to fall as I write this report! It seems time has flown since we last met, and I hope everyone takes some time to relax and enjoy the sunshine and nice weather this weekend before the snow hits in earnest. In the meantime, I'm looking forward to Halloween chocolate 😊

My report this month is organized into several different key areas my team and I have been focusing on:

### 1. Strategic Plans

On September 27, University President Dave Turpin officially launched the University's strategic plan 'For the Public Good' at the 2016 State of the University Address. This document is meant to guide the University forward over the next 5 to 10 years, and is designed to provide a structure and foundation to help everyone feel empowered to create, inspire, and grow, as individuals and groups, across campus. The next steps are to set priorities, develop methods to indicate and measure progress and success, and determine how to report back to the community. From this overarching document, three other strategic plans focusing specifically on prevention and support for sexual assault and violence, healthy campuses, and sustainability, are also being finalized, and you may have been involved or heard about consultation for some of them. Input on the objectives for developing a healthy campus can still be submitted at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/VTZ2F3T>.

Shortly afterwards, the GSA Board unanimously approved the 2016-2017 Board Strategic Plan (though with high fives instead of a public address!), and I'm very pleased to share the Plan with you. While the Plan is developed by the GSA Board to shape their activities for the year, I would like to hear your feedback on the goals and strategic objects to ensure we haven't missed anything important for graduate students; I will also bring this item back to GSA Council in April before a new team takes over so that you can share any new ideas with the incoming team. In addition, I'd like to receive feedback on how to update GSA Council on our progress during the year (e.g. how often, what kind of information), to make sure you as Councillors feel like you're receiving enough information from the elected officials about the activities we are conducting on behalf of graduate students. The next steps for my team and I will be to discuss who will be focusing on which item for both big picture, and day-to-day operations.

### 2. Important Committee Work

Each of the VPs and I sit on a variety of committees within the University and province (see the list of meetings below for a summary of just the past month). This month I want to highlight the excellent work that several VPs are doing on behalf of students. First, Sasha has been sitting on the Sexual Assault Response Implementation Committee, which will be sending out a new stand alone policy on addressing sexual assault and supporting survivors on campus in the next month. Working committees are also



being developed to address specific components of the plan. Second, Masoud and I sit on the Residence Life Task Force (RLTF), which is assessing the residence experience of students and staff over the past five years, and will make recommendations to improve the residence life experience for future students. The task force is currently evaluating submissions to select a company that will conduct the surveys of past residents. If you've lived in residence in the past five years, you might be getting a phone call! Finally, Ali, Firouz, and I met with the Deputy Provost Wendy Rogers and the Dean of Students Andre Costopoulos to discuss writing services and resources on campus. The Scholarly Writing Task Force has just been struck to review all current writing resources available on campus, to try and determine if there are any gaps, and how best to allocate resources to ensure students receive the support they need for different tasks at different times in their programs. Ali will be our representative on this task force, and will take forward the feedback we receive from GSA Council, as well as our discussions at the GSA Board on this topic.

### 3) Provincial Advocacy Work

At the end of September, the ab-GPAC Chair and I attended a meeting with the provincial government and other student leaders from the two undergraduate provincial lobby groups. During this meeting, questions about the Adult Learning Review, labour relations, and tuition were discussed. As some of you may have heard, the Minister of Advanced Education most recently made an announcement on October 19, that the tuition freeze will be extended for one more year (domestic students only), and a tuition review was launched at the same time. The government has yet to finalize their budget for the year (which is an issue in terms of institutions being able to develop their own budgets as it is normally finished by October so that it can pass through the governance structures and be able to make admission offers to top applicants), and the government has not said if they will fund the difference in expected revenue (somewhere between \$2 and \$4 M). Ab-GPAC will again collaborate to develop recommendations on behalf of graduate students.

As described last month at Council, the GSAs and our provincial lobby group ab-GPAC, were asked to submit feedback on the right-to-strike labour legislation changes. The U of C GSA President and I co-chaired the Labour Relations Committee, and we drafted a response to submit to the government with assistance from the ab-GPAC Chair (I am the Vice-Chair). Our final position was to recommend that the government maintain status quo for graduate students, which was developed using the feedback we received from students across the province through our email surveys, in Council discussions, a panel discussion, consultation with the government, one-on-one meetings, and advice from a labour lawyer. Each GSA Board was also invited to provide feedback prior to submission. For the next steps on the labour legislation, the ab-GPAC Chair and Vice-Chair will likely be invited to attend further consultation meetings with the provincial government over the next few weeks before they develop a final decision to be released in the spring.

As a final piece on the provincial advocacy note, the U of A GSA is hosting the ab-GPAC Annual General Meeting October 22-23. Topics will include strategic planning and the spring transition, three-year budget projections (and associated fees from each member school), and a plan to hire a part-time Executive Director,

### 4) On-Going Work

Following up a bit more on our survey of grad students concerning labour matters, the responses to the question 'what would you strike for' generally fell into two areas of i) serious violations of health and

safety, and ii) more money/better pay. First, as a reminder to Councillors, if students do have serious violations of their work environment, they can a) legally refuse to work if they do not feel safe (as a TA/RA), b) they can come to the GSA for assistance to find the right services, c) they can go directly to the Office of Human Rights and Safe Disclosures (third floor in the building where Good Earth and Earls is located) to put in a complaint or ask for advice, or d) they can go to the province's Public Interest Disclosure Commission Office for a disclosure of a wrongdoing (as defined by the Public Interest Disclosure Act). The University takes these complaints very seriously and labs/work spaces can and have been inspected following student complaints with changes required to improve conditions. Second, in terms of more money, I identified last year as VP Labour that grad students at the U of A need sustainable funding packages that allow for a suitable standard of living. Negotiating more money through the Collective Agreement will not address this need (graduate student pay under the Agreement is already approximately \$40 an hour rate, for up to 12 hours of work per week). While this idea was first raised on campus about five years ago, it has not been followed up on since then. However, based on the consultation we conducted over the summer in GSA Council, roundtable sessions, and one-on-one discussions with graduate students, the need and demand for stable and predictable funding packages for grad students that cover tuition and the cost of living has been reinforced. This was further supported both by how students answered the right to strike question, and by a time to completion report just submitted by FGSR that showed that students who received more funding generally had higher completion rates. Given the provincial government's call for a review of tuition in the province, the recent report on financial support given to undergraduate students developed by the Registrar's Office, and the alignment with several strategies in For the Public Good, I have outlined this need to General Faculties Council, Dean's Council, the ALES Cabinet, the Graduate Program Administrators Committee, and FGSR Council. I have also discussed it individually with the Provost, President, and Board of Governors Chair, and asked that a review of graduate student funding also be conducted this year. I envision the results of such a report could ensure more equitable resource allocation on campus, and would enable ab-GPAC to put in a request to the government for better financial support of the research component that separates comprehensive academic and research intensive institutions from other post-secondary institutions (right now the government allocates funding based on 'full learner equivalents', and the grad student researcher component is not addressed as separate category). In addition, full funding packages for all thesis-based grad students would make us a leader in the country in terms of funding for grad students, which would appeal to the University's mission to be a top research intensive university in Canada and the world.

For the Health and Dental Plan update, after further consultation with the GSA Board and Studentcare, a survey was launched this past Wednesday to request further feedback from a representative sample of graduate students as we determine a plan moving forward. Studentcare advised us that we would be a trailblazer should we implement either a two- or three-tiered plan in Western Canada, and noted that they will be able to give us some limited projections for costs (both now and in future years) associated with a two-tiered plan, but they have no data to help predict claims or cost increases for a three-tiered plan (they are no comparable comparators in Canada). In addition, there may be complications with the University's ability to assess a three-tiered plan (it would mean assessing each student up to 2 of 6 fees and apparently may require new IT infrastructure). It's important to note that the implementation of any form of tiered plan is really uncharted territory (other existing tiered plans are in provinces where prescription drug and dental costs are government regulated so the cost structure is very different from that in Alberta). Should the GSA move in this direction we are essentially committing to offering a plan that includes enhanced choice, with less regard to cost (it's interesting to see how we've moved in this direction from our initial conversations last spring which mostly centered on controlling costs). For example, the "enhanced" tier of a two-tier plan could exceed \$1000/year in a few years if our usage

rates continue to grow as they have over the past several years. I ask the GSA Council continue to think about this very important service and for members to discuss it with their colleagues. Feedback can always be submitted to either myself or Ali at any time.

