

## GSA Council Meeting CONSOLIDATED AGENDA

Monday, 15 June 2020 at 6:00 pm

Held online via Zoom

The GSA respectfully acknowledges that the University of Alberta is located on Treaty 6 territory, traditional lands of First Nations and Métis people.

**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. Any additional substantive material received after this mailing will be emailed as soon as possible.

**Reports** from committees, Directly-Elected Officers, and GSA Management are emailed the Friday before a Monday meeting so that the content is as current as possible.

**Speaker Pranidhi Baddam in the Chair**

### OPEN SESSION

**Attached  
Numbered Pages**

1. Approval of the 15 June 2020 Agenda (*suggested time: 1 min*)
2. Approval of the Minutes from the 25 May 2020 GSA Council Meeting (*suggested time: 1 min*)  
*Attachment:*
  - i. Minutes from the 25 May 2020 GSA Council Meeting **2.0 - 2.4**
3. Changes in GSA Council Membership (*suggested time: 1 min*)
  - i. Introduction of New GSA Council Members (*If you are new to GSA Council, please let us know it is your first meeting*)
  - ii. Farewell to Departing GSA Council Members (*If this is your last GSA Council meeting, or if your last GSA Council meeting is approaching, please let us know*)

### GSA Council Member Announcements

4. GSA Council Member Announcements (*suggested time: 5 min*)

### Action Items

5. 2020-2021 GSA Board Strategic Work Plan (*suggested time: 30 min*)  
**Marc Waddingham (President) will present the item.**

*Attachments:*

- i. Cover Letter from the President **5.0**
- ii. Outline of Issue **5.1**
- iii. 2020-2021 GSA Board Strategic Work Plan **5.2 - 5.8**

### Elections

6. GSA Council Elections (*suggested time: 15 min*)  
**Radim Barta (GSA Nominating Committee Chair) will present the item.**

GSA Council-Elected Officer Positions

a. Speaker and Deputy Speaker

*Attachment:*

- i. Nominees for Speaker (1 vacancy) and Nominee for Deputy Speaker (1 vacancy) **6.0 - 6.4**

GSA Standing Committees

b. GSA Appeals and Complaints Board (GSA ACB) (1 vacancy)

*Attachment:*

- i. Nominees for the GSA ACB (1 vacancy) 6.5 - 6.6

**Reports** (*suggested time: 15 min*)

- 7. President (**Marc Waddingham, President**)
  - i. President's Report 7.0 - 7.1
  - ii. GSA Board Report 7.2
  - iii. GSA Budget and Finance Committee Report (**no written report at this time; next meeting scheduled for 22 June 2020**)
  - iv. GSA Governance Committee Report (**no written report at this time**)
- 8. Vice-President Academic (**Sachiketha Reddy, Vice-President Academic**)
  - i. Vice-President Academic's Report 8.0 - 8.1
- 9. Vice-President External (**Anas Fassih, Vice-President External**)
  - i. Vice-President External's Report 9.0 - 9.2
  - ii. GSA Awards Selection Committee Report (**no written report at this time**)
- 10. Vice-President Labour (**Umesh Nimmathi, Vice-President Labour**)
  - i. Vice-President Labour's Report 10.0
  - ii. GSA Labour Relations Committee Report (**no written report at this time**)
- 11. Vice-President Student Services (**Sridhar Parasharamatham, Vice-President Student Services**)
  - i. Vice-President Student Services' Report 11.0 - 11.1
- 12. Senator (**Marla Palakkamanil, Senator**)
  - i. Senator's Report (**no written report at this time**)
- 13. Speaker (**Pranidhi Baddam, Speaker**)
  - i. Speaker's Report (**no written report at this time**)
- 14. Chief Returning Officer (**Amritha Prasad, Chief Returning Officer**)
  - i. Chief Returning Officer's Report (**no written report at this time**)
- 15. GSA Nominating Committee (**Radim Barta, GSA Nominating Committee Chair**)
  - i. GSA Nominating Committee Report 15.0 - 15.1
- 16. GSA Elections and Referenda Committee (**Jennifer Bertrand, GSA Elections and Referenda Committee Chair**)
  - i. GSA Elections and Referenda Committee Report (**no written report at this time**)
- 17. GSA Management (**Courtney Thomas, Executive Director**)
  - i. Executive Director's Report 17.0 - 17.7

