

## GSA Council Meeting CONSOLIDATED AGENDA

Monday, September 26, 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 26 September 2016 Agenda
3. Approval of the Minutes from the 18 July 2016 GSA Council Meeting  
*Attachment:*
  - i. Minutes from the 18 July 2016 GSA Council Meeting **3.0 - 3.7**
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)

#### *Attachments:*

- i. Cover Letter **6.0**
- ii. Outline of Issue **6.1 - 6.2**
- iii. GSA Council Quorum Double Column **6.3 - 6.4**

## Elections, Appointments, Special Business, Updates

### 7. GSA Council Elections

**Radim Barta (Administrative Chair of the GSA Nominating Committee) will present the item**

- i. Dean of Science Review Committee  
*Attachment:*
  - Nominees for the Dean of Science Review Committee **7.0 – 7.2**
- ii. Dean of Native Studies Selection Committee  
*Attachment:*
  - Nominees for the Dean of Native Studies Selection Committee **7.3**
- iii. GSA Standing Committees
  - a. GSA Awards Selection Committee (5 to 7 vacancies)  
*Attachment:*
    - Nominees for the GSA Awards Selection Committee **7.4**
  - b. GSA Governance Committee (1 vacancy)  
*Attachment:*
    - Nominees for the GSA Governance Committee **7.5**

### For Discussion:

### 8. GSA Health and Dental Plan

**Sarah Ficko (GSA President) will present the item**

*Attachments:*

- i. Overview of the GSA Health and Dental Plan 2016-2017 **8.0 - 8.2**

### 9. Right to Strike Consultation

**Sarah Ficko (GSA President) and Sasha van der Klein (GSA Vice-President Labour) will present the item**

## Reports

### 10. President (**Sarah Ficko, GSA President**)

- i. President's Report **10.0 - 10.3**
- ii. GSA Board **10.4**
- iii. GSA Budget and Finance Committee **10.5**
- iv. GSA Governance Committee **10.6**

### 11. GSA Nominating Committee

- i. GSA Nominating Committee Report (**Radim Barta, GSA Nominating Committee Administrative Chair**) **11.0 – 11.2**

### 12. Vice-President Academic (**Firouz Khodayari, GSA Vice-President Academic**)

- i. Vice-President Academic's Report **12.0 – 12.1**

### 13. Vice-President External (**Masoud Khademi, GSA Vice-President External**)

- i. Vice-President External's Report **13.0 – 13.1**
- ii. GSA Awards Selection Committee (**no meetings this reporting period**)

### 14. Vice-President Labour (**Sasha van der Klein, GSA Vice-President Labour**)

- i. Vice-President Labour's Report **14.0 – 14.1**
- ii. GSA Negotiating Committee (**no meetings this reporting period**)
- iii. GSA Labour Relations Committee (**no meetings this reporting period**)

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|--|--------------------|
| <b>15. Vice-President Student Services (Alireza Talaei, GSA Vice-President Student Services)</b>                             | <b>15.0 – 15.1</b> |
| i. Vice-President Student Services' Report   |                    |
| ii. GSA Student Affairs Advisory Committee (Joint Chair: Vice-President External) <b>(no meetings this reporting period)</b> |                    |
| <b>16. Senator (Jane Traynor, GSA Senator)</b>   | <b>16.0</b>        |
| i. Senator's Report  |                    |
| <b>17. Speaker (Sulya Fenichel, GSA Speaker)</b>   | <b>17.0</b>        |
| i. Speaker's Report  |                    |
| <b>18. Chief Returning Officer (Carolina Martinez, GSA Chief Returning Officer)</b>  |                    |
| i. Chief Returning Officer's Report <b>(no written report at this time)</b>  |                    |
| <b>19. GSA Elections and Referenda Committee (Leigh Spanner, GSA Elections and Referenda Committee Chair)</b>                |                    |
| i. GSA Elections and Referenda Committee Report  | <b>19.0</b>        |
| <b>20. GSA Management (Courtney Thomas, GSA Executive Director)</b>  |                    |
| i. Executive Director's Report   | <b>20.0 – 20.4</b> |

**Question Period**

- 21. Written Questions (none at this time)**
- 22. Oral Questions**

**Adjournment**

**GSA Council Meeting MINUTES**  
Monday, July 18, 2016 at 6:00 pm  
2-100 University Hall, Van Vliet Complex

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

Sarah Ficko (President)	Ned Onwugbufor (Councillor-at-Large)	Roshan Shariff (Computing Science)	Jay Friesen (MLCS)
Firouz Khodayari (VP Academic)	Robert Reklow (Councillor-at-Large)	Nicole Meyer (Earth & Atmo Sciences)	Mischa Bandet (Neuroscience)
Sasha van der Klein (VP Labour)	Dasha Smirnow (Councillor-at-Large)	Atase Adjarho (Ed Policy Studies)	Radim Barta (Oncology)
Masoud Khademi (VP External)	Ahmed Najar (Councillor-at-Large)	Amanda Radil (Ed Psych)	Brabhjot Bedi (Paediatrics)
Ali Taleai (VP Student Services)	Sabrina Lopresti (AFNS)	Quinn Barber (Electrical & Computer Engineering)	Andrew Woodman (Pharmacology)
Sulya Fenichel (Speaker)	Christina Poletto (Anthropology)	Linda-Rae Carson (Elementary Education)	Hanin Aburasayn (Pharmacy & Pharmaceutical Sciences)
Preshit Verma (Deputy Speaker)	Michael Woolley (Art & Design)	Neil Prather (History & Classics)	Vladimir Dikic (Philosophy)
Carolyn Martinez Sanchez (CRO)	Swai Mon Khaing (Biochemistry)	Jocelyn Beyer (Humanities Computing)	Will Giang (Physics)
Darcy Bemister (DRO)	Michele DuVal (Biological Sciences)	Faisal Hirji; Ruqayyah Almirzaq (Lab Medicine & Pathology)	Karen Du (Psychology)
Michelle Campbell (Councillor-at-Large)	Hillary Sweet (Biomedical Engineering)	Graham Feeny (Linguistics)	Maryse Ndilu Kiese (Religious Studies)
Alicia Cappello (Councillor-at-Large)	Trent Nabe (Business MBA)	Michelle Michelle (Math & Statistical Sciences)	Ryan Stanfield (Renewable Resources)
Colin More (Councillor-at-Large)	Katie Lafreniere; Yi Fang (Business PhD)	Hirad Soltani (Mech Eng)	Tasha Jayatunge; Kelsi Barkway (Sociology)
Nicole Noel (Councillor-at-Large)	Beth Richardson (Cell Bio)	Ben Kostiuk (Medical Microbiology & Immunology)	Antonio Bruni (Surgery)
Phil Oel (Councillor-at-Large)	Darian Brennekamp (Communication Science & Disorders)	Melissa Silva (Medicine)	

**GUESTS:** Tom Gee (GSA Auditor, Collins Barrow LLP)

Speaker S Fenichel in the Chair.

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

**Roll Call****1. Roll Call of GSA Council Members in Attendance****Approval of Agenda****2. Approval of the 18 July 2016 Consolidated Agenda**

Prepared by J Tanguay and F Robertson for the Council Meeting of 18 July 2016

Macintosh HD:Users:gsaad:Google Drive:320 - Council:Meetings:2016-2017:September 2016:First Mailing:GSA Council 26 September 2016 Item

3 - Minutes GSA Council 18 July 2016.docx

Members had before them the 18 July 2016 Consolidated Agenda, which had been previously distributed on 15 July 2016. N Prather **MOVED**; S van der Klein **SECONDED**.

Motion **PASSED** unanimously.

## Approval of Minutes

### 3. Minutes from the 20 June 2016 GSA Council Meeting

Members had before them the 20 June 2016 GSA Council Minutes, which had been previously distributed on 8 July 2016. A Talaei **MOVED**; F Khodayari **SECONDED**.

M Campbell requested an amendment to the Minutes to reflect that she was present at GSA Council on 20 June 2016 but this was not reflected in the attendance table in the 20 June 2016 GSA Council Minutes.

Motion **PASSED**. One Opposed.

## Changes in GSA Council Membership

### 4. Changes in GSA Council Membership

#### i. Introduction of New Councillors

This was the first meeting for a number of Councillors: C Poletto (Anthropology); H Sweet (Biomedical Engineering); K Lafreniere (Business PhD); Q Barber (Electrical & Computer Engineering); A Woodman (Pharmacology); H Aburasayn (Pharmacy & Pharmaceutical Sciences); V Dikic (Philosophy)

#### ii. Farewell to Departing Councillors

## Councillor Announcements

### 5. Councillor Announcements

P Oel, Councillor-at-Large, noted that as part of Faculty Club's outreach efforts to graduate students, they were trying to organize a "Pint of Science" night, similar to the structure of Nerd Nite events. He noted that the idea was to have some graduate students present their thesis for the interested lay public around a beer. He noted that for those interested in "Pint of Science" but intimidated by larger audiences, perhaps the smaller format of "Pint of Science" would be a good first step and added that interested parties could liaise with him at [aoel@ualberta.ca](mailto:aoel@ualberta.ca).

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

### 6. 2015-2016 GSA Audited Financial Statements

E Schoeck (GSA Executive Director and Financial Team Lead) and S Ficko (GSA President) presented the item and introduced the guest, T Gee (GSA Auditor, Collins Barrow LLP).

**MOTION BEFORE COUNCIL:** That the GSA Council **RECEIVE FOR INFORMATION** the 2015-2016 GSA Audited Financial Statements.

E Schoeck noted that the GSA, as per the requirements of the *Post-Secondary Learning Act*, required a yearly audit. She indicated that last year the GSA changed audit firms but kept the same auditor, one who understood the history and operations of the GSA. She also noted that, this year, the GSA had had two field auditors in the office for three days and that they had access to everything and asked a series of questions (although fewer than in previous years). She reported that, when the field auditors had concluded their work, she and the GSA President met with the auditors to discuss the results and so that all parties could sign off on the audit before it was taken to the GSA Budget and Finance Committee, the GSA Board, and GSA Council before onward transmission to the Board of Governors. E Schoeck next noted that the recommendations to management from the auditor were minimal; while the GSA has made significant progress, especially related to its budget and financial controls, it was important to keep improving and stay on track.

S Ficko further explained that after the auditor came to the office, the audit was presented to the GSA Budget Finance Committee and then was sent to GSA Board. She noted that T Gee, the GSA's auditor, attended both these meetings to explain the audit in-depth and answer any questions. S Ficko then introduced T Gee.

T Gee expressed that he was always delighted to present at these meetings and that he was an alumnus of the U of A MBA program. He then reviewed the audited financial statements and highlighted some main points. T Gee noted firstly that the first few pages were standard for an independent auditor's report and that they stated that the information presented was compliant with standards for not-for-profit organizations. He indicated that over the past three years the overall financial management of the GSA had really improved and that around the time when E Schoeck started as the ED, new processes were put in place. He added that the GSA needed to maintain these improvements. T Gee next noted that the overall position of the GSA had remained strong and that it had improved a bit over the past year. He noted that the Assets to Liability ration had improved and indicated that, ideally, not-for-profits have a 2:1 ratio and the GSA was not there yet but it was moving closer to this ratio every year. He also noted that in both 2015 and 2016 there was enough cash set aside to cover restricted funds.

T Gee next commented that the Statement of Operations for 2015 and 2016 saw a modest operating surplus and that the current year was a little bit better than the previous one. He noted that this was a good improvement from five years ago, when the GSA had operating deficits. He added that over the last few years there had been consistency and not a lot of volatility or surprises, which was positive T Gee then commented on the Statement of Change, noting that over the past few years some reserves had been established/further grown, such as the Legal Defense Fund, the Stabilization Fund, and the Human Resources Fund. He noted that the Legal Defense Fund needed to be increased as a lawsuit could be very expensive.

T Gee then noted that the Statement of Cash Flow showed a decrease due to investments the GSA made and that this represented moving money from one cash pocket to another cash pocket. T Gee also noted that the Operating Activities saw a pause in cash inflow. He added that the GSA was able to generate a positive cash inflow. T Gee concluded by stating that the GSA's financial position was good and, operationally, it was a good year.