Finally, as Radim reports, the GSA Nominating Committee recently launched the annual Early Call for Talent and Training program. Each year, as per GSA Policy, the GSA NoC is charged with the responsibility of actively seeking out graduate students for the positions of GSA President, Vice-President Academic, Vice-President Labour, Vice-President Student Services, and Vice-President External. The Early Call for Talent and Training program is designed to provide training and information to students considering running for elected office and will kick off with a Get-to-Know Dinner on October 26. If you're interested in learning more about our roles as elected officials, please talk to any of us, or contact [gsanomco@ualberta.ca](mailto:gsanomco@ualberta.ca) to attend the dinner next Wednesday night!

With that, it's hard to believe I'm already at the 6 month point of being office. It's been a whirlwind adventure so far, and I'm looking forward to the next 6 months as we continue to work on our annual action plan to take positive steps towards achieving our long-term goals to improve the graduate experience on campus. To end on a positive note, two students that Sasha, Heather, I have been helping over the last six months address supervisory issues have both successfully defended their theses!

Warmest regards,  
Sarah

Ps Here is a list of upcoming events in the next two months!

### **October**

Oct 24-28 - Sustainability Awareness Week

Oct 26 – Early Call Dinner, please RSVP to [gsanomco@ualberta.ca](mailto:gsanomco@ualberta.ca) and to get a full list of scheduled 101 sessions

Oct 27 – GSA/FGSR Professional Development Information Fair – 5-7 pm, Faculty Club, Winspear Room

Oct 27 – GSA Coffee Break with LISSA, EEGSA, EPSGSA, in Rutherford

Oct 28 – Plasma Car United Way Fundraising Race – Sasha will be driving a car on behalf of the GSA!

We're looking for sponsors or people to come out and cheer her on!

### **November**

November 8 – GSA Coffee Break

November 28 – GSA Coffee Break

November 8-9 – FGSR PD events, <https://www.ualberta.ca/graduate-studies/professional-development/events/career-symposium>

[1]

*Please find below a list of meetings I attended between September 26, 2016 to October 24, 2016. The meetings were accurate at the time of printing.*

September 27	Unveiling of "For the Public Good"
September 27	Board Finance and Property Committee (BFPC)
September 28	Student Leaders' Meeting with the Government
September 28	Meeting with the Council of Alberta University Students (CAUS)
September 28	Meeting with the Government about Labour Legislation

September 28	Meeting with the SU President
September 29	Board University Relations Committee (BURC)
September 29	Board Learning and Discovery Committee (BLDC)
September 29	Meeting with Government Stakeholders
September 30	Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research (FGSR) Meet-and-Greet
September 30	PD Requirements with FGSR
September 30	Phone Interview with K McNeill
September 30	GSA Heath and Dental Town Hall
October 3	Meeting about Food Insecurity
October 3	Phyllis Clark Reception
October 4	Labour Relations Meeting
October 4	GSA Governance Committee (GSA GC)
October 4	Labour Consultation Meeting Follow-up
October 5	ab-GPAC Budget
October 5	Collective Agreement 101
October 6	Lunch with FGSR, the Office of the Ombuds, and the Office of Student Conduct and Accountability
October 6	Residence Life Task Force
October 6	Meeting with M Strong, Director of Faculty Relations
October 7	Healthy University Strategic Plan
October 7	Dean of Students
October 7	Meeting with K Foster, Studentcare
October 11	Meeting with B Epperson
October 11	GSA GC
October 12	Mandatory Non-Instructional Fees (MNIF) Oversight Committee
October 12	Scholarly Writing Support Consultation
October 12	General Faculties Council Academic Planning Committee (GFC APC)
October 13	Dean of FGSR
October 13	Meeting re Labour Relations
October 13	Residence Association Meeting
October 17	Helping Individuals at Risk (HIAR) Policy and Procedure Review
October 17	General Faculties Council Executive Committee (GFC EXEC)
October 18	Meeting with Naomi Krogman
October 18	Phone Call with Minister of Advanced Education and Student Leaders
October 19	GSA Nominating Committee (GSA NoC)
October 19	FGRS Council
October 20	Meeting with Ombudsperson
October 20	Board of Governors' Dinner
October 21	Board of Governors
October 21	Board of Governors Luncheon with the GSA and the SU
October 22-23	ab-GPAC AGM

**GSA Board (GSAB)  
Report to GSA Council for the October 24, 2016 Meeting**

To: GSA Council  
 From: Courtney Thomas, Executive Director and Coordinator of the GSA Board; Heather Hogg, Director of Operations; and Julie Tanguay, Associate Director  
 Date: October 21, 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, 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 18 (Executive Director's Report to GSA Council) on pages 18.5-198.8.

**28 September 2016 GSA Board Meeting**

Main Agenda Items:

Campus Food Bank: Third Quarterly Support Payment from the GSA in 2016-2017; GSA Health and Dental Plan

Motions and Agreements:

Members **AGREED** to defer the Motion until SF met with the Interim Board Chair of the Campus Food Bank in October.

**5 October 2016 GSA Board Meeting**

Main Agenda Items:

Actual Expenses for Attendance at a GU15 Conference, August 10-12, 2016 in Hamilton, ON: External Relations Travel Expenses; GSA Health and Dental Plan

Motions and Agreements:

Members **AGREED** to approve the Agenda of October 7, 2016, which had been previously distributed, after correcting several listed meetings of the President, VP Academic, VP Student Services, and VP External, and adding an item concerning the Board SWP. MK **MOVED**. FK Seconded. **CARRIED**.

**MOTION:** The GSA Board is asked to **REVIEW AND RECEIVE FOR INFORMATION** the attached summary of actual expenses incurred through attendance at a GU15 conference, August 10-12, 2016 in Hamilton, ON. MK **MOVED**. AT Seconded. **CARRIED**.

**12 October 2016 GSA Board Meeting**

Main Agenda Items:

GSA Board Strategic Work Plan 2016-2017; GSA Health and Dental Plan; Labour Consultations Regarding the Right to Strike

Motions and Agreements:

Members **AGREED** to approve the Agenda of October 12, 2016, which had been previously distributed after correcting some of AT's meetings. SF **MOVED**. SvK Seconded. **CARRIED**.

**MOTION:** That the GSA Board **APPROVE AND FORWARD TO GSA COUNCIL FOR INFORMATION** the GSA Board Strategic Work Plan 2016-2017. SF **MOVED**. MK Seconded. **CARRIED**.

**19 October 2016 GSA Board Meeting**

Main Agenda Items:

GSA Health and Dental Plan; Scholarly Writing Support at the U of A: Follow Up to Recent Consultation with W Rodgers (Deputy Provost) and A Costopoulos (Dean of Students); GSA Representative on the Operations Committee for the Multi-Faith Prayer and Meditation Space; Utilizing the SU Reusable Dish Program at GSA Council: Volunteers Needed from the GSA Board

Motions and Agreements:

No Motions at this time.

**GSA Governance Committee (GSA GC)  
Report to GSA Council for the October 24, 2016 Meeting**

To: GSA Council  
From: Sarah Ficko  
Date: October 21, 2016

Dear Council Colleagues,

The GSA Governance Committee met on October 11 to review the most recent draft of the integrated version of GSA Bylaw and Policy. Those of you who have served on GSA Council for some time will remember that the integration of these two governing documents has been discussed many times over the past two years as a positive step for the GSA. Currently, there are many topics on which we have both Bylaw and Policy, and this renders it difficult to get a whole picture of a certain issue when one has to flip back and forth between two documents.

