

GSA Council Meeting MINUTES
Monday, 15 October 2018 at 6:00 pm
2-100 University Hall, Van Vliet Complex

IN ATTENDANCE:

Sasha van der Klein (President)	Rongrong Zhang (Business PhD)	Jonathan Lai (Human Ecology)	David Tandio (Pharmacology)
Masoud Aliramezani (VP Academic)	Karl Roesner; Brett Roughead (Cell Biology)	Shweta Sridharan (Internetworking)	Hamdah Al Nebaihi (Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences)
Zhihong Pan (VP External)	Michael Armstrong (Chemistry)	Janita Frantsi (Kinesiology, Sport & Recreation)	Mattia Sorgon (Philosophy)
Beth Richardson (VP Labour)	Pedro Mateo (Civil & Environmental Engineering)	Jiaao Yu (Lab Med & Pathology)	Kimberley Dice (Physical Therapy)
Fahed Elian (VP Student Services)	Craig St. Jean (Communication Sciences & Disorders)	Tabatha Plesuk; Julia Guy (Library & Info Studies)	Scott Karbashewski (Physics)
Pranidhi Baddam (Speaker)	Dylan Ashley (Computing Science)	Alexander Rice (Linguistics)	Yilun Wu (Physiology)
Vahid Ayan (Chief Returning Officer)	Julie Piche (Dentistry)	Michelle Michelle (Math & Statistical Sciences)	Jason Zhang (Political Science)
Amritha Prasad (Deputy Returning Officer)	Kenzie Gordon (Digital Humanities)	Milad Nazarahari (Mechanical Engineering)	Daniela Gomez (Psychiatry)
Ahsan Ahmed (Senator)	Deneh'Cho Thompson (Drama)	Nicole Noel (Medical Genetics)	William Service (Psychology)
Radhika Chakraborty (Councillor-at-Large)	Alex Sheen (Earth & Atmospheric Sciences)	Kevin Joannou (Medical Microbiology & Immunology)	Alexandra Loverock (Public Health)
Marc Waddingham (Councillor-at-Large)	Alexandra San Diego (East Asian Studies)	Sabitha Rajaruban (Medicine)	Alesha Reed (Rehab Science)
Melissa Woghiren (Councillor-at-Large)	Areej Alshammiry (Educational Policy Studies)	Shahnaz Shahtoosi (Modern Languages and Cultural Studies)	Melody Everest (Religious Studies)
Andrew Woodman (Councillor-at-Large)	Chantal Labonté (Educational Psychology)	Rebecca Long (Neuroscience)	Jared Fath (Renewable Resources)
Elizabeth Goldberg (Anthropology)	Golam Kibria Chowdhury; Salah Al Heejawi (Electrical & Computer Engineering)	Albina Karpman (Nursing)	Yicong Luo (Resources Economics & Environmental Sociology)
Brianna Greenwood (Biochemistry)	Nicole Jamison (Elementary Education)	Heather Capel (Occupational Therapy)	Robert Piazza (Secondary Education)
Ruhul Amin (Biological Sciences)	Krista Coté (English & Film Studies)	Braden Chow; Joanne Smith (Oncology)	Jon Mora (Surgery)
Ashmita De (Biomedical Engineering)	Bethany McMillan (History & Classics)	Khushmol Dhaliwal (Paediatrics)	Esra Kazanbas (Women's & Gender Studies)
Teddy Carter (Business MBA)			

Guests: Marion Haggarty-France (University Secretary and United Way Campaign Co-Chair); Doug Stollery (Chancellor); Chloe Chalmers (Manager, Alumni Career Services); Raji Chokkalingam (Internetworking; Deputy Speaker Candidate); Christie Li (Medical Genetics; Deputy Speaker Candidate); Ambuj Punia (Mechanical Engineering; GSA Awards Selection Committee)

Candidate); Abubakar Abdulkadir (History & Classics; GSA Awards Selection Committee Candidate); Prashanth Karupothula (Mechanical Engineering; GSA Awards Selection Committee Candidate); Brent Constantin (Earth & Atmospheric Sciences; GSA Awards Selection Committee Candidate; GSA Elections & Referenda Committee Candidate); Nashwan Naji (Biomedical Engineering; GSA Elections & Referenda Committee Candidate); Siddharth Patel (Mechanical Engineering; GSA Elections & Referenda Committee Candidate); Victor Silvo (Computing Science); Deanna Starr (Occupational Therapy).