T Gee opened the floor for questions. There were none.

On the topic of investments, E Schoeck added that the GSA used to have money held by the University in its Unitized Endowment Pool and that last year the University turned this money over to the GSA and that the GSA had invested it with the assistance of an investment manager and expected the returns to be at least as good if not better than when the funds were with the University.

**MOTION:** That the GSA Council **RECEIVE FOR INFORMATION** the 2015-2016 GSA Audited Financial Statements. S Ficko **MOVED**. R Barta **SECONDED**.

Motion **PASSED** unanimously

## 7. GSA 2016-2017 Budget and Expenditure (Quarterly) Report

**MOTION BEFORE COUNCIL:** That the GSA Council **RECEIVE FOR INFORMATION** the GSA 2016-2017 Budget and Expenditure (Quarterly) Report.

E Schoeck presented the quarterly report and noted that the report only presented two months of expenditure. She added that this report was unavailable six years ago when the GSA did not have good financial reporting mechanisms in place. She also noted that for the past two or three years the GSA has been running a positive balance. She indicated that some lines of the budget were overspent while others were underspent but that the total evened out. She mentioned that one line that was underspent on was insurance as the GSA recently changed brokers and now had the same broker, who was based in Edmonton, for all policies (General Liability and Directors and Officers Liability). She noted that some of the lines that were overspent were the Awards Night line as, due to a last minute change in dates, two Awards Nights were occurring in the same fiscal year (so Awards Night was underspent in 2015-2016 but overspent in 2016-2017) and the IT line, as the GSA office had had a on-site review

and associated tasks in order to raise this aspect of the GSA's operations to University minimal standards. She noted that there was a narrative attached to the report with further details for every line and introduced the other members of the Financial Team: Shirley Ball, GSA Accountant; Dorte Sheik, GSA Financial Manager; Heather Hogg, GSA Director of Operations; and Courtney Thomas, GSA Director of Services and Governance. She noted in closing that the financial team was always focused on the GSA's financial and organizational health. S Ficko added that the GSA 2016-2017 Budget and Expenditure (Quarterly) Report was reviewed by the GSA Budget and Finance Committee and the GSA Board.

**MOTION:** That the GSA Council **RECEIVE FOR INFORMATION** the GSA 2016-2017 Budget and Expenditure (Quarterly) Report. S Ficko **MOVED**. A Talei **SECONDED**.

Motion **PASSED** unanimously

#### 8. Second Reading: GSA Rolling Budget and Business Plan: Proposed Changes to GSA Bylaw and GSA Policy

**MOTION BEFORE COUNCIL:** That the GSA Council, on the recommendation of the GSA Budget and Finance Committee and the GSA Board, **APPROVE** proposed changes to GSA Bylaw and GSA Policy to move from a five-year rolling budget and business plan to a three-year one, as noted in the attached double column document and effective upon the second reading by GSA Council in the case of GSA Bylaw and immediately in the case of GSA Policy.

S Fenichel noted that this was the second reading of the proposed changes to GSA Bylaw. There were no questions.

**MOTION:** That the GSA Council, on the recommendation of the GSA Budget and Finance Committee and the GSA Board, **APPROVE** proposed changes to GSA Bylaw and GSA Policy to move from a five-year rolling budget and business plan to a three-year one, as noted in the attached double column document and effective upon the second reading by GSA Council in the case of GSA Bylaw and immediately in the case of GSA Policy. S Ficko **MOVED**. A Capello **SECONDED**.

Motion **PASSED** unanimously

#### 9. GSA Council Elections

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

M DuVal explained that GSA Council was voting for a graduate student to sit on a Dean Selection Committee for two faculties, Education and Medicine & Dentistry. She noted that these vacancies were filled according to the General Faculties Council procedures for Dean Selection Committees so they were a little bit different than what GSA Council might be used to. She noted that the procedures stated that every department from each faculty was to select a nominee and submit that nominee for the election. She added that all nominees were invited to speak at GSA Council but, according to GSA practice, if one person could not attend to speak, no candidates would speak and that, as not all the nominees could attend, the nominees would not be invited to address GSA Council. T Nabe asked why that was GSA practice and M DuVal explained that, in the interest of fairness, if someone was not available to speak that nominee was at a clear disadvantage.

##### i. Dean Selection Committees

- a) Nominees for Dean of Education Selection Committee  
Amanda Radil (Educational Psychology)  
Katie Bartee (Library and Information Studies)
- b) Nominees for Dean of Medicine and Dentistry Selection Committee  
Luciana Da Silveira Cavalcante (Laboratory Medicine and Pathology)  
Lionel Jensen (Medical Microbiology and Immunology)  
Mackenzie Coatham (Obstetrics)

Prabhjot Bedi (Pediatrics)  
Antonio Bruni (Surgery)

ii. GSA Standing Committees

M DuVal explained that N Mehta was stepping down after serving as a long-time member of the GSA Nominating Committee and thanked him for his service. She noted that the item before GSA Council was to approve the new member of the GSA Nominating Committee. She added that all the nominations received had been forwarded to GSA Council, without pre-approval by the GSA NoC, so the GSA Nominating Committee had no part in the decision-making process. Speaker clarified that communications concerning nominations were sent out in the Speaker's name and the GSA Executive Director's name.

**MOTION BEFORE COUNCIL:** That GSA Council **DECLARED ELECTED** on the GSA Nominating Committee the GSA Council member below:

Nominees for GSA Nominating Committee:  
Antonio Bruni (Surgery)

**MOTION:** That GSA Council **DECLARED ELECTED** on the GSA Nominating Committee the GSA Council member below. M DuVal **MOVED**. M Khademi **SECONDED**.

Motion **PASSED**. 1 Abstention.

**For Discussion**

No items at this time.

**For Information**

No items at this time

**Reports**

**10. President**

**i. President's Report:**

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 15 July 2016. In addition, S Ficko stated that the first GSA roundtable discussion happened on July 11 and two graduate students attended. She noted that a exercise similar to the one GSA Council participated in at the last meeting had been held at the roundtable and expressed hope that more graduate students would attend the next roundtable on August 4.

S Ficko next noted that that there would be a forthcoming change in the assessment of Mandatory Non-Instructional Fees (MNIF) as the MNIF structure has been simplified and consolidated into new categories (Athletic and Recreation Fee, Student Health and Wellness Fee, and Student Academic Support Fee). She added that the new assessment system came with an increase in accountability and transparency (oversee by a newly created MNIF oversight committee) and that this restructuring would not change the amount of MNIFs paid.

Finally S Ficko reported that E Schoeck would be stepping down as the GSA Executive Director at the end of the summer. She noted that E Schoeck had a lot of knowledge and that it would be a big transition. She also noted that in the process of hiring a new Executive Director she had had lot of support and had reached out to past GSA Presidents. She noted that, after an interview with the GSA Board, it was determined that C Thomas, current GSA Director of Services and Governance would be hired as the new GSA Executive Director. She added that C Thomas would start in this position on September 1, 2015.

**ii. GSA Board**

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 15 July 2016. The report stood as submitted.

**iii. GSA Budget and Finance Committee**



Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 15 July 2016. The report stood as submitted.

**iv. GSA Governance Committee**

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 15 July 2016. The report stood as submitted.

**11. GSA Nominating Committee**

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 15 July 2016. The report stood as submitted and, in addition, M DuVal stated that the nominations for the Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry Council were currently open. She also noted that the GSA had been approached to find a representative to serve on the Bookstore Advisory Committee and asked GSA Council members if they used the Bookstore and it what ways. She added that if they had any feedback about the Bookstore they could contact the GSA VP Student Services, A Talaei, at gsavpsse@ualberta.ca.

**12. Vice-President Academic**

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

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 15 July 2016. The report stood as submitted and, in addition, F Khodayari highlighted the Graduate Student Internship Program, which created internship opportunities for graduate students. He added that he suggested allowing graduate students to organize their own internship and that the advisor to the program, Andrea Spevak, liked the idea but, nonetheless, internships found by graduate students would be vetoed by the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research. He mentioned that the maximum rate of compensation for internships in the program was \$25/hour.

**13. Vice-President External**

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

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 15 July 2016. The report stood as submitted.

**ii. GSA Awards Selection Committee**

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 15 July 2016. The report stood as submitted and, in addition, S van der Klein noted that she attended the Implementation Steering Committee of the Review of the University of Alberta's Response to Sexual Assault. She added that this review began in February and that, following this review, one committee was created to review the current policy regarding sexual assault and one was created to implement the other recommendations found in the report; the latter was the one she had attended. The mandate of this committee was to guide and oversee four working groups, each one aiming at one cluster of recommendations. She added that the working groups will need graduate students to serve on them and asked that if there were any graduate students interested in serving, they could contact her or M DuVal, Administrative Chair of the GSA Nominating Committee. N Prather asked how the University was positioned relative to other Universities when it came to responding to sexual assault and S van der Klein replied that the University was doing pretty good but there was always room for improvement.

**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 15 July 2016. The report stood as submitted and, in addition, A Talaei noted that the current U-Pass agreement between the various municipalities and the University expired in August 2017 and that the municipalities have started negotiating a new agreement with the post-secondary institutions participating in the program and their respective students' associations. He noted that the municipalities' opening position for the new four-year agreement was presented as a cap on the fee for the first two years and then a slight increase in the fee in the next two years. A Talaei further noted that the University of Alberta subsidized the cost of the U-Pass for students and that this subsidy would have to be negotiated as the agreement governing it (between the GSA, the SU, and the University) also ended in August 2017 and that the subsidy might be lower. A Talaei added that he would keep GSA Council informed on the progress of both negotiations.

**ii. GSA Student Affairs Advisory Committee**

No meetings this reporting period.

**16. Senator**

**i. Senator's Report**

No written report at this time.

**17. Speaker**

**i. Speaker's Report**

No written report at this time.

**18. Chief Returning Officer**

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

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 15 July 2016. The report stood as submitted as V Pimmett (former CRO and author of the report) could not attend the meeting. S Fenichel noted that, if there were any questions on the report, they could be sent to GSA Associate Director at [gsaad@ualberta.ca](mailto:gsaad@ualberta.ca) and that they would then be shared with the former CRO. She expressed hope that V Pimmett would be able to attend a future GSA Council meeting to answer any questions in person and introduced Carolina Martinez, the CRO for 2016-2017.

**19. GSA Elections and Referenda Committee**

**i. GSA Elections and Referenda Committee**

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 15 July 2016. The report stood as submitted.

**20. GSA Management**

**i. Executive Director's Report**

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 15 July 2016. It was noted that this was E Schoeck's last report to GSA Council as Executive Director. The report stood as submitted and, in addition, E Schoeck reported on the state of the GSA six years ago, noting that, as a historian, she believed in the importance of understanding the past. She noted that when she came to the GSA the organization was extremely disorganized and she had many discussions with then GSA President Roy Coulthard about budget, staffing and many other matters on the road to repairing the organization and its reputation. She noted that she was happy to report that the GSA was in much better shape now, with an excellent staff, a balanced budget, a good IT infrastructure, etc. She noted that even with all this progress, GSA Councillors needed to remain vigilant and to go out and vote for Directly-Elected Officers and participate in other ways. E Schoeck then introduced the current GSA office support members. She noted that she had known the incoming Executive Director, C Thomas, for a very long time and that C Thomas had a BA and MA from the U of A and a PhD from Yale and that she has been with the GSA since 2012 and had also worked in University governance. She added that the GSA would be in very good hands.

E Schoeck then thanked all the graduate students who worked to rebuild the GSA, especially R Coulthard, and all the graduate students that volunteered their time to make the GSA a great organization. She added that it had been a pleasure to work for the GSA and GSA Council warmly thanked E Schoeck with a round of applause.

**Question Period**

**21. Written Questions**

None at this time.

**22. Oral Questions**

**Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:23 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 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.

**NOTE:** The force of this Motion is to **increase the quorum of GSA Council from 14 to 30 voting members**. Additionally, Medical Sciences and Interdisciplinary Studies will be removed from the membership of GSA Council moving forward (see the attached double column document for a rationale).