The integrated version eliminates this and also includes a revised numbering system that makes it very easy to tell whether one is looking at a section of Bylaw or a section of Policy when utilizing the document. The GSA Governance Committee has spent approximately six months reviewing various drafts of this document and discussing the relative merits of different numbering schemes – I am very happy to report that we were all in agreement at our most recent meeting that the integrated version is user friendly and easily navigable. While the numbering and the ordering of various sections has been amended, no other changes (either editorial or substantive) have been made. The integrated version is now posted on the GSA website and I encourage you all to read it and let me know if you have any feedback. Moving forward, I believe having this streamlined and more logically ordered document at our disposal is a great step!

The GSA Governance Committee, as per its mandate, will meet again soon to review various editorial changes to the integrated version of GSA Bylaw and Policy (including incorrect punctuation, typos, and matters of non-standardized naming conventions). As part of our work plan to review our governing documents (not to mention various pending proposals to GSA Council from several GSA Standing Committees regarding changes to GSA Bylaw and Policy), it will be important for the GSA Governance Committee to address these minor editorial matters in a timely fashion so that we can forge ahead with other proposed amendments – as always, all editorial changes will be reported to GSA Council.

Sincerely,  
Sarah Ficko, GSA President and Chair, GSA Governance Committee

**GSA Nominating Committee (GSA NoC)  
Report to GSA Council for the October 24, 2016 Meeting**

To: GSA Council  
From: Radim Barta  
Date: October 21, 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 and those which will be filled shortly.

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,

Radim Barta, Administrative Chair, GSA Nominating Committee

**Early Call for Talent and Training**

GSA Policy states "The NoC will actively seek out potential candidates for all GSA Directly-Elected Officers and Council-Elected Officers positions" (GSA Policy, Nominating, Section 6.4). Likewise, as per GSA Policy, Standing Committees, Section 10. 3.b:

"The GSA NoC leads an annual initiative each October called the Early Call for Talent and Training. During this "Early Call" any graduate student interested in running for elected office is invited to a get-to-know dinner and is encouraged to participate in a series of training sessions on such topics as University governance, GSA 101, budget and audit basics, collective bargaining, major GSA services, and more. Information is provided about the President's and Vice-Presidents' portfolios and the time commitments involved. These sessions provide a basic set of information that the GSA sees as essential for the effective leadership of its corporation and for the carrying out of its fiduciary duties."

The 2016 GSA Early Call for Talent and Training is now in progress, after the initial advertisement went out through the GSA Newsletter on September 30, 2016. The Get-to-Know Dinner is scheduled for October 26, 2016 and it is a good opportunity for anyone thinking about getting more involved or running for a Directly-Elected Officer (DEO) position to get acquainted and have informal discussion over food with current and past DEOs. The Training program (with a total of 5 different sessions) will begin on October 28, 2016. As GSA Council members are aware, engagement from graduate students is key to the success of the GSA, and so I encourage all members of GSA Council to share this information with their colleagues and to please contact [gsa.nomcomm@ualberta.ca](mailto:gsa.nomcomm@ualberta.ca) if you are interested in attending the dinner on October 26.

**GSA Standing Committees**

**1) GSA Appeals and Complaints Board (GSA ACB) (1 Graduate Student Positions)**

As per GSA Policy, the current members of the GSA ACB (who were all interviewed by the GSA NoC prior to being elected by GSA Council) were elected. On October 13, the GSA NoC emailed all current members of the GSA ACB asking them if they wished to continue their service on the GSA ACB. GSA Council will be asked at the November meeting of GSA Council to vote to re-elect the members who wished to continue on the GSA ACB. At this meeting there will also be a vote to elect the Chair and Vice-Chair.

## Bodies External to the GSA

GSA Council has delegated to the GSA NoC the responsibility of filling positions on all committees external to the GSA. Normally, all vacancies are advertised. According to GSA Policy, “advertising may be waived in instances where, in the GSA NoC’s view, it is urgent to fill a vacancy” (GSA Policy, Nominating, Section 5.2).

### **1) Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research (FGSR) Academic Appeals Committee (1 FGSR Council Member)**

On September 20, 2016, an email was circulated to graduate students serving on the FGSR Council notifying them of the one (1) vacancy on the FGSR Academic Appeals Committee. The deadline for nominations was September 26, 2016. One (1) nomination was received. **Maryam Kebbe (Pediatrics)** was elected to serve on the FGSR Academic Appeals Committee.

### **2) Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research (FGSR) Council (5 Councillors and 5 Alternates)**

These positions were advertised in the GSA Newsletter on September 23, 2016 and again on September 30, 2016. The deadline for nominations was October 5, 2016, at 12:00 PM (noon). Eight (8) nominations were received. **Kulpreet Cheema (Rehabilitation Sciences), Syed Hussain (Medicine), Phil Oel (Biology), Mohammadhadi Rouhani (Electrical and Computer Engineering), and Mostafa Tawfeek (Civil Engineering)** were elected to serve as Councillors on the FGSR Council. **Sumanth Kumar Arnipally (Petroleum Engineering), Honey Bhatia (Engineering Management), and Ted Han (Ophthalmology and Visual Science)** were elected to serve as Alternates on the FGSR Council.

### **3) Sexual Assault Response Implementation Committee (SARIC) Subcommittees (3 Graduate Student Positions)**

These positions were advertised in the GSA Newsletter on October 6, 2016 and the deadline to receive nominations was October 14, 2016, at 12:00 PM (noon). Four (4) nominations were received for the ‘Accountability’ Subcommittee and the GSA NoC elected **Bijaya Pokharel (Nursing)** to serve. Four (4) nominations were received for the ‘Assessment’ Subcommittee and the GSA NoC elected **Megan Stewart (Women’s and Gender Studies)** to serve. Five (5) nominations were received for the ‘Support’ Subcommittee and the GSA NoC elected **Kenzie Gordon (Humanities Computing)** to serve.

## Current Vacancies

### **1) GSA Appeals and Complaints Board (GSA ACB) (5 Graduate Student Position)**

The GSA NoC advertised for one (1) position on the GSA ACB and this position currently remains unfilled. Additionally, four (4) members of the GSA ACB informed the GSA NoC, following the email the GSA NoC sent to the GSA ACB members on October 13 noted above, that they could not continue on the GSA ACB, leaving five (5) vacancies which we will work to fill in the coming weeks.

### **2) GSA Elections and Referenda Committee (GSA ERC) (2 Graduate Student Position)**

In the September 30, 2016 GSA Newsletter, the GSA NoC advertised for one (1) vacant position on the GSA ERC. The deadline to receive nominations was October 11, 2016 and no nominations were received. A call for additional nominations was emailed to GSA Council on October 14, 2016. The deadline to receive additional nominations was October 20, 2016 at 12:00 PM (noon) and no additional nominations were received. In the meantime a second member from the GSA ERC resigned. These two (2) vacancies on GSA ERC will be advertised in the upcoming weeks.

## **Addendum – Recent In-Person Meeting of the GSA NoC**

On October 18, 2016, members of the GSA NoC met to review proposed changes to the composition of the GSA NoC. These proposed changes include the removal of the GSA President and the GSA Executive Director as voting members and the addition of two GSA members as voting members. As noted above, GSA NoC practice has always been that the President abstains from all voting, and the same is true for the Executive Director – these proposed changes thus formalize that practice within GSA Policy while also increasing the diversity of voices on the committee. These proposed changes will next be considered by the GSA Governance Committee for recommendation to GSA Council.



The GSA NoC also discussed comments made during the September GSA Council meeting and received via email following the meeting. The GSA NoC agreed to include a short description of the mandate of committees in GSA Council elections items. The GSA NoC also decided to ask GSA Council if it would be beneficial to allow for a short period of follow up questions when a nominee addressed GSA Council regarding their nomination, keeping in mind that this will extend the length of meetings and that follow up questions should be related to what candidates have said in response to the question posed to them in GSA Council by the GSA NoC.

The GSA NoC also agreed to include a brief overview of GSA NoC processes in the GSA NoC report to GSA Council. Please find this overview below.