Speaker Praniidhi Baddam in the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 6:01 pm.

Roll Call

1. Roll Call of GSA Council Members in Attendance

Approval of Agenda

2. Approval of the 15 October 2018 Consolidated Agenda

Members had before them the 15 October 2018 Consolidated Agenda, which had been previously distributed on 12 October 2018. K Gordon **MOVED**; D Ashley **SECONDED**.

Motion **PASSED** unanimously.

Approval of Minutes

3. Minutes from the 17 September 2018 GSA Council meeting

Members had before them the 17 September 2018 GSA Council Minutes, which had been previously distributed on 5 October 2018. K Gordon **MOVED**; J Lai **SECONDED**.

Motion **PASSED** unanimously.

Changes in GSA Council Membership

4. Changes in GSA Council Membership

- i. **Introduction of New GSA Council Members:** A Sheen (Earth & Atmospheric Sciences); A San Diego (East Asian Studies); E Kazanbas (Women's & Gender Studies); M Waddingham (CAL); J Smith (Oncology); K Coté (English & Film Studies); K Joannou (Medical Microbiology & Immunology).
- ii. **Farewell to Departing GSA Council Members:** K Roesner (Cell Biology).

Council Member Announcements

5. Council Member Announcements

S van der Klein invited graduate students to attend the GSA Halloween event for parents and kids. She indicated that there would be candy, games, and prizes for kids and coffee and candy for parents. The event was on 31 October 2018 at 2 PM in Triffo Hall; all were welcome (whether you accompany a child or not) and costumes were encouraged.

F Elian reminded GSA Council of the GSA Funding 101 taking place on 18 October 2018 at 1:00 PM and invited members to visit the GSA website for more information.

Presentations:

6. University of Alberta United Way Campaign

Zhihong Pan (VP External) presented the item and introduced the guests, Marion Haggarty-France (University Secretary and United Way Campaign Co-Chair) and Doug Stollery (Chancellor).

D Stollery and M Haggarty-France introduced themselves; D Stollery gave GSA Council a brief introduction to the United Way, a charitable agency with the mission to create pathways out of poverty in the community. He explained that United Way was an international organization with chapters based in different communities; money raised stays in each community. He indicated that the United Way supported more than 145,000 people living in poverty by funding more than 50 social agencies in the Edmonton region and programs include those that help children succeed in school, financial literacy, affordable housing and food, supports for mental health, domestic violence, and support for high-risk youth, including the 211 network (24-7 referral service for counselling and crisis intervention).

D Stollery noted that the University supported the United Way and their services were open to all students. He added that some programs on campus were supported by the United Way, including Community Service Learning and various co-ops, and

that the 211 Service had expanded to provide information about on and off campus services for students. He added that graduate students could take on a leadership role in the United Way and share their time and talent with their community, including sharing information about United Way services, making donations, and joining in volunteer activities to drive donations. S van der Klein acknowledged that most graduate students did not have much money to donate but encouraged GSA Council members to speak to their Deans or Chairs and encourage them to donate.

GSA Council members posed a series of question, including but not limited to, details about the 211 services (funding for 211 came from a variety of places, including donations and government funding); details about different programs that received funding from the United Way (All in for Youth - provides wraparound services for kids from vulnerable communities; volunteers to help kids get ready for school, provided food and after school care); whether there were any programs for graduate students in particular (all United Way services were available to all, including graduate students); and what the U of A's fundraising goal was (\$800,000; all funds stay in the community).

7. Alumni Career Services: UAlberta Switchboard

Fahed Elian (VP Student Services) presented the item and introduced the guest, Chloe Chalmers (Manager, Alumni Career Services).

C Chalmers introduced the online UAlberta Switchboard tool, noting that graduate students could use it to ask for, or offer, a variety of services and networking opportunities, and that the overall intention of the tool focused on career and professional growth. C Chalmers indicated that UAlberta students, staff, and alumni could utilize Switchboard and that anyone logging in with a ualberta email address would be automatically approved. She explained that, if users chose to include more personal information on their profiles, this helped the website send them more relevant content. She added that the Alumni Association launched this tool in May and was now in the process of rolling it out to students. C Chalmers indicated that graduate students could use Switchboard to find professional development opportunities and reviewed how users could utilize the platform.