#### Background:

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.**

**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 ( <i>deletions noted by a strikethrough</i> ) and Proposed Changes ( <i>additions underlined</i> )	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>	



GSA NOMINATING COMMITTEE (GSA NoC)  
**DEAN OF SCIENCE REVIEW COMMITTEE (ONE POSITION): NOMINEES**

A Review Committee for the Dean of Science is being struck by the Provost's Office. The Faculty Deans Selection Procedure, Appendix A: Dean Selection Committees for Individual Faculties, outlines that the departmental GSAs in Science will select and forward one name to GSA Council and the representative will be elected by GSA Council.

On August 31, 2016, the GSA emailed all departmental GSAs to forward a name, with a deadline of September 22, 2016 at 2:00 PM. The GSA received **two (2) nominations (one from the Department of Chemistry and one from the Department of Computing Science)**. No nominations were received from Biological Sciences, Earth and Atmospheric Sciences, Mathematical and Statistical Sciences, Physics and Psychology.

**There will be a paper ballot vote held at the September 26, 2016 GSA Council meeting for the Science Graduate Student Position on the Dean of Science Review Committee.**

*If you are unable to attend the September 26, 2016 meeting of GSA Council and would like to cast an electronic vote for this position, you must contact the GSA Nominating Committee Coordinator ([gsa.nomcomm@ualberta.ca](mailto:gsa.nomcomm@ualberta.ca)) BEFORE 3:00 PM on Monday September 26, 2016 in order to cast your vote in advance of the GSA Council meeting.*

**Nominees for this position are be presented in alphabetical order on the ballot. 'None of the Candidates' will not be considered a nominee for the purpose of this ballot, as University regulations must be followed.**

**Chemistry Nominee:**

Anis Fahandej-Sadi

**Computing Science Nominee:**

Candy Pang

**The names and biographies received (two nominees) are ATTACHED on pages 7.1 and 7.2. Biographies have been attached as received (ie not edited) in reverse alphabetical order.**

As set out in U of A policies and procedures:

"The graduate student representative(s) shall be selected through the following mechanism. Each Departmental Graduate Student Association shall forward a name to the Graduate Students' Association and the representative will be elected by the Graduate Students' Association Council. If no Departmental Graduate Student Association exists or if no names are forwarded by the existing associations, the Graduate Students' Association shall be responsible for forwarding a name to the Graduate Students' Association Council for ratification."

(<http://www.policiesonline.ualberta.ca/PoliciesProcedures/Procedures/Selection-of-Faculty-Deans-Procedure-Appendix-A-Dean-Selection-Committees-for-Individual-Faculties.pdf>).

## Biographies and Resumes of Nominees (2 Nominees)

### 1. Candy Pang

#### Bio

I was born in Hong Kong and finished high school education in Hong Kong. My family immigrated to Canada in 1990. Since then my family has been living in Edmonton, Alberta. I am fluent in Chinese and English. I got my BSc with Honors Computing Science Industrial Internship Program with First Class Honor Degree in 1997. During my Bachelor program, I worked as an intern at TELUS for 16 months. With the support of the NSERC scholarship, I finished my MSc Department of Computing Science in 1999. Since then, I have been working as an IT practitioner in Edmonton. Worked in both public and private sectors. Then, I enroll in the PhD Computing Science program in 2012, with the support from Alberta Innovates Technology Futures (AITF) Graduate Student Scholarship.

Though out my life, I have been heavily involved in church activities, like teaching Children Sunday School, being the church auditor, participating in short term missionary program, and organizing conferences and activities. At work, I was involved in sport activities like Dragon Boat Racing and Corporate Challenge. Coming back to school for my PhD, I tried to participated in as much student activities as possible to stay in touch with the much younger students. For example, I joined the Ada's team which encourage female enrollment in the IT field. Each year, the Ada's team organizes activities to encourage girls of all age to study Computing Science. Personally, I like advantage travelling. I have volunteered in a remote farm in Tanzania for 2 months; backpacked in countries, such as Peru, Mexico, Turkey, India, China and Europe; hiked to the base-camp of Everest in Nepal and summited Mount Kilimanjaro in Tanzania.

#### Summary Resume

I am now in my fifth year of my PhD program, and plan to graduate by the end of this school year. Since I have 15 years of IT industry experience working with enterprise systems, I am involved in the Software Engineering group in the Department of Computing Science, studying the continuous integration practices in enterprises. I am currently working with Dr. Abram Hindle and Dr. Denilson Barbosa on software development and integration.

I was the University of Alberta Graduate Student Association Council Computing Science councillor alternate between 2014 and 2016.

Being away from U of A for 13 years, I notice a lot of changes in the institution. Living and working in Alberta for 26 years, I proudly call myself Albertan. I believe the Faculty of Science will continue to have big influence in Alberta's future. I am interested in the Dean of Science Review Committee for I want to know that the Faculty of Science is in good hand.

### 2. Anis Fahandej-Sadi

#### Bio

I was born in Toronto, Ontario, Canada, but moved to and was raised in the mountainous city of Kelowna, British Columbia, Canada from a young age. I acquired my B.Sc. in chemistry from the Okanagan campus of the University of British Columbia. While at UBCO, I was a teaching assistant for first year mathematics, physics, and both first year general chemistry and second year organic chemistry. I was also an executive at the Chemistry Course Union from the beginning of my second year, and was in charge of the sponsorship for the 2015 Western Canadian Undergraduate Research Conference. Currently at U of A, I am VP external for the Chemistry Graduate Student Society, and also on the organizing committee for the 2017 Banff Symposium of Organic Chemistry.

#### Summary Resume

I am currently a second-year PhD student in the Department of Chemistry, with my project revolving around oxidative decarboxylative copper catalyzed cross coupling of aryl-boronic acids and substituted half-esters, with

this work being conducted in the lab of Dr. Rylan Lundgren. For the summers month of 2013 and 2014, during my undergraduate degree, I worked under the direction of Dr. Kevin Smith at UBCO, studying high-valent chromium complexes with potential applications in lignin valorization and aryl-aryl cross coupling. I am currently a teaching assistant for chemistry 103 (introductory chemistry for engineers), as well as holding hours in the 10X help room. I am interested in the Dean of Science Review Committee as it is vital to have student voices heard on a decision that will have a direct effect on graduate students, and my experience on various organizational committees will be an asset to this process. Though no meeting schedule has been presented for this committee, I am confident that my schedule allows me enough flexibility to be present for the entirety of the proceedings.

GSA NOMINATING COMMITTEE (GSA NoC)  
**DEAN OF NATIVE STUDIES SELECTION COMMITTEE (ONE POSITION): NOMINEES**

**Suggested Motion for GSA 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:

**Mike Dockman**

**Background:**

A Selection Committee for the Dean of Native Studies is being struck by the Provost's Office. The Faculty Deans Selection Procedure, Appendix A: Dean Selection Committees for Individual Faculties, outlines that, if no departmental GSA exists in Native Studies, the GSA will be responsible for selecting a graduate student representative. This position was advertised to all graduate students on September 16, 2016, via email. The deadline to receive nominations was on September 20, 2016 at 10:00 AM and no nominations were received. A call for additional nominations was sent on September 20 with a deadline of September 23, 2016 at 10:00 AM. One nomination was received.

**Jurisdiction:**

Faculty Deans Selection Procedure Appendix A: Dean Selection Committees for Individual Faculties

*"One (1) full time graduate student enrolled in the Faculty of Native Studies selected by the Native Studies Graduate Students' Association. If no association exists, the Graduate Students' Association will be responsible for selecting a graduate student from the Faculty of Native Studies as the representative."*

GSA NOMINATING COMMITTEE (GSA NoC)  
**GSA AWARDS SELECTION COMMITTEE (GSA ASC) (5-7 POSITIONS): NOMINEES**

**Suggested Motion for GSA Council:**

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

**Yingzhou Li (Earth and Atmospheric Science)**  
**Wade Michaelchuk (Physical Education and Recreation)**  
**Preshit Verma (Civil and Environmental Engineering)**

**GSA Council Members Staying the GSA Awards Selection Committee:** Grant Norman (Neuroscience), Krista McFadyen (Educational Policy Studies/Law), Margot Challborn (Political Science), Nafisa Abdulhamid (Political Science), Afshan Amjad (Elementary Education), Rebecca Horne (Human Ecology)

**GSA Council Members Leaving on the GSA Awards Selection Committee:** Karen Turpin (Public Health), Leticia Cristina Radin Pereira (Agricultural, Food and Nutritional Science), Maikel Farhan (Medicine), Carolyn Gibson (Renewable Resources), Kimberly Quach (Public Health)

**Background:**

In the August 26, 2016 GSA Newsletter, the GSA Nominating Committee advertised for five to seven (5-7) vacant positions on the GSA Awards Selection Committee (GSA ASC). The deadline to receive nominations was September 9, 2016 and three nominations were received. A call for additional nominations was emailed to GSA Council on September 14, 2016. The deadline to receive additional nominations was on September 21, 2016 at 12:00 PM (noon) and no additional nominations were received. Since the number of nominations received was fewer than the number of vacant positions, the nominees will be declared elected by GSA Council.

The GSA ASC selects the recipients of GSA Recognition Awards and the Government of Alberta Graduate Citizenship Award. The GSA ASC also reviews GSA Bylaw and Policy regarding the adjudication of GSA Recognition Awards. (GSA Policy, GSA Standing Committee, Sections 6.3.a and 6.3.a.i).

**Jurisdiction:**

GSA Policy, Standing Committees, Section 6.1.a.iii.

*"Up to twelve (12) graduate students, elected by Council."*

**GSA NOMINATING COMMITTEE (NoC)  
GSA Governance Committee (ONE POSITION)  
NOMINEES**

As advertised to GSA Council on September 2, 2016 via email the GSA NoC advertised for one (1) vacant position on the GSA Governance Committee (GSA GC). The deadline to receive nominations was September 12, 2016 and two (2) nominations were received. A call for additional nominations was emailed to GSA Council on September 14, 2016. The deadline to receive additional nominations was on September 21, 2016 at 12:00 PM (noon) and no additional nominations were received.

**There will be a paper ballot vote held at the September 26, 2016 GSA Council meeting for the GSA Governance Committee.**

*If you are unable to attend the September 26, 2016 meeting of GSA Council and would like to cast an electronic vote for this position, you must contact the Nominating Committee Coordinator ([gsa.nomcomm@ualberta.ca](mailto:gsa.nomcomm@ualberta.ca)) BEFORE 3:00 PM on Monday September 26, 2016 in order to cast your vote in advance of the Council meeting.*

**Nominees for this position are listed in reverse order by last name and will be presented in *alphabetical* order on the ballot. 'None of the Candidates' will also be considered a nominee.**

- 1. Robert Reklow (Councillor-at-Large; Physiology)**
- 2. Nicole Noel (Councillor-at-Large; Biological Sciences)**

**Jurisdiction:**

GSA Policy, Nominating, Section 6.6

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

**GSA Governance Committee:** Vacancy: ONE MEMBER OF THE GSA COUNCIL(GSA Policy, Standing Committees, Section 3.1.a.iv)

**GSA Governance Committee Role (GSA Policy, Standing Committees, Section 3.2.a):**

"The 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 and make any routine or editorial changes to the governance documents as deemed necessary by the Committee."

**GSA Council Member Leaving the Governance Committee:** Shelby Sanders (Earth and Atmospheric Sciences).

**GSA Council Member Staying on the Governance Committee:** Justin Leifso (Political Science), Maryse Ndilu Kiese (Religious Studies)

**The names and biographies received (two nominees) are ATTACHED on pages 7.6 and 7.7. Biographies are presented as received (i.e. not edited).**

## Biographies and Resumes of Nominees (2 Nominees)

### 1. Nicole Noel

#### Other committees

GSA, Councillor-at-Large

Volunteering as WebMaster for BGSA

#### Bio

I was born and raised in Fort McMurray, and moved to Edmonton four years ago to complete my undergrad at the U of A. I completed the first two years of my undergrad degree at Keyano College in Fort McMurray, where I was actively involved in the theatre community and backstage work (including makeup artistry and prop design). At the U of A, I was the properties master for Student Union's production of Young Frankenstein in 2013. I completed my BSc (with a biological sciences major and English minor) in 2014. In 2015, I completed a BSc Honors in Molecular Genetics after degree.