- In electing individuals to serve on GSA Standing Committees, the procedure is as follows (Section E: Nominating, GSA Policy, GSA Standing Committees, GSA Nominating Committee):
  - The GSA NoC advertises vacancies either through the GSA Newsletter, or directly to the intended demographic (ie GSA Council), with a deadline to receive nominations typically set one (1) or two (2) weeks later. This is referred to as the first call for nominations.
  - After the initial deadline has passed, the GSA NoC approves nominations to be forwarded to GSA Council (in most instances all nominations are forwarded to GSA Council unless the a nomination does not meet the membership eligibility requirements detailed in GSA Policy for a given committee.
  - After this, a call for additional nominations is circulated to GSA Council with the names and biographies/resumes of the nominees forwarded thus far. This call includes a deadline for GSA Council members to nominate either themselves or other eligible parties, pending the eligible parties' consent.
  - Following the deadline for the additional call for nominations, there are two different potential paths that are followed:
    1. If there are more nominees than positions to fill, or if any additional nominations are received, the GSA NoC provides, in advance of a GSA Council meeting, a question to be asked to the nominees at GSA Council. The nominees are given the chance to address GSA Council only if all the nominees can attend the meeting. A vote is then held in GSA Council. The results are communicated to the nominees, and to GSA Council in the GSA Council Summary.
    2. If there are less nominees than positions, and no additional nominations were received, the nominees are declared elected and GSA Council receives, for information, the names of the newly elected members at GSA Council.
  
- In electing individuals to serve on Decanal Selection/Review Committees, the process varies per department in accordance with the University of Alberta Policies and Procedures, "Faculty Deans Review Procedure", "Faculty Deans Review Procedure", and "Faculty Deans Selection Procedure Appendix A: Dean Selection Committees for Individual Faculties". The GSA NoC, in electing these individuals, follows the process outlined in these procedures.

**GSA Vice-President Academic  
Report to GSA Council for the October 24, 2016 Meeting**

To: GSA Council  
From: Firouz Khodayari  
Date: October 21, 2016

Dear Council Colleagues,

I hope everybody has enjoyed the first snowfalls while keeping the rolling ball of their academic life moving. I am attending a conference in Chile at the time of writing this report. I have been discussing and presenting Mining topics here the whole day, please don't be surprised if you see something about Mining, Copper or Gold in this report! During the last month as Vice-President Academic, I have attended several meetings and been involved in some discussions which I will share the highlights with you in this report.

**Co-Curricular Record Committee**

Co-curricular refers to opportunities for students to gain experiences and skills that are not part of their formal curriculum and are not part of their transcript. Having a record of these opportunities makes students' CVs look more professional and it is a common practice among many other universities in North America. This committee is proposing to have an Individual Development Plan (IDP) included on the record. The problem is that the minimum requirement hours for a Co-Curricular Record is 10 hours while it is 8 hours for the IDP. I will be having some meetings with FGSR and the chair of the Co-Curricular Record Committee to see how graduate students can benefit more from this record.

**FGSR Policy Review Committee**

The new version of the FGSR policy on leaves of absence is ready to be applied. The most important change is the addition of a new category to the three currently existing categories (Medical, Parental, and Compassionate). The new category is called Professional Development (or Professional Experience) (PD) leave. The PD leave provides to graduate students the opportunity to pursue professional experience. Authority to grant medical and parental leaves resides within the department. A leave of absence for compassionate reasons or PD may only be granted by the Dean of FGSR. There have been many meetings and discussions regarding these changes in order to ensure that graduate students are proposed supported in all of these changes.

**Scholarly Writing Support Consultation**

Following the discussions and concerns regarding the Centre for Writers in GFC last year, a committee has been formed to review writing services across campus, as Ali reported. This committee will report to GFC after finishing consultations and review.

I am happy to answer any questions or comments that you might have regarding this report. Also I would be more than happy to discuss any suggestions or concerns on any academic related issue that you may have.

Thanks,

Firouz Khodayari, GSA Vice-President Academic

*Please find below a list of meetings I attended between September 26, 2016 to October 24, 2016. I was away at a conference from Monday, October 17, 2016 to Friday, October 21, 2016. The meetings were accurate at the time of printing.*

September 27	Unveiling of "For the Public Good"
September 27	Meeting re Leave Policy
September 29	Co-Curricular Record Committee (CCR)
September 30	Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research (FGSR) Meet-and-Greet
September 30	PD Requirements with FGSR
September 30	University Research Policy Committee (URPC)
September 30	MEGSA Election
October 4	Policy Review Committee (PRC)
October 6	Lunch with FGSR, the Ombuds Office, and the Office of Student Conduct and Accountability
October 12	Mandatory Non-Instructional Fees (MNIF) Oversight Committee
October 12	Scholarly Writing Support Consultation
October 13	FGSR Caucus
October 14	Mandatory Non-Instructional Fees (MNIF Subcommittee)

**GSA Vice-President External  
Report to GSA Council for the October 24, 2016 Meeting**

To: GSA Council  
From: Masoud Khademi  
Date: October 21, 2016

Dear Council Colleagues,

Hope you are doing well in these cold and cloudy days. Before getting into the formal report. I wanted to share a moment with you. I am one of those pro-sunshine people who get really excited when they see sunshine, especially during fall and winter. The other morning, after couple of snowy days when I woke up and felt that the sunbeam was falling across my face, I suddenly started smiling. Then I thought to myself that if you have an appreciative attitude in your life, you could always find little moments of happiness here and there, even if we know for a fact that *"Winter is Coming"*.

This month I want to start my report by thanking all graduate students who showed up at the GSA Coffee Breaks this past month. For those of you who might not know, the GSA is hosting a series of coffee breaks in several departments. The interesting part of these GSA Coffee Breaks for me was that, it provided me with the opportunity to talk to grad students in a friendly environment in their own department, to listen to their concerns, and to update them on what we have already done and plan to do on their behalf. So if you have not had the chance to attend a GSA Coffee Break yet I really encourage you to do so.

I have attended Alumni Council and, in that meeting, the President of the Alumni Association (Mary Pat Barry) went over their Strategic Plan for the next two years, and explained their various milestones within the upcoming year. One of the things she mentioned was increasing the level of student engagement by focusing on student leaders. Afterwards, Greg Latham from the Office of the Alumni Relations talked about their plan on how to engage different faculties. They distributed a fact sheet to councillors about some of the departments and how the Alumni Association could collaborate with them.

Furthermore, during the past month, as a member of the Alumni Association Student Council, I adjudicated the Student Engagement grant applications. This grant is allocated to support student group initiatives and it is offered twice a year. This time the amount available was not entirely spent, so there will be some extra money to give out next semester when more applications are received.

One of the other meetings that I have attended this month was the GSA Award Selections Committee (GSA ASC). This was a training session for the adjudication of the 2016 Alberta Graduate Citizenship Award. As you might already know, the deadlines to receive hard and soft copy applications were October 14 and 15 respectively. In the upcoming weeks the GSA ASC will start the adjudication process and then forward the names of the final nominees to the provincial government.

The other meeting that I have attended this past month was the Residence Budget Advisory Committee (RBAC), in the RBAC meeting the proposed residence rates for 2017-2018 were presented which shows a 3% increase in rent for graduate students' residences.

In the few days before the GSA council, I will attend some other meetings such as the Council of Residence Associations (CORA), the Residence Advisory Meeting (RAC), and a meeting between Student Groups Services and the Dean of Student, which I am going to report on at GSA Council.

In the end, just like every other month, if you need more information or have any questions regarding the meetings that I have attended this past month, do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Masoud Khademi, GSA Vice-President External

*Please find below a list of meetings I attended between September 26, 2016 to October 24, 2016. . I was away at a conference from Monday, September 26, 2016 to Friday, September 30, 2016. The meetings were accurate at the time of printing.*

October 3	Interview with K McNeill
October 4	Unwind Your Mind Coffee Break
October 5	Alumni Council
October 6	Lunch with FGSR
October 6	Lunch with FGSR, the Ombuds Office, and the Office of Student Conduct and Accountability
October 12	Residence Budget Advisory Committee (RBAC)
October 13	GSA Awards Selection Committee (GSA ASC)
October 13	Residence Life Task Force
October 12	Scholarly Writing Support Consultation
October 12	Mandatory Non-Instructional Fees (MNIF) Oversight Committee
October 12	Scholarly Writing Support Consultation
October 17	Unwind Your Mind Coffee Break
October 19	Alumni Student Council
October 21	Council of Residence Associations (CORA)
October 21	Board of Governors Luncheon with the Su and the GSA
October 21	Student Groups Services Presentation
October 24	Residence Advisory Meeting (RAC)

**GSA Awards Selection Committee (GSA ASC)  
Report to GSA Council for the October 24, 2016 Meeting**

To: GSA Council  
From: Masoud Khademi  
Date: October 21, 2016

Dear Council Colleagues,

The GSA ASC met on October 13, 2016 for a training session in advance of the adjudication of the 2016 Alberta Graduate Citizenship Award (AGCA) applications. The deadline to receive hard-copy applications was Friday, October 14 at 4:00 PM and for electronic applications was Saturday, October 15 at 12:00 PM. We received 140 applications. The GSA ASC will start the adjudication process in the upcoming weeks and then forward names to the provincial government.