GSA Council members posed a series of questions including, but not limited to, how Switchboard differed from LinkedIn (Switchboard was not focused on an individual's profile and it could be less intimidating for users to network with individuals on Switchboard, compared to LinkedIn; Alumni wanted to use this tool to connect with and provide assistance to students); whether there was the option to post anonymously on the site (users were encouraged to make things personal, as the tool tried to mirror a real-life community and to connect individuals through sincere personal requests); whether users had to login every day to check posts, or if they could receive notifications within certain categories (notifications relevant to the user could be sent, based on the interests and areas of expertise they select in their profiles); whether there was a mobile friendly app for Switchboard (there was an app, but C Chalmers encouraged utilization of the website and noted that the website was mobile friendly); having Switchboard personal profiles linked to an individual's name through Google searches (C Chalmers indicated that she did not know the answer to this question and would look into it); how the Switchboard license was paid for and if there were any user costs (it was free to use the tool and there were no advertisements, as the Alumni Association paid for the license); and whether there could be specific tags to advertise positions related to the Graduate Student Internship Program (GSIP) (C Chalmers reviewed the various ways to search for posts).

Action Items:

8. Recommended Changes to GSA Bylaw and Policy on Elections

Yilun Wu (GSA Elections and Referenda Committee member) presented the item.

MOTION BEFORE GSA COUNCIL: That the GSA Council, on the recommendation of the GSA Elections and Referenda Committee, **APPROVE** the recommended changes to GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section I: Elections, as shown in the attached double column document and effective upon approval of GSA Council.

Y Wu summarized the recommended changes that were also addressed at the September meeting of GSA Council, which included changes in the qualifications to the GSA Chief Returning Officer (CRO) position, the removal of slates, prohibiting the use of moderated mailing lists, requiring that all campaign printing be done through SUBPrint, removal of the current prohibition on campaigning in any spaces that require swipe card access, and establishing a more formal process for bringing forward complaints to the GSA CRO. There were no questions.

MOTION: That the GSA Council, on the recommendation of the GSA Elections and Referenda Committee, **APPROVE** the recommended changes to GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section I: Elections, as shown in the attached double column document and effective upon approval of GSA Council. J Fath **MOVED**; Y Wu **SECONDED**.

Motion **PASSED**. Six Abstentions (S van der Klein, M Aliramezani, Z Pan, B Richardson, F Elian, and M Waddingham).

9. Recommended Changes to GSA Bylaw and Policy on Graduate Student Groups

Sasha van der Klein (President) and Fahed Elian (VP Student Services) presented the item.

MOTION BEFORE GSA COUNCIL: That the GSA Council, on the recommendations of GSA Governance Committee and GSA Board, **APPROVE** the recommended changes to GSA Bylaw and Policy and the addition of GSA Policy on Graduate Student Groups, as shown 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 GSA Policy.

S van der Klein explained that these changes were mostly editorial and concerned clarifying the nature of groups for the purpose of the GSA Council remuneration policy.

GSA Council Members posed a series of questions, including but not limited to, the distinction between academic and non-commercial groups and those classified as social or recreational and if the language could be more representative (wording was meant to capture the nature of academic groups, which departmental groups were; the point was to distinguish these from groups that were purely social in nature while allowing for social components among academic groups) and clarification on if graduate students interested in pursuing social clubs registered through Student Groups Services (groups had to be registered through Student Group Services regardless; the GSA designation was primarily so the GSA can fund academic events, not social events).

MOTION: That the GSA Council, on the recommendations of GSA Governance Committee and GSA Board, **APPROVE** the recommended changes to GSA Bylaw and Policy and the addition of GSA Policy on Graduate Student Groups, as shown 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 GSA Policy. S van der Klein **MOVED**; M Waddingham **SECONDED**.

Motion **PASSED** unanimously.

For Discussion:

10. GSA Board Strategic Work Plan: Update to GSA Council

Sasha van der Klein (President) presented the item.

S van der Klein presented GSA Council members with a new format for the updates to GSA Council on the GSA Board Strategic Work Plan (SWP); each Vice-President providing their own update on aspects of their own portfolios. She added that updates would be provided again in January and April as well. She indicated that her team and herself continued to advocate for guaranteed, transparent, and sustainable funding for graduate students and added that there was willingness within University administration but this was a slow moving process. She noted they were also working on making quality supervision an institutional priority. She added that both these goals were important long-term goals.