#### Summary Resume

I am currently a second year Masters student in the Department of Biological Sciences. I'm carrying out my thesis work in Dr. Allison's lab, where I have been investigating photoreceptor connectivity and degeneration in zebrafish. I had the pleasure of being a TA for BIOL 107 and GENET 375 in the first year of my Masters.

I joined the GSA as a Councilor-at-Large in May, 2016, and have been volunteering as the Biology Graduate Student Association's Webmaster since May, 2016, as well. I am currently in training to be a volunteer at the Sexual Assault Centre of Edmonton. I'm interested in being a part of the GSA Governance Committee because I want to be actively involved in the graduate student community, and the GSA GC deals with matters that are important and impactful to the graduate student association. I feel that I would be a useful and contributing member of this committee.

### 2. Robert Reklow

#### Other committees

N/A

#### Bio

Growing up in Edmonton, my passion for research sparked in high school when I completed the Heritage Youth Researcher Summer (HYRS) program in 2010. In 2015, I completed my B.Sc. (Physiology) and honors thesis here at the University of Alberta before beginning my M.Sc. in September 2015. Outside of school, I enjoy playing sports, travelling Canada and abroad, and exploring Edmonton with friends. I've also been involved with various

community and campus groups including Science Mentors, St. John Ambulance, U of A First Aid Responders, and the campus Golden Key chapter. I have also had an active voice on G.S.A. Council as Councillor-at-Large since October 2015. Together, my volunteer and leadership experience has shaped my outlook and refined critical analytical skills, which are useful specifically when reviewing and developing policies to enact positive change within institutions such as the University of Alberta.

### **Summary Resume**

I am currently beginning my second and final year of my M.Sc. in Physiology with Dr. Greg Funk. I study the central rhythmic breathing center of the mammalian brain, also known as the preBötzing Complex. I specifically examine how astrocyte-derived modulators, like adenosine, influence this region during development, which is critical in understanding how we respond to stimuli like hypoxia. This project is a continuation of my undergraduate honors thesis, but I have previous research experience in Physical Therapy (2010, HYRS) and in Laboratory Medicine and Pathology (2013-2014, Undergraduate Research).

My interest in serving as a GSA Councillor-at-Large was to actively contribute to the Council and support the development of effective policies to support all graduate students at the University of Alberta. To date, I have had an active voice on Council and I believe I can further represent and speak for other students and councillors by serving on the G.S.A.'s Governance Committee. I am committed to working with other committee members to further a progressive mandate that will benefit all graduate students at the University of Alberta. Based on my current schedule, I do not foresee any time commitment conflicts that will interfere in fulfilling this role.



The cost of the Plan is increasing for 2016-2017. Premiums (insurance rates) are determined by the amount of “risk” (ie, cost associated with paying out claims) calculated for an individual or a group (in the GSA’s case, a group, as it is a group coverage plan), using claims history information and specific information about that individual or group. As “risk” (ie claims/cost to the insurance company) goes up, premiums go up as well so that the insurer has a larger pool of money to draw from when it covers submitted claims, thereby minimizing their “risk” (which, as privately owned, for-profit companies, they are invested in doing). In general, the largest driver of the cost of a group Plan such as the GSA’s is usage and claims. Essentially, the insurance business is predicated on building up a large reserve of money and hoping few claims are filed. However, when claims go up and that pool of money gets depleted, costs go up to replenish the pool of funds.

Increasingly large numbers of graduate students are using the GSA Health and Dental Plan; and it is good news that people are using this important service. However, increased usage does mean that the cost of the Plan has risen because the cost is based on the number and dollar amount of claims submitted. When more graduate students use the Plan by filing claims, the cost of the Plan increases overall.

#### **Background on the history of the Plan:**

- The Plan was established by referenda in 1994 (Dental) and 2003 (Health)
- It is designed to cover “extras” and to fill gaps in provincial basic healthcare (Alberta Health Services)
- The Plan is administered by the GSA’s broker, Studentcare (since 2003), under the direction of the GSA Board and governed by GSA Bylaw and GSA Policy
- The GSA’s insurance company is currently Desjardins Financial Services (since 2012); prior to that it was Sun Life Financial
- Over \$1.8 million in claims were paid to GSA members in 2015 (up from ~\$1.6 million in 2014)

#### **How the fee is set annually and increases to the fee over the past few years:**

- The GSA Board reviews data with Studentcare semi-annually, and then recommends fee and benefit changes to GSA Council annually
- GSA Council is responsible for final approval of the fee (except if it exceeds a 15% increase; this triggers a referendum) and benefit changes (eg in July 2014, GSA Council approved an increase to vision benefits)
- The fee and benefits are set annually in March/April based on ~6 months of claims data and previous trends to meet the U of A Board of Governors schedule to approve the collection of the fee in advance of the new academic year starting in September
- When the GSA switched insurers to Desjardins, a set fee for two years was offered (this was because, after many years of operating in the eastern provinces, Desjardins was trying to break into the business realm of the western provinces and were highly motivated)
- During this period the cost paid by graduate students did not increase but it was an artificial freeze as claims (and so the actual cost of the Plan) were increasing behind the scenes
- In 2014-2015, GSA Council (acting on the recommendation of the GSA Budget and Finance Committee and the GSA Board) agreed to maintain the fee at the same level as 2011-2012 by using the GSA Health and Dental Plan Reserve Fund (HDPRF) to cover increase – this fund exists because, occasionally, after setting the fee, Studentcare negotiates a premium that is lower than expected. The GSA then banks the difference in the

HDPFRF, a restricted fund governed by GSA Bylaw and GSA Policy that can only be used for health and dental purposes (ie to decrease a fee increase seen by members in a given year, or to increase coverage)

- In 2015-2016, GSA Council (acting on the recommendation of the GSA Budget and Finance Committee and the GSA Board) approved a total 11% increase to the fee (and maintaining the existing level of coverage), with graduate students paying 8% and the HDPFRF being used to bridge the remaining 3%

**The current situation:**

In February of 2016 the GSA received early data on members’ claims for 2015-2016. That data indicated a large increase in the number of claims, which means a commensurate increase in the cost. The GSA Board (tasked with oversight of the Plan), the GSA Budget and Finance Committee (whose mandate is to advise on all financial matters associated with the GSA), and GSA Council (represented by a graduate students from every department with a graduate program) discussed this matter extensively in March, April, and May. Rather than cutting benefits in order to keep the cost the same as 2015-2016, GSA Council voted to approve a 15% increase to the fee associated with the Plan for 2016-2017. The actual increase in the cost of the Plan was 17% but GSA Council also approved off-setting the amount paid by again graduate students by drawing down the GSA Health and Dental Plan Reserve Fund. The fee paid by graduate students for 2016-2017 will be \$492.95/year, an increase of 15% (or \$64.30/year) over 2015-2016.

In order to provide a snapshot of how use of the Plan and associated cost has expanded, please look at the below two tables.

Table 1: Annual usage and average claims for the GSA Health and Dental Plan from 2008-2009 to 2015-2016 (presented separately as the data related to the Heath Plan, followed by the data related to the Dental Plan, followed by combined totals)

<b>Health Plan</b>	<b>2008-2009</b>	<b>2009-2010</b>	<b>2010-2011</b>	<b>2011-2012</b>	<b>2012-2013</b>	<b>2013-2014</b>	<b>2014-2015</b>	<b>2015-2016</b>
Paid Claims	\$687,160	\$819,533	\$882,134	\$913,072	\$806,928	\$1,046,325	\$1,094,963	\$1,229,944
Enrolment	4,738	5,324	5,409	5,451	5,469	5,427	5,301	5,482
Per Capita Claims	\$145.02	\$153.94	\$163.08	\$167.51	\$147.54	\$192.79	\$206.54	\$224.36
<b>Dental Plan</b>								
Paid Claims	\$569,986	\$664,506	\$696,000	\$705,749	\$654,751	\$749,820	\$785,327	\$921,163
Enrolment	4,691	5,260	5,377	5,409	5,410	5,353	5,236	5,429
Per Capita Claims	\$121.51	\$126.34	\$129.44	\$130.47	\$121.03	\$140.07	\$149.99	\$169.66
<b>Total</b>								
Incurred Claims	\$1,257,146	\$1,484,039	\$1,578,134	\$1,618,821	\$1,461,679	\$1,796,145	\$1,880,289	\$2,151,107
Enrolment	5,292	4,715	5,393	5,430	5,440	5,390	5,269	5,456
<b>Per Capita Claims</b>	<b>\$280.45</b>	<b>\$266.65</b>	<b>\$292.62</b>	<b>\$298.12</b>	<b>\$268.71</b>	<b>\$333.23</b>	<b>\$356.88</b>	<b>\$394.29</b>

Table 2: Breakdown of projected premiums, actual premiums, and the fee charged to graduate students from 2008-2009 to 2015-2016. Any differences between the actual premium and the fee paid by graduate students reflects either payment into the HDPRF of the positive difference between premium and fee or, when the difference is negative, use of the HDPRF to offset cost to students.

Plan Year	Projected Premium	Actual Premium	HDP Fee Paid by Students	Use of HDPRF*
2008-09	\$326.63	\$329.61	\$329.64	+ \$0.03
2009-10	\$345.93	\$330.70	\$346.12	+ \$15.42
2010-11	\$361.75	\$360.00	\$360.00	--
2011-12	\$384.15	\$384.12	\$378.00	- \$6.12
2012-13	\$405.00**	\$376.08	\$396.90	+ \$20.82
2013-14	N/A***	\$376.08	\$396.90	+ \$20.82
2014-15	\$414.05	\$413.16	\$396.90	- \$16.26
2015-16	\$440.37	\$440.28	\$428.65	- \$11.63
2016-17	\$500.34	< >	\$492.95	-\$7.39

\* A positive figure indicates payment **into** the HDPRF; a negative figure indicates **use of** the HDPRF  
 \*\* High jump in projected premium resulted in a request for proposals and switch to Desjardins as the plan provider  
 \*\*\* No projected premium necessary because of two-year guaranteed premium rate

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

Table 3: Comparison of coverage for prescription drugs, dental coverage and vision coverage by three alternative health and dental plan providers, with the GSA members’ current coverage indicated in brackets.

Insurer	Prescription Drug Coverage	Basic Dental Coverage	Vision Coverage
<b>GSA Plan - \$492.95/year</b>	Up to 80%/yr, no cap	100%/yr within the Network for preventive services, 80%/yr within the Network for basic services, 30%/yr for major restorative services, \$500 cap	\$70/2 yrs for exams; \$100/2 yrs for glasses, lenses; \$150/yr for laser eye surgery
<b>Blue Cross - \$690/year</b>	70%	70%	None
<b>FlexCare - \$858/year</b>	70% up to the first \$750, then 90% for the remaining \$497	50% up to \$1,150 in year 1, then 80% up to \$400 and 50% up to \$860 in years 2+	\$50/2 yrs for exams; \$250/2 yrs for glasses, lenses
<b>AMA - \$848/year</b>	70% up to \$350 in year 1, then 70% up to \$400 in years 2+	70% up to \$350 in year 1, then 70% up to \$550 in year 2, then 70% up to \$700 in years 5+	\$100 in years 1-2, \$150 in years 3-4, \$200 in years 5+

**GSA President**  
**Report to GSA Council for the September 26, 2016 Meeting**

To: GSA Council  
From: Sarah Ficko  
Date: September 23, 2016

Dear Councillor Friends and Colleagues,

Crunch, crunch, crunch! I love the sounds made while walking through a pile of dry leaves at the time of year ☺ As we haven't met in a little while, I want to say welcome to autumn, and welcome to a new school year! I hope everyone had an enjoyable, fun, relaxing, and productive summer, and are ready for a new year of research, teaching, and learning.