I would be happy to answer any questions you have about the GSA ASC on Monday.

Sincerely,

Masoud Khademi, GSA Vice-President External, and Chair of the GSA Awards Selection Committee

**GSA Vice-President Labour  
Report to GSA Council for the October 24, 2016 Meeting**

To: GSA Council  
From: Sasha van der Klein  
Date: October 21, 2016

Dear Council Colleagues,

The days are running by too fast! The Thursday after GSA Council I will be challenged with my candidacy exam and I still have loads to study. I thought milestones were there to be reached, but this one feels like it's thrown at me at a significant speed instead.

This month we received an update on a case that has been dragging on for half a year already. The update was unfortunately not good news, instead of the changes we hoped for to address the issues, the department took another step away from graduate students. The case involves **discrimination and harassment** against students. With these kinds of serious issues in particular a department should never let graduate students stand-alone. In addition, there are still a couple of ongoing student cases with **funding issues**. Often complicated, but once we get departments to straighten out their offer letters it will give some satisfaction, hopefully.

This month I have also continued my work on the **Sexual Violence Policy** Committee. The deadline for the policy submission is coming up soon, and the Procedures also need to be ready before the new year. In addition to the Policy and Procedures, which are official documents that cannot be changed easily, there will be information documents attached to the Policy and Procedures, which lists, for example options and resources available to the victims of sexual assault and offices victims of sexual assault can go in case they want to defer exams or change their supervisory committee. Finally, the larger steering committee, the **Sexual Assault Response Implementation Committee (SARIC)**, has delegated tasks to each of four working groups. The **"Education and Outreach"**, **"Accountability"**, **"Support"**, and **"Assessment"** working groups each work on the specific recommendations made in the "Review of the University of Alberta's Response to Sexual Assault". The GSA Nominating Committee has elected graduate students to serve on three of these working groups as indicated in their report.

That was October at a glance, hope you don't feel like winter has come too soon. Let me know if you have any questions, and feel free to contact me at any time!

Thanks,

Sasha van der Klein, GSA Vice-President Labour

## 12.1

*Please find below a list of meetings I attended between September 26, 2016 to October 24, 2016. I was away at a conference from Tuesday, October 4, 2016 to Thursday, October 6, 2016. The meetings were accurate at the time of printing.*

September 27	Unveiling of "For the Public Good"
September 27	Meeting re Leave Policy
September 27	Sexual Assault Implementation Policy Committee
September 29	Meeting with Government Stakeholders
October 11	GSA Governance Committee (GSA GC)
October 12	Meeting with a Graduate Student
October 12	Movies for Mental Health
October 13	Sexual Violence Policy Discussion
October 17	Unwind Your Mind Coffee Break
October 17	Helping Individuals at Risk (HIAR) Policy and Procedure Review
October 19	Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research (FGSR) Council
October 20	Board of Governors Luncheon with the GSA and the SU



**GSA Vice-President Student Services  
Report to GSA Council for the October 24, 2016 Meeting**

To: GSA Council  
From: Ali Talaei  
Date: October 21, 2016

Dear Council Colleagues,

Hope all is fine and you are doing well. In the past month, I have attended several meetings and met with various stakeholders. The highlights of which are as follows.

**Campus Food Bank:** There is both good news and bad news regarding the Campus Food Bank (CFB). We have held the AGM and a board meeting and we are preparing for the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Food Bank. The two good news is 1<sup>st</sup>, the selection process for the Board Chair is going smoothly and 2<sup>nd</sup>, while the number of people using the CFB in September has doubled up compared to last September and the CFB has been successful serving them. However, this means that more people on campus are in need of food and a long-term sustainable solution needs to be developed to address that.

**Health and Dental:** We have had our last Health and Dental Town Hall which was well attended. We have compiled the feedback from students and shared it with the Studentcare who are assessing the feasibility of different options on our behalf. Sarah reports on this as well and the discussion will move forward over the next few months pending the conclusion of the Board's review of the Plan in the new year.

**Mandatory Non-Instructional Fees (MNIF):** Last year, the GSA and the Students' Union agreed with University administration to track more transparently how MNIF fees collected from students are spent on different things, including services. Previously, the fees were collected and added to the operational budget. The new MNIF Oversight Committee will aid in a more transparent tracking mechanism. As VP Student Services, I am sitting on the MNIF Advisory and Oversight committees, which are working on developing a new reporting framework.

**Scholarly Writing Support Committee:** As you might be aware (two emails have been sent out to all students), and as reported by Firouz, University administration is trying to conduct an inventory of writing services on campus and, to the extent possible, bring all these services under one umbrella where they could be managed more effectively. In addition, the committee is trying to identify the needs of different focus groups (including graduate students) and make sure that writing services are organized in a way that meets the needs of all stakeholders. If you have any concerns or suggestions, please do not hesitate to contact me at [gsavpsse@ualberta.ca](mailto:gsavpsse@ualberta.ca). Also, there will be town halls in different locations on campus that you are welcomed to attend.

Sincerely,

Ali Talaei, Vice-President Student Services

September 28	General Faculties Council Academic Planning Committee (GFC APC)
September 28	Campus Food Bank (CFB) Board Meeting
September 28	CFB AGM
September 30	Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research (FGSR) Meet-and-Greet
September 30	PD Requirements with FGSR
September 30	Heath and Dental Town Hall
October 4	Unwind Your Mind Coffee Break
October 6	General Faculties Council Committee on the Learning Environment (GFC CLE)
October 6	Lunch with FGSR, the Ombuds Office, and the Office of Student Conduct and Accountability
October 7	Dean of Students
October 12	Scholarly Writing Support Consultation
October 12	Mandatory Non-Instructional Fees (MNIF) Oversight Committee
October 17	2020 Sustainability and Grad Students
October 19	CFB Chair Selection Interviews
October 20	U-Pass Advisory Committee
October 20	Board of Governors Luncheon with the GSA and the SU

**GSA Chief Returning Officer  
Report to GSA Council for the October 24, 2016 Meeting**

To: GSA Council  
From: Carolina Martinez  
Date: October 21, 2016

Dear Council Colleagues,

I met with the GSA Elections and Referenda Committee (GSA ERC) on September 27 and again on October 4, 2016 to discuss proposed changes to GSA Bylaw and Policy as highlighted in the GSA ERC report.

Also, the Deputy Returning Officer (DRO) and I met with the 2014-2015 Chief Returning Officer, Virginia Pimmett, and the 2014-2015, Sean Rah, for a training session on October 7 in advance of the 2017 GSA General Elections.