M Aliramezani noted that his two main objectives within his portfolio were monitoring the frequency of supervisory committee meetings and expanding networking and mentorship opportunities for graduate students. He explained that supervisory committee meetings were mandatory for PhD students but not for all Masters students (dependent on department). He added that the GSA would be circulating a survey on supervisory meetings to graduate students shortly and encouraged GSA Council members and their fellow graduate students to participate. He noted that he had shared his concern about graduate students not always having regular supervisory committee meetings with the Dean of the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research (FGSR), stating that the GSA would like supervisory committee meetings to be included in any FGSR initiative to track academic milestones. M Aliramezani noted that funding for opportunities through the Graduate Student Internship Program was available until 2019 and that he was working, through the Professional Development Advisory Board, to increase the awareness of the program with external stakeholders.

Z Pan also highlighted two items: finalizing the discussion with the Students' Union concerning the collection of residence fees (following a GSA Board survey to graduate students in residences); and attendance at the ThinkGrad conference in Winnipeg to connect with other leaders from across Canada.

B Richardson focused on items in her portfolio that were finished noting that the nature of her portfolio was such that many aspects could never really be concluded (advocacy, conflict resolution, etc). She noted that she was currently working on advocating for safe working and living conditions on campus through the Campus and Facilities Safety and Security (CFSS) Working Group. She added that the Working Group's report would soon be presented to University governance to ensure

safety on campus. She also noted that she had been working on open access data and research collection with the Tri-Council agencies to address issues faced by graduate students in terms of data management practices.

F Elian reported two accomplishments, noting that representatives from the Academic Success Centre would bring in a new initiative targeted to graduate students using the GSA subsidy provided annually. He also noted that GSA Council recently voted to add occupational therapy services to the GSA Health and Dental Plan with no change to the annual Plan fee.

GSA Council members posed a series of questions, including but not limited to, specific details around the “Indigenous initiatives” referred to in the SWP, how these metrics can be marked by an indigenous perspective, and who is developing the metrics (regular meeting with representatives of the Indigenous Graduate Students’ Association (IGSA) to learn about barriers and challenges, advocating for group space; meeting with the informal Indigenous representative on the Board of Governors; meeting with representatives from the Indigenous Initiatives office about the importance of Indigenous graduate students; the IGSA is advocating for ways to have Indigenous voices heard at different student leader summits, through the Alberta Graduate Provincial Advocacy Council (ab-GPAC)).

Elections

11. GSA Council Elections

K Gordon (Vice-Chair of the GSA Nominating Committee) presented the item and introduced the nominees, who were given the opportunity to address GSA Council by responding to a question provided in advance. K Gordon asked the following question of the candidates for GSA Deputy Speaker and the candidates were given 45 seconds to respond: “Please tell GSA Council what motivated you to run for this position.”

Nominees for GSA Deputy Speaker:

Raji Chokkalingam (Internetworking)
Christie Li (Medical Genetics)

GSA Standing Committees

- a. GSA Appeals and Complaints Board (1 vacancy)

Nominee for GSA Appeals and Complaints Board:

Samantha Wesch (Women’s and Gender Studies)

- b. GSA Awards Selection Committee (2 vacancies)

Nominee for GSA Awards Selection Committee:

Abubakar Sadiq Abdulkadir (History & Classics)
Brent Constantine (Earth & Atmospheric Sciences)
Prashanth Karupothula (Mechanical Engineering)
Ambuj Punia (Mechanical Engineering)

- c. GSA Elections and Referenda Committee (1 vacancy)

K Gordon presented the item and introduced the nominee, who was given the opportunity to address GSA Council by responding to a question provided in advance. K Gordon asked the following question of the candidate and the candidate was given 45 seconds to respond: “Taking 45 seconds, please tell us why you’d like to serve on the GSA Elections and Referenda Committee.”