After getting back from my field research site in the NWT, I've hit the ground running in terms of meetings, committees and events to attend, participate in, and lead. We've had a ton of things going on at the GSA ranging from departmental orientations to events and receptions, to assisting grad students with issues of concern. I'll highlight a few key areas in my report, including the Health and Dental Plan review, labour consultation, and Collective Agreement education, and the VPs also talk about many of the other issues and items we've been involved with this month.

As many of you are aware, we have been doing a fairly comprehensive review of our Health and Dental Plan, at the request of Council this past spring. Over the summer, we discussed the feedback generated from the facilitated workshop and silent discussion in Council, the Roundtable sessions open to all graduate students that we hosted, and feedback received from individual graduate students who were unable to attend the Roundtables, at our weekly GSA Board meetings. After reviewing the feedback, Ali and I requested that our broker, Studentcare, ask our insurer, Desjardins, to provide us with quotes on four different plan options: a) a plan with less coverage and a lower cost than our current one, b) a plan with greater coverage and a higher cost than our current one, c) a two tiered plan with levels that have more and less coverage and cost than our current plan, and d) a three tiered plan with less, similar, and more coverage and cost than our current plan. Studentcare provided us with this information just in time for our first H&D Town Hall on September 12. At that meeting, I provided the attendees with background information on the H&D Plan, and then we went through a series of questions to discuss the type of plan and benefits that students would like to have. We'll be doing a similar exercise at Council this month, and then there will be a final opportunity for consultation with other graduate students at the September 30 Town Hall. While one plan will never fully satisfy everyone, I want to thank everyone who has participated so far for their thoughtful comments and suggestions. I'm hoping that by doing extensive consultation this year, the GSA will continue to offer a plan that meets the needs of graduate students and their families moving forward.

The second key area I've done a lot of work on is about the changes to existing labour legislation that are being brought forward by the provincial government. As a brief overview, in January 2015, the Supreme Court ruled that the right to strike is a fundamental right for public sector employees when collective bargaining negotiations break down. In many other jurisdictions, employment and labour relations within the post-secondary education sector have been contained within a labour relations code or legislation, but in Alberta, it has been governed under the *Post-Secondary Learning Act*. Due to this

more open-ended structure, collective bargaining processes are contained in GSA and Faculty Association collective agreements rather than in legislation, and have developed in an organic and collegial manner over many years. If negotiations do break down, the *PSLA* generally mandates a process of compulsory binding arbitration as a final step to resolve disagreements, though this has never been needed in GSA negotiations.

During the initial round of consultation last fall, the Alberta Graduate Provincial Advocacy Council (ab-GPAC), which is composed of members from the four research intensive universities with graduate programs, was consulted and responded that graduate students should be treated differently from other groups (non-academic staff, faculty associations) as many graduate students wear multiple hats (student, TA, RA, etc), that GSAs should retain the exclusive right to represent grad students, and that compulsory binding arbitration is a more effective tool for graduate students, as the potential economic gains from a strike were overshadowed by reservations about the effectiveness of a strike, the negative consequences to students, and the high potential to be locked out by the university. While it was initially agreed that the status quo would remain in place for graduate students, further legal advice by the government indicated that the status quo was not compliant with the Supreme Court ruling. As such, the government has embarked on a second round of consultation, beginning late August 2016, and continuing until October 17.

At this point, we are developing responses to submit to the government, both as individual GSAs and for ab-GPAC. A longer briefing document developed by the Labour Relations Committee of ab-GPAC, along with a series of questions and scenarios that people will be asked to complete and submit, is being developed with the intention of sharing it with all graduate students through a GSA Special Bulletin. If you would like to submit feedback directly to the government, they have developed a discussion guide and an online form to submit further feedback <http://PSLALabourRelations.alberta.ca>, and will also be hosting consultations on campus on Sept 29 from 3-5 pm or 7-9 pm in the Council Chamber <https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/registration-for-post-secondary-labour-consultation-sessions-edmonton-registration-27355466938>. This is a very important topic, and I encourage you to investigate it further as you think about the pros and cons of these changes, how it can affect you directly and affect the other students in your departments and faculties, and as you consider any potential long term effects on future students.

The final area that I want to talk about (and Sasha will follow up on this), is about our new Collective Agreement (CA) that came into effect on September 1. This year, it was very beneficial that the CAs for the non-academic staff, the academic staff association, and the GSA were all approved at the same Board of Governor's meeting, as it has helped raise awareness across campus about our CA. Lack of awareness and knowledge has been a serious issue in ensuring compliance with the CA. Over the last few weeks, I'm very pleased to say we've informed over 1,800 grad students about the new CA at over 35 Departmental Orientations and the GSA Fall Orientation (and even more when one considers that the GSA also presented at the University Alberta International Orientation). In addition, I have had the opportunity to help educate ~100 senior administration and other University administrators about the new CA over the past few weeks. I presented a version of the presentation I gave in Council in May during the ratification vote at a Statutory Dean's Council, at the ALES Cabinet meeting, and at the

Graduate Program Administrators Committee. I'm very pleased that so many people are more aware, informed, and actively engaging with our CA.

As I mentioned at the July Council, Ellen Schoeck has stepped down as Executive Director as of the end of August, and I'd like to thank her once more for all her hard work since 2012 in helping the GSA become a stable and supportive organization for grad students. After much discussion and consultation to develop a process to hire a new ED, I'd like to congratulate and warmly welcome Courtney Thomas (former GSA Director of Services and Governance) into the Executive Director role, and hope everyone will take a few minutes to stop by the GSA office in Triffo Hall or before/after Council to do the same. As a final note, I want to thank my VPs for all their dedication over the past few weeks in helping new students navigate the University system and in their ongoing work on behalf of grad students. I'd also like to thank the GSA Office Team for all their hard work in preparing, coordinating, and implementing all the meetings and events that we attend and host on behalf of grad students.

I wish everyone a happy fall and Thanksgiving in a few weeks!

Warmest regards,  
Sarah

*Please find below a list of meetings I attended between August 23, 2016 and September 26, 2016. The meetings were accurate at the time of printing. I was on Research Leave from August 23, 2016 to August 25, 2016.*

August 25	Alberta Graduate Provincial Advocacy Council (ab-GPAC)
August 29	Site Tour for the University's Bid to Host Congress 2020
August 29	Reception for Debra Pozega Osburn
August 30	Communication Sciences & Disorders Departmental Orientation
August 31	Public Health Departmental Orientation
August 31	Chemical and Materials Engineering Orientation
August 31	UAI Transitions Orientation
August 31	GSA Fall Orientation
August 31	Health and Dental Discussion with C Yamagishi and K Foster
August 31	Reception for Don Hickey
September 1	Meeting with the Dean of the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research (FGSR)
September 1	GSA Budget and Finance Committee (GSA BFC)
September 2	Residence Life Task Force
September 2	Meeting with a Graduate Student
September 2	Meeting with a Graduate Student
September 6	Meeting with the Post Doctoral Fellows Association (PDFA)
September 6	Residence Association Fee Collection Meeting with the SU
September 7	Collective Agreement Presentation to the Statutory Deans' Council
September 8	Meeting with the Associate Dean of Students
September 8	Labour Relations Consultation Meeting
September 9	Football Game with the Board of Governors
September 10	Internetworking Departmental Orientation
September 12	Meeting with an Associate Dean of FGSR (B Hogeveen)

September 12	Collective Agreement Presentation to the Faculty of Agricultural, Life and Environment Sciences Cabinet
September 12	General Faculties Council (GFC) EXEC
September 12	President's Award Reception to Refugees and Displaced Persons
September 12	Dinner with the Chancellor
September 13	Health and Dental Town Hall
September 13	Labour Relations Consultation Meeting
September 13	Emergency Financial Support for Graduate Students
September 13	Meeting with the University's Provost and Vice-President
September 13	Meeting between the GSA DEOs and the Associate Deans of FGSR
September 14	Interview for the Gateway
September 14	Mandatory Non-Instructional Fees (MNIF) Oversight Committee
September 14	Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research (FGSR) Council
September 14	Alberta Graduate Provincial Advocacy Council (ab-GPAC) Labour Consultation Phone Meeting
September 14	EID-AL-ADHA Reception
September 15	Meeting with Faculty Relations Officer
September 15	Meeting with a Graduate Student
September 15	FGSR Professional Development Advisory Board (PDAB)
September 15	Tuition Budget Advisory Council (TBAC)
September 16	Right to Strike Discussion with the U of C GSA President
September 16	Meeting re a Negotiations Course
September 16	Renewable Resources Orientation
September 16	Residence Life Task Force
September 16	Informal Legal Discussion re Provincial Labour Consultation
September 19-20	Forensic Experiential Traumatic Interview (FETI) Sexual Assault Workshop
September 21	Collective Agreement Presentation to the Graduate Program Administrators Committee (GPAC) Steering Committee
September 21	Board Safety, Health and Environment Committee (BSHEC)
September 21	Celebrate! Teaching, Research and Learning Ceremony
September 22	Labour Relations Consultation Meeting
September 22	GovWeek GSA 101
September 22	Alumni Awards Ceremony and Reception
September 23	Meeting with the Vice-President (Facilities & Operations)
September 23	Cap 'N Gown Ceremony
September 23	Green and Gold Parade and Pep Rally
September 23	GovWeek Talk by Edmonton Mayer D Iveson
September 26	General Faculties Council (GFC) Member Orientation
September 26	General Faculties Council (GFC)

**GSA Board (GSAB)**  
**Report to GSA Council for the September 26, 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: September 23, 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 20 (Executive Director's Report to GSA Council) on pages 20.1-20.4.

**24 August 2016 GSA Board Meeting**

Main Agenda Items:

Sexual Violence Policy: Draft from the Director, Student Conduct and Accountability; GSA Health and Dental Plan

Motions and Agreements:

None at this time

**7 September 2016 GSA Board Meeting**

Main Agenda Items:

GSA Health and Dental Plan

Motions and Agreements:

None at this time

**14 September 2016 GSA Board Meeting**

Main Agenda Items:

Attendance at the Canadian Association for Graduate Studies (CAGS) Annual Conference, November 2 to 4, 2016, in Toronto, ON: Estimated Expense; GSA Health and Dental Plan; Receipt of Appointment of Executive Director

Motions and Agreements:

Members **AGREED** to approve the Minutes of September 7, 2016, which was previously distributed, after amending a section in the President's Report about the Statutory Deans' Council to read, "\$24,000 is the predicted level of funding needed to cover expenses." MK **MOVED**. FK Seconded. **CARRIED**.

**MOTION:** That the GSA Board **APPROVE** the estimated expense for two (2) representatives of the GSA to attend the Canadian Association of Graduate Studies (CAGS) Annual Conference, November 2 to 4, 2016, in Toronto, ON, as noted below. SF **MOVED**. MK Seconded. **CARRIED**.

**MOTION:** GSA Board members are asked to **RECEIVE FOR INFORMATION** the appointment, as of September 1, 2016, of Courtney Thomas as the GSA Executive Director. SF **MOVED**. AT Seconded. **CARRIED**.

**21 September 2016 GSA Board Meeting**

Main Agenda Items:

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

Motions and Agreements:

Members **AGREED** to approve the Agenda of September 21, 2016, which had been previously distributed, with the addition of sending a delegate for the Vice-President Academic to GFC and an update on the GSA Board SWP (as requested by AT). SF **MOVED**. AT Seconded. **CARRIED**.

Members **AGREED** to appoint SvK to GFC until December 31, 2016, after which FK would be reappointed.



**GSA Budget and Finance Committee (GSA BFC)  
Report to GSA Council for the September 26, 2016 Meeting**

To: GSA Council  
From: Sarah Ficko  
Date: September 23, 2016

Dear Council Colleagues,

On September 1 the GSA Budget and Finance Committee met to review the GSA's investments (GSA Council members may recall that the GSA recently moved its investments from the University's unitized endowment pool to ATB investment management services). I am pleased to report that our investments are performing well (as you will note when the next quarterly financial statements come before you in November).