Thank you,

Carolina Martinez, GSA Chief Returning Officer

**GSA Elections and Referenda Committee (GSA ERC)  
Report to GSA Council for the October 24, 2016 Meeting**

To: GSA Council  
From: Leigh Spanner  
Date: October 21, 2016

Dear Council Colleagues,

The GSA Elections and Referenda (GSA ERC) met on September 27, and on October 4, 2016 to discuss changes to GSA Bylaw and Policy on Elections and Referenda. We will also meet again before these proposed changes (which the GSA Board will also review) will be presented to you in November. In brief, the substantive changes the GSA ERC will be recommending include:

- Creating restrictions for DEOs if they re-run for office or wish to endorse a candidate (ie restricting access to GSA office staff and resources and clarifying that if they wish to endorse a candidate, they must do so as an individual, not as a GSA Officer);
  - Making changes to Referenda Bylaw and Policy to parallel already approved changes to GSA Bylaw and Policy on Elections (ie allowing campaigning during the voting period of a referendum);
  - Distinguishing between campaigning conducted on University physical or electronic property and campaigning conducted off-campus, using non-University physical or electronic property;
  - Adjustments to the scope of responsibilities of the CRO and DRO resulting from the awareness that various forms of campaign materials (such as campaigning done through social media or face-to-face interactions) cannot necessarily be directly overseen by the CRO or DRO;
  - Changes to limitations placed on candidates and Campaign Representatives in a referendum with respect to using mailing lists (ie prohibiting the use of mailing lists moderated by University employees and used to send official University communications, and permitting the use of mailing lists moderated by graduate student groups and departmental GSAs);
  - Provision for campaign materials in languages other than English to be accompanied by an English translation;
  - Reorganization of current “do” and “don’t” lists to place individual items with already existing sections;
- and*
- To parallel previously approved changes to the Officer Portfolios for CRO and DRO and the mandate of the GSA ERC, multiple provisions for them to consult with the GSA ERC during the course of an election or referendum were added.

I look forward to presenting these changes to you in November and welcome any questions or feedback you may have before then.

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

**GSA Executive Director  
Report to GSA Council for the October 24, 2016 Meeting**

To: GSA Council  
From: Courtney Thomas  
Date: October 21, 2016

Dear GSA Council Members,

As is the practice with reports from the Executive Director, each month I will select one main topic of focus. For October, that topic is the list of all the documents that define the GSA as a corporate entity. As a separate corporation from the University under the *Post-Secondary Learning Act*, we have our own infrastructure (we have our own, independent accountant and auditor, and serve as signatories to an array of agreements). Since many of you last saw the below list, you will notice that there have been a few updates/changes. For example, the GSA's agreement with TD Insurance Meloche Monnex was renewed (accompanied by a substantial increase in the sponsorship funding that TD provides to the GSA), after a review of other proposals and renegotiation discussions with TD. Likewise, as previous Executive Director Ellen Schoeck has reported, our lease on our office space in Triffo Hall was up for renewal in 2016, the first of four renewals, and is now next up for renewal in 2021. And, finally, the GSA's agreement with ATB concerning the management of investments is now listed.

Additionally, and as mentioned in Radim's and Sarah's reports, the annual Early Call for Talent and Training, led by the GSA NoC, is now underway. The Get-to-Know Dinner will be held on October 26 and anyone interested in attending is directed to contact [gsanomco@ualberta.ca](mailto:gsanomco@ualberta.ca).

As always, the detailed weekly reports from the management team to the GSA Board are attached for your review.

I am happy to answer any questions.

Best,  
Courtney Thomas, GSA Executive Director

**Documents that Define the GSA as a Corporate Entity**

NAME	SUMMARY	STATUS
<b><i>Agreements with Expiry Dates</i></b>		
Campus Food Bank	Regulates GSA involvement with Food Bank.	GSA gives \$9000/annum to Campus Food Bank. <b>MOU expired April 30, 2015. For 2016-2017, GSAB decided on four payments of \$2500 over 2016-2017.</b>
Graduate Student Assistantship Collective Agreement and Agreement re GSAP and GSSF	Sets out terms of employment for graduate students serving as GTAs, GRAs, and GRAFs, as well as a separate MOU that governs GSSF funds.	<b>Current agreement expires August 31, 2018.</b>
Collective Agreement with NASA covering office staff	Sets out terms of employment for GSA staff.	Renegotiated by the Executive Director and Director of Operations in April

		2012 and 2015. <b>Current agreement expires in 2020.</b>
Graduate Student Assistance Program (GSAP)	Provides for a wide range of personal counselling.	Originally signed December 31, 2010 for a two-year period with the possibility of 4 two-year extensions. Was reviewed and re-signed via email in August 2013. Dependents added in December 2013. <b>Current agreement expired December 31, 2014 but is described by Administration as a rolling plan. Reviewed annually with Administration.</b>
Health and Dental Agreement with Studentcare	Provides for Health and Dental Plan.	Provider changed in 2012. Re-signed in 2014. <b>Current agreement expires August 31, 2020 (renegotiated agreement was signed in October 2014). Review service levels annually. and the GSA Board is currently engaged in a comprehensive review of the Plan.</b>
Liability Insurance	As a separate corporation from the university, we carry our own General Liability insurance and Directors and Officers insurance.	Doubled our liability insurance in 2012. <b>The GSA is not covered for alcohol use. Discussions in 2013-2014 and 2016-2017 with Administration and insurance experts surrounding the creation of an alcohol liability waiver for graduate student groups. General Liability insurance expires May 17, 2017.</b>
North Power Plant and Dewey's	<p><b>2009 Memorandum of Agreement</b> with the Students' Union regarding the operation of Dewey's.</p> <p><b>2010 Memorandum of Understanding</b> with the U of A for use of North Power Plant Space for the Tory Building decant.</p> <p><b>1997 Memorandum of Agreement</b> with the U of A guaranteeing graduate social space in North Power Plant or at another location; <b>2004 Letter of Confirmation</b> on this MoU from the Dean of Students. The space included is the current sustainability offices and</p>	<p><b>Expired August 2012</b> - conversations about use of space are currently ongoing.</p> <p><b>No Expiration</b> - conversation regarding Dewey's/NPP underway as part of this MoA.</p> <p><b>No Expiration</b> - conversation regarding Dewey's/NPP underway as part of this MoA.</p>

	Tory decant space.	
Officers/Directors' Insurance	As a separate corporation from the university, we carry insurance that covers the elected officials, and management.	We doubled our coverage in 2013. We switched brokers in 2016 and signed a new agreement. <b>Current agreement expires January 28, 2017.</b>
Photocopier Lease with Xerox	Covers two photocopiers.	<b>Current agreement expires March 31, 2018.</b>
TDIMM	Provides for group auto and home insurance as well as some funding for GSA events.	Renewed in 2016 for a period of 5 years and with an increase in the sponsorship funds provided by TD. <b>Current agreement expires September 16, 2021. Funding for the TD Student Service Award continues until 2021.</b>
Triffo Hall Lease	Detailed lease covering our use of Triffo office space.	First-ever lease was signed in June 2011; 5-year term, four renewals (three now remaining). <b>Resigned in 2016 and current agreement expires May 30, 2021 (notification of desire to renew must be given 6-12 months before expiry).</b>
U of A Financial Services	Stipulates when GSA receives fees collected by the U of A on our behalf.	Re-negotiated and signed in April 2012. Re-negotiated again in 2013 for the academic years 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016. Re-negotiated again in 2016 for the academic years 2016-2017, 2017-2018, and 2018-2019. <b>Current agreement expires April 30, 2019.</b>
U-PASS Transit Agreement with the U of A	Governs U-PASS.	Referendum held in March 2013. New agreement signed in September 2013. <b>Current agreement expires in 2017 when the U of A agreement with the municipalities expires.</b>
Agreement with the Edmonton, Strathcona County, and St. Albert	Governs U-PASS.	The University signs this agreement with the municipalities and the U of A and the GSA and SU then each sign a separate agreement. <b>Current agreement expires in 2017 and an agreement in principle on renewal must be reached by October 31, 2016 – negotiations are ongoing.</b>