Nominee for GSA Elections and Referenda Committee:

Brent Constantine (Earth & Atmospheric Sciences)
Nashwan Naji (Biomedical Engineering)
Siddharth Patel (Mechanical Engineering)

Reports

12. President

i. President’s Report:

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 12 October 2018. The report stood as submitted.

ii. GSA Board

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 12 October 2018. The report stood as submitted.

iii. GSA Budget and Finance Committee

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 12 October 2018. The report stood as submitted.

iv. GSA Governance Committee

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 12 October 2018. The report stood as submitted. In addition, S van der Klein stated that the GSA Governance Committee would soon be looking at a proposal to create a seat for an Indigenous graduate student representative on GSA Council. A GSA Council member asked whether this would overlap with the current GSA Council position for a representative from the Faculty of Native Studies (S van der Klein responded that these would be two separate positions, as not all students within the Faculty of Native Studies were Indigenous, and that the new position would be elected by the Indigenous Graduate Students' Association, which represented Indigenous graduate students across campus), and another GSA Councillor asked whether the new position would be voting or non-voting (S van der Klein responded that the full proposal would be brought forward to GSA Council on 19 November).

13. Vice-President Academic

i. Vice-President Academic's Report:

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 12 October 2018. The report stood as submitted. In addition, M Aliramezani stated that there would be a survey distributed through the GSA newsletter later in the week to help collect data from graduate students regarding the frequency of supervisory committee meetings. He encouraged members to fill out the survey, and to encourage their colleagues to participate as well.

14. Vice-President External

i. Vice-President External's Report

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 12 October 2018. The report stood as submitted. In addition, Z Pan stated that the deadline for the Government of Alberta Graduate Citizenship Awards was on 16 October, and that the GSA Awards Selection Committee's adjudication of these awards would begin shortly thereafter.

ii. GSA Awards Selection Committee's Report

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 12 October 2018. The report stood as submitted.

15. Vice-President Labour

i. Vice-President Labour's Report

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 12 October 2018. The report stood as submitted. In addition, B Richardson stated that as part of her work with the CFSS Working Group, she was looking for informal feedback on attitudes about working after hours and on weekends on campus. A number of members provided feedback including, but not limited to, the fact that there were situations where certain types of experiments required graduate students to stay late; whether access to buildings on campus after-hours would be restricted (B Richardson responded that through her work with the CFSS on the creation of a report addressing increasing safety measures on campus, they had been discussing ways to address security in buildings with low occupancy levels after hours, and emphasized that graduate students would not lose after hour access to their buildings); what could be done in situations where professors force graduate students to work late hours (B Richardson indicated that any graduate students in this situation under a Graduate Research Assistant Fellowship (GRAF) contract could come and talk to her); and a GSA Councillor shared that within their department, they had a new safety officer, who was more proactive about ensuring students were not working after hours in the lab, and there was now better awareness that students working with hazardous substances should not be working after hours. B Richardson indicated these were the types of stories she was interested in hearing, and encouraged members to email her with any safety concerns or additional opinions on this matter.

ii. GSA Labour Relations Committee

No meetings this reporting period.

16. Vice-President Student Services

i. Vice-President Student Services' Report

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 12 October 2018. The report stood as submitted.

17. Senator

i. Senator's Report

No written report at this time.

18. Speaker

i. Speaker's Report

No written report at this time.

19. Chief Returning Officer

i. Chief Returning Officer's Report

No written report at this time.

20. GSA Nominating Committee

i. GSA Nominating Committee Report

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 12 October 2018. The report stood as submitted. In addition, K Gordon stated that she wanted to draw attention to the Early Call for Talent and Training, which was offered each year in advance of the GSA General Election. She added that the program provided training to individuals were interested in running for one of the GSA Directly-Elected Officer and GSA Councillor-at-Large positions. There was a dinner scheduled for 25 October, and the training sessions would begin on 29 October. She reported that there were posters advertising the Early Call program, and encouraged any interested GSA Councillors to take one to put up in their department.

21. GSA Elections and Referenda Committee

ii. GSA Elections and Referenda Committee Report

No written report at this time.

22. GSA Management

i. Executive Director's Report

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 12 October 2018. The report stood as submitted. In addition, C Thomas stated that there was still a vacancy for a GSA Council member on the GSA Budget and Finance Committee (GSA BFC). It was emphasized that there was a minimal time commitment for this committee, with about 4 – 6 meetings each year, and that GSA BFC members did not need to have prior financial knowledge to join the committee.

Question Period

23. Written Questions

None at this time.

24. Oral Questions

None at this time.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:33 pm.