As this meeting I also updated members on the GSA's renegotiation of our agreement with TDIMM, which expires in 2016. As is also noted in my report to you as Chair of the GSA Governance Committee, we undertook an analysis of proposals from two companies and then elected to renegotiate our agreement with TD (the new agreement was also reviewed by the GSA's lawyers prior to my signing it).

I am happy to answer any questions.

Sincerely,  
Sarah Ficko, GSA President and Chair, GSA Budget and Finance Committee

**GSA Governance Committee (GSA GC)  
Report to GSA Council for the September 26, 2016 Meeting**

To: GSA Council  
From: Sarah Ficko  
Date: September 23, 2016

Dear Council Colleagues,

On August 22, 2016 the GSA Governance Committee approved, via email, editorial changes to the following sections of GSA Policy: Grants Information and Policy, GSA Recognition Awards and Adjudication Criteria, Officer Portfolios, and Standing Committees.

The changes were factual in nature. The first set related to the new CA, which takes effect on September 1 and which contains slightly amended titles and terminology surrounding TAs and RAs than that of the 2014-2016 CA. The new CA can be found here: [http://www.gsa.ualberta.ca/~media/gsa/CollectiveAgreement/2016-2018\\_Graduate\\_Students\\_CA.pdf](http://www.gsa.ualberta.ca/~media/gsa/CollectiveAgreement/2016-2018_Graduate_Students_CA.pdf).

The second change (to GSA Policy on GSA Recognition Awards and Adjudication Criteria) related to the funding for the TDIMM service award, which was noted as being provided until 2016. As a new agreement with TD has been signed (following an analysis of proposals from two companies and a review of the agreement by the GSA's lawyers), the date currently in GSA Policy was changed to "for a fixed term."

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

**GSA Nominating Committee (GSA NoC)  
Report to GSA Council for the September 26, 2016 Meeting**

To: GSA Council  
From: Radim Barta  
Date: September 23, 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

**GSA Standing Committees**

**1) GSA Awards Selection Committee (5-7 Graduate Student Positions)**

In the August 26, 2016 GSA Newsletter, the GSA NoC advertised for five to seven (5-7) vacant positions on the GSA Awards Selection Committee (GSA ASC). The deadline to receive nominations was September 9, 2016 and three nominations were received. A call for additional nominations was emailed to GSA Council on September 14, 2016. The deadline to receive additional nominations was on September 21, 2016 at 12:00 PM (noon) and no additional nominations were received. **Yingzhou Li (Earth and Atmospheric Science), Wade Michaelchuk (Physical Education and Recreation), Preshit Verma (Civil and Environmental Engineering)** are declared elected to serve on the GSA Awards Selection Committee. **See item 7iia – Nominees for the GSA ASC.**

**2) GSA Governance Committee (1 GSA Council Member Position)**

In an email to GSA Council on September 2, 2016 the GSA NoC advertised for one (1) vacant position on the GSA Governance Committee (GSA GC). The deadline to receive nominations was September 12, 2016 and two (2) nominations were received. A call for additional nominations was emailed to GSA Council on September 14, 2016. The deadline to receive additional nominations was on September 21, 2016 at 12:00 PM (noon) and no additional nominations were received. **See item 7iib – Nominees for GSA GC**

**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" (Nominating, Section 5.2).

**1) Dean of Science Review Committee (1 Science Graduate Student Position)**

A Review Committee for the Dean of Science is being struck by the Provost's Office. The Faculty Deans Selection Procedure, Appendix A: Dean Selection Committees for Individual Faculties, outlines that the departmental GSAs in Science will select and forward one name to GSA Council and the representative will be elected by the GSA Council. On August 31, 2016, the GSA emailed all departmental GSAs with a deadline of September 22, 2016 at 2:00 PM to forward a name. The GSA received two (2) nominations (one from the Department of Chemistry and

one from the Department of Computing Science). **See Item 7i – Nominees for the Dean of Science Review Committee.**

**2) Dean of Native Studies Selection Committee (1 Native Studies Graduate Student Position)**

A Selection Committee for the Dean of Native Studies is being struck by the Provost's Office. The Faculty Deans Selection Procedure, Appendix A: Dean Selection Committees for Individual Faculties, outlines that, if no departmental GSA exists in Native Studies the GSA will be responsible for selecting a graduate student representative. This position was advertised to all graduate students on September 16, 2016, via email. The deadline to receive nominations was on September 20, 2016 at 10:00 AM and no nominations were received. A call for additional nominations was sent on September 20 with a deadline of September 23, 2016 at 10:00 AM. One nomination was received. **See Item 7ii – Nominees for the Dean of Native Studies Selection Committee**

**3) FGSR Council (20 Councillors and 5 Alternates)**

These positions were advertised in the GSA Newsletter on August 12, 2016 and again on August 19, 2016. The deadline for nominations was August 26, 2016, at 12:00 PM (noon). Fifteen (15) nominations were received. **Ahmad Al-Dabbagh (Electrical and Computer Engineering), Isaac Awotwe (Economics), Lebogang Disele (Drama), Clara Fallone (Medical Physics), Aryan Karimi (Sociology), Maryam Kebbe (Pediatrics), Elaine Laberge (Sociology), Chongdan Luo (Chemical and Materials Engineering), Sylvia I.C. Madueke (Modern Languages and Cultural Studies), Alleson Mason (Educational Policy), Jennifer Ann McGetrick (Public Health), Estacio Pereira (Civil and Environmental Engineering), Camila Pinto (Agricultural, Food, and Nutritional Science), Dasha Smirnow (Business), and Andrew Woodman (Pharmacology)** were elected to serve on the FGSR Council. The GSA NoC is working to fill the remaining positions, as noted below.

**4) First Alberta Campus Radio Association (FACRA) Board (1 Graduate Student Position)**

This position was advertised in the GSA Newsletter on August 12, 2016 and the deadline to receive nominations was August 19, 2016, at 12:00 PM (noon). Three (3) nominations were received. The GSA NoC elected **Rylan Kafara (Physical Education and Recreation)** to serve on the FACRA Board.

**5) Provost's Academic Advisory Council for Sustainability (PAACS) (1 Graduate Student Position)**

This position was advertised in the GSA Newsletter on August 19, 2016 and the deadline to receive nominations was August 26, 2016, at 12:00 PM (noon). Four (4) nominations were received and the GSA NoC elected **Dasha Smirnow (Business, PhD)** to serve on the PAACS.

**6) Bookstore Advisory Committee (1 Graduate Student Position)**

This position was advertised in the GSA Newsletter on September 9, 2016 with a deadline of September 16, 2016 at 12:00 PM (noon) to receive nominations. One (1) nomination was received. The GSA NoC elected **Alicia Cappello (Humanities Computing)** to serve on the Bookstore Advisory Committee.

**7) Shell Enhanced Learning Fund (SELF) Selection Committee (1 Graduate Student Position)**

This vacancy was advertised in the September 9, 2016 GSA Newsletter with a deadline of September 16, 2016 at 12:00 PM (noon) to receive nominations. Three (3) nominations were received. The GSA NoC elected **Babak Soltannia (Mechanical Engineering)** to serve on the SELF Selection Committee.

**8) Festival of Teaching Steering Committee (1 Graduate Student Position)**

This position was advertised in the September 2, 2016 GSA Newsletter and again in the September 9, 2016 GSA Newsletter with an extended deadline of September 16, 2016 at 12:00 PM (noon) to receive nominations. One (1) nomination was received. The GSA NoC elected **Patrick A. Reid (Physical Education and Recreation)** to serve on the Festival of Teaching Steering Committee.

### **Current Vacancies**

#### **1) Student Library Advisory Committee (1 GSA Councillor Position)**

There is currently one (1) vacancy for a GSA Councillor on the Student Library Advisory Committee. Notice of this vacancy and a call for nominations were circulated to GSA Council on September 19, 2016 with a deadline to receive nominations of September 30, 2016 at 12:00 PM (noon).

#### **2) FGSR Council (5 Councillors and 5 Alternates)**

There are currently five (5) Councillor positions and five (5) Alternate positions on FGSR Council. The GSA NoC advertised for these positions in the GSA Newsletter on September 23, 2016 and will do so again on September 30, 2016. The deadline for nominations to be received is October 5, 2016, at 12:00 PM (noon).

### **Addendum – Administration of the GSA NoC**

On September 2, 2016, Michele DuVal stepped down from her position as the Administrative Chair of the GSA NoC. She will continue to serve as a member of the GSA NoC. As per GSA Policy, Standing Committees, Section 10.1.c, GSA President Sarah Ficko has appointed GSA NoC member Radim Barta as the Administrative Chair of the GSA NoC.

**GSA Vice-President Academic  
Report to GSA Council for the September 26, 2016 Meeting**

To: GSA Council  
From: Firouz Khodayari  
Date: September 23, 2016

Dear Council Colleagues,

It is again fall, and I am sure that all of you are busy with courses or research or TA/RAships (or all of them at the same time), so good luck with that. Although it is a busy season for us as graduate students, it is lovely to see that fresh energy across the campus, which makes us move forward. As Vice-President Academic, I have attended several meetings and been involved with some discussions during the last month – I share the highlights with you in this report.

### **Orientations**

As the other DEOs report, we did many departmental orientations and I attended 7. It is always good to see fresh students with happy faces, lots of energy, motivation, and hope. This year's orientations were awesome; we changed the format this year and partnered with FGSR. This added new information to the presentation and made us make our presentation more efficient. I think new students got a lot out of them. We did our best to make sure that new graduate students know about the role of GSA. Since most of you Councillors were in attendance at the orientations, please pass your feedback to us concerning how we can make them even better!

### **FGSR Council**

There will be some changes in the University Calendar regarding the renumbering of AGRMT 900 to 903 and adding AGRMT 906. AGRMT 903 is reserved for University of Alberta graduate students participating in an approved program administered under a formal agreement between the University of Alberta and other institution(s), who wish to maintain part-time registration at the University of Alberta while studying at an approved partner institution. AGRMT 906 is reserved for University of Alberta graduate students participating in an approved program administered under a formal agreement between the University of Alberta and other institution(s), who wish to maintain full-time registration in the Spring and Summer terms at the University of Alberta while studying at an approved partner institution.

FGSR has also updated the format of GTL (Graduate Teaching and Learning) courses. It used to be 3 levels of GTL, they have changed the format and added level 4. Please inform the students and take a look at FGSR's website for more details.

### **GSA Coffee Break**

Unwind Your Mind GSA Coffee Breaks are back! I attended our first Coffee Break for this year this past Thursday at the graduate student lounge in PAW. We will be having the rest of our coffee breaks in different departments across campus. Please watch our newsletter for more on the dates and locations and join us! We are looking forward to see you there next time!

## 12.1

I am happy to answer any questions or comments that you might have regarding this report. Also I would be more than happy if you would like to share your suggestions or concerns of any academic related issue at the University.

Thanks,

Firouz Khodayari, GSA Vice-President Academic

*Please find below a list of meetings I attended between August 23, 2016 and September 26, 2016. The meetings were accurate at the time of printing. I was on Research Leave from August 23, 2016 to August 31, 2016.*

September 1	Native Studies Departmental Orientation
September 8	Medicine Departmental Orientation
September 8	Pharmacology Departmental Orientation
September 9	General Faculties Council (GFC) Replenishment Committee
September 9	Occupational Therapy Departmental Orientation
September 9	Art & Design Departmental Orientation
September 12	GSA Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research (FGSR) Council Caucus
September 12	Dinner with the Chancellor
September 13	Medical Microbiology and Immunology Departmental Orientation
September 13	Meeting between the GSA DEOs and the Associate Deans
September 14	Mandatory Non-Instructional Fees (MNIF) Oversight Committee
September 14	Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research (FGSR) Council
September 16	Pharmacy Departmental Orientation
September 16	Physiology Departmental Orientation
September 21	Celebrate! Teaching, Research and Learning Ceremony
September 22	GSA General Faculties Council (GFC) Caucus
September 22	Unwind Your Mind GSA Coffee Break
September 22	Alumni Awards
September 23	Oncology Departmental Orientation
September 24	Consultation on Precarious Work with Niki Ashton
September 26	General Faculties Council (GFC) Member Orientation

**GSA Vice-President External  
Report to GSA Council for the September 26, 2016 Meeting**

To: GSA Council  
From: Masoud Khademi  
Date: September 23, 2016

Dear Council Colleagues,

I remember two years ago, on my first day on campus, when I heard that the U of A logo and its branding colors were green and gold. At that time I wondered why; but, after couple of days of walking around the campus and river valley, I was amazed by the magnificent views of golden trees and how they mixed with evergreens. And that was my “eureka” moment! I hope you all enjoy the start of this beautiful, colourful season too, and do well in all aspects of your life.