<b>AGREEMENTS WITH NO EXPIRY DATE (ONGOING)</b>		
<b>NAME</b>	<b>SUMMARY</b>	<b>STATUS</b>
Alberta Graduate Provincial Advocacy Council	Society under the <i>Societies Act</i> .	Registered in March 2015 with U of C, U of L and AU GSAs. No expiration date; annual <i>Societies Act</i> filing required. (The former Alberta Graduate Council disbanded in 2013).
ATB Financial Banking	Operating account.	Reviewed with BMO in April 2012. Switched to ATB in 2016 (as they also manage the GSA's investments). Signing authorities reviewed annually. GSA changed banks to ATB starting May 1, 2016; ongoing with no expiry date.
ATB Financial Investments	GICs, investments.	Agreement was signed on April 11, 2016. Reviewed regularly.
CAPS and Writing Resources Centre Agreements	Provides for subsidy of certain CAPS and WRC courses for grad students.	Annual subsidy of \$5500. Reviewed annually.
Ceridian (Payroll)	GSA staff and elected officials are now paid by direct deposit.	Outsourcing is cheaper than in-house production of cheques. Agreement signed May 30, 2011. Ongoing with no expiry date.
U of A Human Resources Direct Deposit	Provides for direct deposit of GSSF allocations to graduate students and T4A production by U of A.	Signed in 2012. Major infrastructure change from cheque processing. Ongoing with no expiry date.
Info Sharing with Studentcare and University	Allows Studentcare access to graduate students' personal information for strictly defined purposes regarding the GSA's Health and Dental Plan.	Reviewed with the U of A Privacy Officer and Studentcare in 2012 and new agreement signed on May 3, 2013. Ongoing with no expiry date; GSA gives notice of 6 months if wanting to terminate.
PAW Centre	Sets out terms of operation of PAW. SU also a signatory to the Agreement.	Referendum held, agreement signed in April 2012. Need to negotiate business terms with SU ( <b>discussion began in December 2013 and continues but should be concluded soon – final drafts are under review</b> ).
Personal Information Sharing Agreement with the U of A	Allows the GSA access to specified graduate students' personal information for strictly defined purposes, e.g. emailing the newsletter, elections.	Signed in May 2013. Ongoing with no expiry date.



Student Financial Services (formerly UBEF)	Student Financial Services administers the GSA's Emergency Bursary program. GSA distributes funds.	2006 AEGS Memorandum of Settlement between GSA/BoG provides for establishment of bursary program with terms of reference developed by GSA and "distributed through the University Bursary Program."
--	--	---

<i>Other Corporate Documents</i>		
<b>NAME</b>	<b>SUMMARY</b>	<b>STATUS</b>
Audit (based on GSA Council-approved budget)	As a separate corporation from the University, we hire our own auditor. Requirement of the <i>Post-Secondary Learning Act</i> .	Audit occurs annually in May-June. Audit field workers are typically on-site in late May, early June.
GSA Council Bylaw and Policy	Enabled by the <i>Post-Secondary Learning Act</i> .	Comprehensive review began in 2013 and continues. Integrated document completed in October 2016.
Management Contracts with ED/Letters of Appointment	Sets out terms of employment for managers.	The ED's contract and other standard appointment letters for managers have been reviewed by our lawyers.
Referenda Master File	All referenda questions that actively impact graduate students (eg UPASS, PAW Centre, GSAP, GSA Health and Dental Plan, etc).	Compiled and filed. Ongoing as referenda arise.
Tuition Agreement Letters	Letters from the University stating the tuition increases for the upcoming academic year.	Received annually.

### Management Report to the GSA Board, September 28, 2016

The following issues have dominated management's attention in the week since the last GSA Board meeting on September 21, 2016:

#### Strategic

- **Main Issues Dealt With in the Past Week:** GSA Council meeting; action arising from a recent GSA Elections and Referenda Committee meeting and planning for the next meeting; planning for a GSA Governance Committee meeting; planning for the fall PD event (sending invitations to various PD providers/resource hubs); delivery of the Unwind Your Mind GSA Coffee Breaks (first one was September 22 and approximately 10 people attended); questions from graduate students concerning the GSA Health and Dental Plan; ongoing review of the Plan; developing a schedule for the 2016 Early Call; right-to-strike legislation and associated consultation process, arranging a meeting with representatives from various residence associations concerning their work and how it is affected by Residence Services' decision to not collect association fees (in progress); preparing for Friday's Health and Dental Town Hall
- **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 the GSA Governance Committee reviewed it for the third time over the summer – additional changes have been made and a GSA Governance Committee meeting is scheduled for October 4; ongoing review of GSA Bylaw and Policy on elections and referenda associated with GSA Elections and Referenda Committee meetings); review of Board Policies on succession for the Chair of the GSA Board and for President (amendments pending).
- **Graduate Student Groups:** ongoing relationship building with Student Group Services and discussions concerning collection of fees for residence associations and SU initiatives concerning student groups.

#### Grants and Operations

- Transfer of content to **Sitecore 3** (to be completed by November) and the possible creation of a **potential service agreement with IST** (will be following up shortly with IST). Development of an evergreening plan for office computer equipment.
- 878 likes (up 3 from September 21). Our Facebook posts reached 850 users this week and our "post engagement" count was 744. Twitter = 658 followers (up 6 from September 21). Our tweets earned 263 "impressions" over the last week.
- **Grants processing:**

	Total Amount Available This Period	Total Amount Remaining This Period (Post-Processing)	Number of New Applications Since Last GSAB	Total Number of Applications This Period
<b>ATAs</b>	\$91,636.14	\$2,163.89	11	167 (15 pending processing)
<b>CCGs</b>	\$70,852.35	\$5,852.35 <b>CLOSED</b>	0	43 (0 pending processing)
<b>ASGAs</b>	\$3,562.50	\$0 <b>CLOSED</b>	0	3 (0 pending processing)
<b>EBs</b>	\$130,625 (no periods)	\$117,504.00	0	8 (0 pending processing)

#### Week in Review – Office Operations:

- Supporting the **work of the GSA Nominating Committee** (planning for Early Call and preparation of related materials, vacancies on the Dean of Native Studies Selection Committee, Dean of Science Review Committee, Student Library Advisory Committee, and FGSR Council).
- Supporting the **work of the GSA Elections and Referenda Committee.**
- Delivery of the **Unwind Your Mind GSA Coffee Breaks** and planning for the fall **PD event.**
- Compiling **statistics on grants** - thinking about how amounts break down with an eye to reviewing distribution across fiscal periods, process, percentage distribution of GSSF, etc.
- Receipt of applications for the **Alberta Graduate Citizenship Award** and preparing for adjudications by the GSA Awards Selection Committee.

### Management Report to the GSA Board, October 5, 2016

The following issues have dominated management's attention in the week since the last GSA Board meeting on September 28, 2016:

#### Strategic

- **Main Issues Dealt With in the Past Week:** Action arising from a recent GSA Elections and Referenda Committee meeting and planning for the next meeting; planning for a GSA Governance Committee meeting; planning for the fall PD event (sending invitations to various PD providers/resource hubs); delivery of the Unwind Your Mind GSA Coffee Breaks (second one was October 4 and approximately 18 people attended); questions from graduate students concerning the GSA Health and Dental Plan; ongoing review of the Plan; right-to-strike legislation and associated consultation process, arranging a meeting with representatives from various residence associations concerning their work and how it is affected by Residence Services' decision to not collect association fees (in progress)
- **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 the GSA Governance Committee reviewed it for the third time over the summer – additional changes have been made and a GSA Governance Committee meeting is scheduled for October 11; ongoing review of GSA Bylaw and Policy on elections and referenda associated with GSA Elections and Referenda Committee meetings); review of the GSA Nominating Committee Composition (a draft has been prepared and the GSA Nominating Committee will review at their October 18 meeting before the proposal is reviewed by the GSA Governance Committee); review of Board Policies on succession for the Chair of the GSA Board and for President (amendments pending).
- **Graduate Student Groups:** ongoing relationship building with Student Group Services and discussions concerning collection of fees for residence associations and SU initiatives concerning student groups.

#### Grants and Operations

- Transfer of content to **Sitecore 3** (to be completed by November) and the possible creation of a **potential service agreement with IST** (will be following up shortly with IST). Development of an evergreening plan for office computer equipment.
- 879 likes (up 1 from September 28). Our Facebook posts reached 242 users this week and our "post engagement" count was 39. Twitter = 660 followers (up 2 from September 28). Our tweets earned 833 "impressions" over the last week.
- **Grants processing – A new funding period opened on October 1, the table below shows grants processed up to September 30 and the next management report will show GSSF funds allocated in the new granted period:**

	Total Amount Available This Period	Total Amount Remaining This Period (Post-Processing)	Number of New Applications Since Last GSAB	Total Number of Applications This Period
<b>ATAs</b>	\$91,636.14	\$0 <b>CLOSED</b>	15	167 (0 pending processing)
<b>CCGs</b>	\$70,852.35	\$5,852.35 <b>CLOSED</b>	0	43 (0 pending processing)
<b>ASGAs</b>	\$3,562.50	\$0 <b>CLOSED</b>	0	3 (0 pending processing)
<b>EBs</b>	\$130,625 (no periods)	\$117,504.00	0	8 (0 pending processing)

#### Week in Review – Office Operations:

- Supporting the **work of the GSA Nominating Committee** (planning for Early Call and preparation of related materials, vacancies on the GSA Elections and Referenda Committee, GSA Appeals and Complaints Board, and FGSR Council).
- Supporting the **work of the GSA Elections and Referenda Committee**.
- Delivery of the **Unwind Your Mind GSA Coffee Breaks** and planning for the fall **PD event**.
- Receipt of applications for the **Alberta Graduate Citizenship Award** and preparing for adjudications by the GSA Awards Selection Committee.

### Management Report to the GSA Board, October 12, 2016

The following issues have dominated management's attention in the week since the last GSA Board meeting on October 5, 2016:

#### Strategic

- **Main Issues Dealt With in the Past Week:** Budget building for the 2017-2018 fiscal year; quarterly financial statements; action arising from a recent GSA Elections and Referenda Committee meeting and planning for the next meeting (committee is meeting regularly throughout September and October to finalize proposed changes to GSA Bylaw and Policy on elections and referenda); action arising from a recent GSA Governance Committee meeting; planning for the fall PD event (finalizing list of PD providers/resource hubs to attend, drafting a blurb for the newsletter, website, and social media); ongoing delivery of the Unwind Your Mind GSA Coffee Breaks; support for the GSA Board's review of the GSA Health and Dental Plan (internal meetings, phone call with Studentcare, exploration of a survey to all graduate students); right-to-strike legislation and associated consultation process, preparing for a meeting with representatives from various residence associations concerning their work; preparing for the first mailing of GSA Council material in advance of the October 24 meeting; preparing for the GSA ASC to adjudicate applications for the Alberta Graduate Citizenship Awards (GSA ASC training session, scheduling adjudication sessions for members, office receipt of applications).
- **Bylaw and Policy Review:** a review of all Bylaws and Policies for inconsistencies and errors and integration of the two (a draft was reviewed for the fourth time by the GSA Governance Committee and will hopefully soon be posted on the GSA website – GSA Council members will also be offered the opportunity to provide feedback); ongoing review of GSA Bylaw and Policy on elections and referenda associated with GSA Elections and Referenda Committee meetings; review of the GSA Nominating Committee Composition (a draft has been prepared and the GSA Nominating Committee will review it at their October 18 meeting before the proposal is reviewed by the GSA Governance Committee); review of Board Policies on succession for the Chair of the GSA Board and for President (amendments pending).
- **Graduate Student Groups:** ongoing relationship building with Student Group Services and discussions concerning SU initiatives concerning student groups.

#### Grants and Operations

- Transfer of content to **Sitecore 3** (planned to be completed by November but may need to carry forward to December pending office workloads) and the possible creation of a **potential service agreement with IST** (will be following up with IST this month).
- 888 likes (up 5 from October 5). Our Facebook posts reached 809 users this week and our "post engagement" count was 177. Twitter = 664 followers (up 4 from October 5). Our tweets earned 651 "impressions" over the last week.

	Total Amount Available This Period	Total Amount Remaining This Period (Post-Processing)	Number of New Applications Since Last GSAB	Total Number of Applications This Period
<b>ATAs</b>	\$91,636.14	\$72,985.03	32	32 (45 pending processing)
<b>CCGs</b>	\$94,989.85	\$23,989.85 <b>CLOSED</b>	48	48 (48 pending processing)
<b>ASGAs</b>	\$3,562.50	\$2,062.5	1	1 (1 pending processing)
<b>EBs</b>	\$100,625 (no periods)	\$117,504.00	0	8 (0 pending processing)

#### Week in Review – Office Operations:

- Supporting the **work of the GSA Nominating Committee** (planning for Early Call and preparation of related materials, AFNS GSA election, delegates for three working groups of the Sexual Assault Response Implementation Committee (SARIC)).
- Supporting the **work of the GSA Elections and Referenda Committee and the GSA Governance Committee**.
- Delivery of the **Unwind Your Mind GSA Coffee Breaks** and planning for the fall **PD event**.
- Receipt of applications for the **Alberta Graduate Citizenship Award** and preparing for adjudications by the GSA Awards Selection Committee.

### Management Report to the GSA Board, October 19, 2016

The following issues have dominated management's attention in the week since the last GSA Board meeting on October 12, 2016:

#### Strategic

- **Main Issues Dealt With in the Past Week:** Preparing for Early Call 101 sessions; meeting with senior SU staff to share information and establishing a regular meeting schedule; budget building for the 2017-2018 fiscal year; quarterly financial statements and planning for an upcoming GSA Budget and Finance Committee meeting; planning for the next meeting of the GSA Elections and Referenda Committee (committee is meeting regularly throughout October to finalize proposed changes to GSA Bylaw and Policy on elections and referenda in advance of the November GSA Council meeting); planning for an upcoming GSA Governance Committee meeting to review editorial changes to GSA Bylaw and Policy; planning for the fall PD event (now collecting RSVPs – 9 received thus far and 6 PD providers confirmed); ongoing delivery of the Unwind Your Mind GSA Coffee Breaks; support for the GSA Board's review of the GSA Health and Dental Plan; right-to-strike legislation and associated consultation process (review of the ab-GPAC submission meeting with representatives from various residence associations concerning their work (the issue of residence associations is a component of a series of interconnected issues involving student groups); preparing for the second mailing of GSA Council material in advance of the October 24 meeting; preparing for the GSA ASC to adjudicate applications for the Alberta Graduate Citizenship Awards (139 applications received, up from the 123 received last year).
- **Bylaw and Policy Review:** a review of all Bylaws and Policies for inconsistencies and errors (the GSA Governance Committee will meet to consider a series of editorial amendments); ongoing review of GSA Bylaw and Policy on elections and referenda associated with GSA Elections and Referenda Committee meetings; review of the GSA Nominating Committee Composition (a draft has been prepared and the GSA Nominating Committee reviewed it at their October 18 meeting, the GSA Governance Committee will now consider it); review of Board Policies on succession for the Chair of the GSA Board and for President (amendments pending).
- **Graduate Student Groups:** Lots of thinking and discussion of issues related to student groups; ongoing relationship building with Student Group Services; discussions concerning SU initiatives concerning student groups.

#### Grants and Operations

- Transfer of content to **Sitecore 3** (planned to be completed by November but may need to carry forward to December pending office workloads) and the possible creation of a **potential service agreement with IST** (IST will be providing a cost quote in the coming weeks).
- 889 likes (up 1 from October 12). Our Facebook posts reached 972 users this week and our "post engagement" count was 84. Twitter = 669 followers (up 5 from October 12). Our tweets earned 1,400 "impressions" over the last week.

	Total Amount Available This Period	Total Amount Remaining This Period (Post-Processing)	Number of New Applications Since Last GSAB	Total Number of Applications This Period
<b>ATAs</b>	\$91,636.14	\$62,297.23	23	55 (26 pending processing)
<b>CCGs</b>	\$94,989.85	\$23,989.85 <b>CLOSED</b>	0	48 (48 pending processing)
<b>ASGAs</b>	\$3,562.50	\$2,062.5	0	1 (1 pending processing)
<b>EBS</b>	\$100,625 (no periods)	\$87,504.00	0	8 (0 pending processing)

#### Week in Review – Office Operations:

- Supporting the **work of the GSA Nominating Committee** (planning for Early Call and preparation of related materials, AFNS GSA election, etc).
- Supporting the **work of the GSA Elections and Referenda Committee and the GSA Governance Committee.**
- Delivery of the **Unwind Your Mind GSA Coffee Breaks** and planning for the fall **PD event.**
- Receipt of applications for the **Alberta Graduate Citizenship Award** and preparing for adjudications by the GSA Awards Selection Committee (see above).