Typically, September is one of the busiest times in the academic calendar for both students and the University’s administrative bodies. For me as GSA VP External, this month was full of energy and positivity. At the start of the month, as the other DEOs report, we went to several departmental orientations. These gave me a chance to talk to many new graduate students and welcome them to the University of Alberta and the GSA family. In these orientations, we also talked a little about the GSA, its resources and its core services for graduate students. Aside from these departmental orientations, the GSA held its fall orientation, at which we had chance to talk to more than 300 students at the Telus Center. Seeing all these happy and excited faces during orientation week, especially at the Alumni pep rally, once again reminded me how amazing being at this school is.

Two of the other important committees meetings I attended during the past month were the Residence Advisory Committee and the Residence Budget Advisory Committee meetings. The roles of these committees are discussing the budget for residences and financial and operational issues. Some of the main topics discussed at these meetings were proposed rents for 2017-2018, changes to the meal plan for Lister Centre (mostly undergraduate focused), maintenance issues in all residences, and outlining a substantial repair plan for them.

Regarding residence issues, I also attended several Residence Like Task Force meetings. The specific role of this Task Force is to address certain problems regarding students’ experience in residences and find sustainable solutions for them. It should be mentioned that this Task Force was established after the previous SU Executive team brought up some specific issues regarding residences such as Lister Centre and the GSA is also aware of many other issues in residences such as Michener Park.

The other important meeting that we (all the DEOs) had last month was with Chancellor Doug Stollery. In that semi-formal meeting, I and the other DEOs tried to address the most important issues that graduate students are dealing with. We also asked about how the Senate could help us in implementing our strategic plan considering its substantial influence in the University community. As one of the Senators said in that meeting the role of the Senate is making bridges between different bodies within the University. I, as a graduate student representative, hope that one bridge that the Senate plans to build could help graduate students to achieve a well-deserved high quality learning environment and a working environment in which they are respected.

Sincerely,  
Masoud Khademi, GSA Vice-President External



*Please find below a list of meetings I attended between August 23, 2016 and September 26, 2016. The meetings were accurate at the time of printing. I am away on research leave from September 22 to September 30, 2016.*

August 24	Edmonton Student Alliance (ESA)
August 24	Council of Residence Associations (CORA)
August 25	Alberta Graduate Provincial Advocacy Council (ab-GPAC)
August 29	Business Departmental Orientation
August 29	Reception for Debra Pozega Osburn
August 30	Chemical & Electrical Engineering Departmental Orientation
August 30	Physical Education & Recreation Departmental Orientation
August 31	MBA Departmental Orientation
August 31	Laboratory Medicine & Pathology Departmental Orientation
August 31	Alumni Council Pep Rally
August 31	GSA Fall Orientation
September 2	Residence Life Task Force
September 6	Residence Association Fee Collection Meeting with the SU
September 7	General Faculties Council Committee on the Learning Environment (GFC CLE)
September 8	Alumni Council Orientation
September 8	Electrical and Computer Engineering Departmental Orientation
September 12	Dinner with the Chancellor
September 13	Edmonton Coalition of Post-Secondary Institutions and Edmonton Student Association Presidents Meeting
September 13	Residence Budget Advisory Committee (RBAC)
September 13	Meeting between the GSA DEOs and the Associate Deans of the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research (FGSR)
September 21	Residence Budget Advisory Committee (RBAC)
September 21	Celebrate! Teaching, Research and Learning Ceremony

**GSA Vice-President Labour  
Report to GSA Council for the September 26, 2016 Meeting**

To: GSA Council  
From: Sasha van der Klein  
Date: September 23, 2016

Dear Council Colleagues,

Fall seems to have come to Edmonton while I was out of the country for a week. In Beijing, I couldn't do without shorts and slippers, back in Edmonton my scarf and gloves are again part of my biking outfit each morning. So I didn't only have to overcome a sleep jetlag, but also a true season jetlag!

As the other DEOs report, before I left, around the end of August, it was **orientation time**. It was good to see so many new students attending the orientation sessions of their department and also great to see a lot of new students at our own event in the Telus Centre. Departments differ quite a lot in how they inform students about their upcoming graduate studies, but luckily many of them asked for a short GSA introduction at their orientation. I hope that everyone that attended knows where and how to find us!

I have received many cases involving misunderstandings or misinterpretings of the **Graduate Assistant Collective Agreement** over the last couple of weeks. This year's changes got many departments confused and them handing out the new offer letters created some further confusion for recipients (and some follow up work for the GSA). If you have any concerns about your offer letter, even if you consider it a minor issue, just shoot me an email about it.

Regarding the **mental health portfolio**, September 12 was the University of Alberta's **World Suicide Prevention Day**. The Days of Action Committee on which I have a seat handed out around 800 postcards to create awareness around suicide and suicide prevention. Across campus there were many other initiatives such as the Identify, Help, and Refer Students in Distress drop-in Workshop in SUB. I have also been continuing my work on the **Sexual Violence Policy** Committee, reviewing this policy coming up for implementation in the new year. Regarding this same area of work, Sarah and I attended the **Forensic Experiential Trauma Interview**, known as FETI, workshop. This two-day workshop was basically aimed at law enforcement officers who do interviews with sexual assault victims to collect evidence. The biggest problem discussed is that how an officer would normally ask questions won't necessarily trigger memories in a trauma victim, as during the trauma, the neural pathways that create memory are inhibited. Christopher Wilson was a really engaging speaker and trained us in the way you should approach a conversation/interview with a trauma victim. Although this is extremely valuable knowledge, I do hope we won't have to use it in the future!

That was September, hope you have had a great start in the new academic year. And as always, let me know if you have questions, feel free to contact me any time!

Thanks,

Sasha van der Klein, GSA Vice-President Labour

Please find below a list of meetings I attended between August 23, 2016 and September 26, 2016. The meetings were accurate at the time of printing.

August 23	Meeting with a Graduate Student
August 23	Meeting with a Graduate Student
August 24	Health & Wellness Speaker Series Conversation
August 25	GALD Presentation
August 29	Reception for Debra Pozega Osburn
August 30	Meeting with a Student
August 30	East Asian Studies Departmental Orientation
August 31	Computing Science Departmental Orientation
August 31	Chemistry Departmental Orientation
August 31	Agricultural, Food & Nutritional Science (AFNS) Departmental Orientation
August 31	Neuroscience Departmental Orientation
August 31	Resource Economics and Environmental Sociology (REES) Departmental Orientation
August 31	Secondary Education Departmental Orientation
August 31	GSA Fall Orientation
August 31	Reception for Don Hickey
September 1	Sexual Assault Policy Discussion
September 12	Meeting with an Associate Dean of the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research (FGSR) (B Hogeveen)
September 12	Dinner with the Chancellor
September 12	Labour Relations Consultation Meeting
September 13	Meeting between the GSA DEOs and the Associate Deans of the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research (FGSR)
September 15	Sexual Assault Policy Discussion
September 19-20	FETI Sexual Assault Workshop
September 21	Meeting about AFNS Departmental GSA
September 21	Days of Action
September 21	Celebrate! Teaching, Research and Learning Ceremony
September 22	General Faculties Council Campus Law Review Committee (GFC CLRC)
September 26	General Faculties Council (GFC) Member Orientation
September 26	General Faculties Council (GFC)

**GSA Vice-President Student Services  
Report to Council for September 26, 2016 GSA Council Meeting**

To: GSA Council  
From: Ali Talaei  
Date: 23 September 2016

Dear Council Colleagues,

Hope you are all doing good. It has been a long time since we met at GSA Council, I look forward to seeing you on Monday.

The past few weeks were basically about welcoming newcomers to the U of A and giving them information about the GSA. Also there is some news about the ongoing affairs of the GSA which I would like to share with you.

#### **Orientations**

As the other DEOs report, late August and early September were mainly about orientations. Together with other DEOs, management team and staff, we have had a great time welcoming new students. As a GSA delegate, I participated in several departmental orientations (we partnered with FGSR this year as well) and also in the GSA fall orientation, where a lot of different service providers had booths at our information fair. This year for the first time we had joint orientations with FGSR, which was quite effective in terms of introducing the two organizations.

#### **U-Pass**

We had several meetings meeting with U-Pass stakeholders and I am glad to inform you that the University has kindly agreed to continue the subsidy of the U-Pass fee for U of A students. With the subsidy from the University, the cost of the U-Pass will increase by \$3 next year, then \$3, and then by \$5/year in the last two years of the new five-year agreement. The U of A is the only institution in Edmonton that provides a subsidy and we are grateful for the support.

#### **Health and Dental Plan**

As Sarah reports, we have had a series of internal discussion and town halls, which provided us the opportunity to gain insights about graduate students' needs and we have conveyed the feedback to Studentcare. The Board's review of this important service continues and Council will be kept informed of our discussions.

#### **Coffee Breaks**

The GSA Coffee Breaks are back again. With the great effort of the GSA office team and with the financial support of the Unwind Your Mind grant, we will offer a series of Coffee Breaks again this term. Watch the GSA newsletter for information and please join us in a relaxing environment to chitchat with your peers and enjoy some time out of your office.

Sincerely,

Ali Talaei, GSA Vice-President Student Services

## 15.1

*Please find below a list of meetings I attended between August 23, 2015 and September 26, 2016. The meetings were accurate at the time of printing.*

August 29	Reception for Debra Pozega Osburn
August 30	Music Departmental Orientation
August 31	Anthropology Departmental Orientation
August 31	Rehab Medicine Departmental Orientation
August 31	Reception for Don Hickey
August 31	GSA Fall Orientation
September 2	History & Classics Departmental Orientation
September 2	Philosophy Departmental Orientation
September 12	Dinner with the Chancellor
September 13	Emergency Financial Support for Graduate Students
September 13	Meeting between the GSA DEOs and the Associate Deans of the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research (FGSR)
September 14	Mandatory Non-Instructional Fees (MNIF) Oversight Committee
September 15	U-Pass Admin Committee
September 16	Political Science Departmental Orientation
September 21	Campus Food Bank Board Meeting
September 22	GSA Coffee Break
September 22	General Faculties Council Facilities Development Committee (GFC FDC)
September 22	Unwind Your Mind GSA Coffee Break
September 22	Alumni Awards

**GSA Senator  
Report to GSA Council for the September 26, 2016 Meeting**

To: GSA Council  
From: Jane Traynor  
Date: September 23, 2016

Dear Council Colleagues,

On September 8, I attended my Senator's orientation. There I was able to meet with a variety of other Senators, both old and new, all from various backgrounds. Everyone is quite helpful and excited to advocate for the University in a variety of external communities.

September 21 and 22 was the first senate plenary for both myself, and for Chancellor Doug Stollery. Chancellor Stollery has taken his new job in stride and helped to lead discussion around the role of the Senate in the new Institutional Strategic Plan – the primary focus for this Plenary Session.

I am still waiting on confirmation for which committees I will be involved in for this year.

If you have any upcoming events that you would like to have Senate representation at or have an initiative you feel should be brought to the attention of the Senate, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Jane Traynor, GSA Senator

**GSA Speaker  
Report to GSA Council for September 26, 2016 Meeting**

To: GSA Council  
From: Sulya Fenichel  
Date: September 23, 2016

Dear GSA Councilors,

This month I am submitting a written report in order to advise on some recent changes to the membership of GSA Council. According to the GSA Bylaw, the *composition* (as distinct from the *membership*) 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.” Currently, there are two voting seats on GSA Council (one for Interdisciplinary Studies and one for Medical Sciences). Both Interdisciplinary Studies and Medical Sciences do not offer graduate programs in their names, but are instead comprised of individual departments that already have distinct seats on GSA Council. I quote here from the material that accompanies the proposal for increasing the quorum of GSA Council and encourage you all to refer to that material:

*“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).”*

Given this, Interdisciplinary Studies and Medical Sciences will be removed from the composition of Council without in any way impacting the representation of graduate students on GSA Council. Likewise, a seat for the new graduate program in Women’s and Gender Studies has been added to the membership of GSA Council. I welcome any questions you may have on this matter, or any other matter involving GSA Council.

Sulya Fenichel, GSA Speaker

**GSA Elections and Referenda Committee (GSA ERC)  
Report to GSA Council for the September 26, 2016 Meeting**

To: GSA Council  
From: Leigh Spanner  
Date: September 23, 2016

Dear Council Colleagues,

The GSA Elections and Referenda (GSA ERC) meet on September 22, 2016, to continue discussion of the list of “takeaways” from the 2016 General Election and potential recommendations to consider in advance of the next GSA General Election. In that meeting we also discussed possible changes to GSA Bylaw and Policy on Referenda.

The GSA ERC already has a few additional meetings scheduled for the fall to finalize these discussions. Proposed changes to GSA Bylaw and Policy on Elections and Referenda will then be brought forward to GSA Council after their comprehensive review and consideration by the GSA ERC.

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



**GSA Executive Director  
Report to GSA Council for the September 26, 2016 Meeting**

To: GSA Council  
From: Courtney Thomas  
Date: September 23, 2016

Dear Council Colleagues,

While many of you may already know me, September marks my first GSA Council meeting as Executive Director and I would like to take this opportunity to briefly introduce myself.

I came to the GSA in 2012 as part of a succession plan (most recently I have occupied the position of Director of Services and Governance) with several years of experience working with the Edmonton Public Library System as well as the Office of University Governance here at the U of A. I hold a BA (Honours) and MA from the U of A (Department of History and Classics) and PhDs from Yale University (in History and in Renaissance Studies). Just prior to starting with the GSA I served as an instructor at Yale and at MacEwan University.

I never fail to be impressed by the level of engagement and enthusiasm manifested by members of this Council and the past four years that I have spent with the GSA have been both challenging and exceptionally rewarding ones. I am excited to step into the role of Executive Director and look forward to continuing in a new role with an organization that does important work on behalf of graduate students (and post-secondary education more broadly) and that has such an excellent reputation. As our Auditor communicated to you in July, it is important for the GSA to stay on track after years of rebuilding; I look forward to supporting the work of the GSA's elected leaders and also to maintaining that excellent reputation and organizational stability over time. To ensure a smooth transition, the former Executive Director, Ellen Schoeck, will remain part-time with the GSA on a temporary basis as a Director-at-Large.

Turning now to a snapshot of operational matters, the GSA office support team has spent the time since the last GSA Council meeting engaged with several matters, including:

- Planning and delivering, along with the Directly-Elected Officers (DEOs), the GSA's fall orientation (over 300 attendees, one of the largest turnouts yet)
- Ongoing support of the work of the GSA's Standing Committees
- Assisting the DEOs with delivering over 35 departmental orientations (this year we collaborated with FGSR to bring an FGSR rep to as many departmental orientations as possible to deliver a short, separate presentation)
- Planning, under direction from the GSA Board, for several fall GSA events (including a PD event and Unwind Your Mind Coffee Breaks, for which we secured grant funding)
- Following on the GSA's IT upgrade over the summer (reported on previously by Ellen), exploring options associated with a service agreement concerning the maintenance and security of our IT structure
- Assisting several individual graduate students on a range of issues
- Supporting the GSA Board with its comprehensive review of the GSA Health and Dental Plan and development of the 2016-2017 GSA Board Strategic Work Plan
- Assisting the DEOs with the ongoing review/renegotiation of various agreements (including U-Pass and TDIMM)

As always, the regular reports submitted from management to the GSA Board are included below and I welcome any questions you may have.

Best,  
Courtney Thomas, Executive Director

**Management Report to the GSA Board, August 24, 2016**

Dear All,

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

**Strategic**

- **Main Issues Dealt With in the Past Week:** assisting a graduate student with a complex issue; departmental orientation planning and scheduling; exploring a service agreement with IST and preparing associated documents; meeting with ATB representatives concerning potential sponsorship opportunities; planning for town halls on the GSA Health and Dental Plan; budget building; planning for the fall PD event (meeting with FGSR), Fall Orientation, and Departmental Orientations (the last week of August and first week of September will be very busy!!!!); review of GSA Bylaw and Policy on referenda; discussions surrounding bursaries and emergency funding for graduate students, preparing for a GSA BFC meeting.
- **Bylaw and Policy Review:** a review of all Bylaws and Policies for inconsistencies and errors and integration of the two (a draft has been prepared and a GSA Governance Committee reviewed it for the third time at its last meeting – additional changes are being made and another GSA Governance Committee meeting will be scheduled for the early fall).
- **Graduate Student Groups:** creation of an alcohol liability waiver (further thinking on this matter after a meeting with the manager, Office of Insurance and Risk Assessment) and ongoing relationship building with Student Group Services, Council remuneration (cheques will be issued in early September).

**Grants and Operations**

- Transfer of content to **Sitecore 3** and preparing documents related to the creation of a **potential service agreement with IST**.
- **Social Media:** Facebook = 820 likes (up 10 from August 17). Our Facebook posts reached 3 users this week and our “post engagement” count was 10. Twitter = 629 followers (up 4 from August 17). Our tweets earned 815 “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	\$33,855.58	23	120 (23 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	\$562.50	0	2 (0 pending processing)
<b>EBs</b>	\$130,625 (no periods)	\$123,872.00	0	5 (0 Pending processing)

**Week in Review – Office Operations:**

- Supporting the **work of the GSA Nominating Committee** (vacancies on the GSA Awards Selection Committee and the Provost’s Academic Advisory Council on Sustainability).
- Assistance with planning for **Coffee Breaks, Fall Orientation, Departmental Orientations, and the fall PD event**.
- Circulating **Agenda/Handbooks to departments**.

**Management Report to the GSA Board, September 7, 2016**

Dear All,

The following issues have dominated management’s attention in the weeks since the last GSA Board meeting on August 24, 2016:

**Strategic**

- **Main Issues Dealt With in the Past Week:** Fall Orientation (323 graduate student attendees) and Departmental Orientations (we have done 24 so far); planning for the fall PD event (meeting with FGSR); planning for the Unwind Your Mind coffee breaks; review of GSA Bylaw and Policy on referenda; discussions surrounding bursaries and emergency funding for graduate students, GSA BFC meeting, collection of fees for residence associations, meeting with the PDFA.
- **Bylaw and Policy Review:** a review of all Bylaws and Policies for inconsistencies and errors and integration of the two (a draft has been prepared and a GSA Governance Committee reviewed it for the third time at its last meeting – additional changes are being made and another GSA Governance Committee meeting will be scheduled for the early fall).
- **Graduate Student Groups:** creation of an alcohol liability waiver (further thinking on this matter after a meeting with the manager, Office of Insurance and Risk Assessment) and ongoing relationship building with Student Group Services, Council remuneration (cheques will be issued in early September).

**Grants and Operations**

- Transfer of content to **Sitecore 3** and preparing documents related to the creation of a **potential service agreement with IST**.
- **Social Media:** Facebook = 855 likes (up 35 from August 24). Our Facebook posts reached 1,227 users this week and our “post engagement” count was 327. Twitter = 645 followers (up 16 from August 24). Our tweets earned 4,300 “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	\$24,278.89	14	141 (14 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>	1	3 (1 pending processing)
<b>EBs</b>	\$130,625 (no periods)	\$123,872.00	0	6 (0 Pending processing)

**Week in Review – Office Operations:**

- Supporting the **work of the GSA Nominating Committee** (vacancies on the GSA Governance Committee, GSA Awards Selection Committee, Festival of Teaching Steering Committee, FGSR Council, and the Faculty of Science Dean Review Committee).
- Assistance with planning for **Coffee Breaks, Fall Orientation, Departmental Orientations, and the fall PD event**.
- Circulating **Agenda/Handbooks to departments**.

**Management Report to the GSA Board, September 14, 2016**

Dear All,

The following issues have dominated management’s attention in the week since the last GSA Board meeting on September 7, 2016:

**Strategic**

- **Main Issues Dealt With in the Past Week:** Planning for the fall PD event (generating a list of PD providers/resource hubs to invite and touring event space); planning for the Unwind Your Mind coffee breaks (first one is set for September 22 and the ones following are being coordinated with various departmental GSAs); town halls on the GSA Health and Dental Plan and the ongoing review of the Plan (collecting feedback, following up with Studentcare as needed, etc); developing a training program for the CRO and DRO; developing a schedule for the 2016 Early Call; right-to-strike legislation and associated consultation process; ab-GPAC budget; GSA FGSR Council Caucus; preparing for the first mailing for GSA Council on Friday, September 16; scheduling GSA ERC and GSA GC meetings.
- **Bylaw and Policy Review:** a review of all Bylaws and Policies for inconsistencies and errors and integration of the two (a draft has been prepared and a GSA Governance Committee reviewed it for the third time at its last meeting – additional changes are being made and another GSA Governance Committee meeting will be scheduled for the early fall (as noted above); ongoing review of GSA Bylaw and Policy on elections and referenda).
- **Graduate Student Groups:** creation of an alcohol liability waiver (further thinking on this matter after a meeting with the manager, Office of Insurance and Risk Assessment); ongoing relationship building with Student Group Services, Council remuneration (cheques will be issued in early September); ongoing discussions concerning collection of fees for residence associations.

**Grants and Operations**

- Transfer of content to **Sitecore 3** (to be completed by November) and preparing documents related to the creation of a **potential service agreement with IST**.
- **Social Media:** Facebook = 868 likes (up 13 from September 7). Our Facebook posts reached 825 users this week and our “post engagement” count was 232. Twitter = 648 followers (up 3 from September 7). Our tweets earned 601 “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	\$16,278.89	18	156 (19 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	2	8 (0 pending processing)

**Week in Review – Office Operations:**

- Supporting the **work of the GSA Nominating Committee** (planning for Early Call, vacancies on the GSA Governance Committee, GSA Awards Selection Committee, Shell Enhanced Learning Fund, Festival of Teaching Steering Committee, and the Bookstore Advisory Committee).
- Assistance with planning for **Coffee Breaks, Health and Dental Town Halls, Departmental Orientations, and the fall PD event**.
- Assistance with **Council remuneration**.

**Management Report to the GSA Board, September 21, 2016**

The following issues have dominated management’s attention in the week since the last GSA Board meeting on September 14, 2016:

**Strategic**

- **Main Issues Dealt With in the Past Week:** GSA Elections and Referenda Committee meeting and associated action; planning for the fall PD event (generating a list of PD providers/resource hubs to invite and seeking feedback from FGSR); planning for the Unwind Your Mind coffee breaks (first one is set for September 22 and we got a Gold Certification from Sustainability); questions from graduate students concerning the GSA Health and Dental Plan; ongoing review of the Plan; TDIMM agreement; 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.
- **Bylaw and Policy Review:** a review of all Bylaws and Policies for inconsistencies and errors and integration of the two (a draft has been prepared and a GSA Governance Committee reviewed it for the third time at its last meeting – additional changes are being made and another GSA Governance Committee meeting will be scheduled for the early fall; 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.
- **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).
- **Social Media:** Facebook = 875 likes (up 7 from September 14). Our Facebook posts reached 889 users this week and our “post engagement” count was 39. Twitter = 652 followers (up 4 from September 14). Our tweets earned 955 “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	\$7,663.89	17	173 (20 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, Shell Enhanced Learning Fund, Festival of Teaching Steering Committee, and the Bookstore Advisory Committee).
- Assistance with planning for **Unwind Your Mind Coffee Breaks, Health and Dental Town Halls, and 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.