**Question Period**

- 18. Written Questions (**none at this time**)
- 19. Oral Questions

**Adjournment**

**GSA Council Meeting MINUTES**  
Monday, 25 May 2020 at 6:00 pm  
Held online via Zoom

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

Marc Waddingham (President)	Kyla Cangiano (Anthropology)	Jessica Kennedy (Human Ecology)	Hamdah Al Nebaihi (Pharmacy & Pharmaceutical Sciences)
Sachiketha Reddy (VP Academic)	Jessica Grenke (Biological Science)	Evan Wong (Indigenous GSA)	Paolo Verdini (Philosophy)
Anas Fassih (VP External)	Georgio Cheruvellil (Business MBA)	Elaine Yip (Kinesiology, Sport, & Recreation)	Clinton Potts (Physics)
Umesh Nimmathi (VP Labour)	Jan Tang (Business PhD)	Jenn Laskosky (Library & Information Studies)	Robert Reklow (Physiology)
Sridhar Parasharamatham (VP Student Services)	Calvin Chan; Brenna Hourigan (Cell Biology)	Scott Perry (Linguistics)	Elise Sammons (Political Science)
Pranidhi Baddam (Speaker)	Omnath Ekambaram (Chemical & Materials Engineering)	Nishant Agrawal (Mathematical & Statistical Sciences)	Precious Amusan (Psychiatry)
Reza Azadi (Deputy Returning Officer)	Arsh Hazrah (Chemistry)	Shahed Taghian Dehaghani (Mechanical Engineering)	Lane Liddle (Psychology)
Alesha Reed (Senator)	Fernando Hernandez (Computing Science)	Nicole Noel (Medical Genetics)	McKenzie Tilstra (Public Health)
Paramita Chaudhuri Basu (Councillor-at-Large)	Julie Piche (Dentistry)	Kevin Joannou (Medical Microbiology & Immunology)	Carlee Wilson (Rehabilitation Science)
Nadia Daniel (Councillor-at-Large)	Jennifer McDevitt (Digital Humanities)	Aristeidis Boukouris (Medicine)	Justine Lejoly (Renewable Resources)
Tejasai Kommanpalli (Councillor-at-Large)	Collette Slevinsky (Drama)	Amber Peters (Modern Languages & Cultural Studies)	Michael Huang (REES)
Zeenat Ladak (Councillor-at-Large)	Qi Chen (Earth and Atmospheric Sciences)	Britt Fedor; Charbel Baaklini (Neuroscience)	Robert Piazza (Secondary Education)
Gopu Rakshith Reddy (Councillor-at-Large)	Alexandra San Diego (East Asian Studies)	Sadie Deschenes (Nursing)	Prof-Collins Ifeonu (Sociology)
Md Solimul Chowdhury (Councillor-at-Large)	Lauren Trafford (Educational Psychology)	Braden Chow; Shayla Mosley (Oncology)	Lindy Schaffrick (Surgery)
Mohammad Zubair (Councillor-at-Large)	Yina Liu (Elementary Education)	Matthew Benson (Ophthalmology)	
Zhiying Wang (AFNS)	Jane Allred (History & Classics)	Shubham Soni (Paediatrics)	

Guests: Robyn Paches (Program Manager, Studentcare); Neslihan Akpınar (GSA Councillor-at-Large nominee; Political Science); Marla Palakkamanil (GSA Senator nominee; Public Health).

Speaker Pranidhi Baddam in the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 6:02 pm. Speaker acknowledged the Traditional Territory of Treaty Six.

**Approval of Agenda****1. Approval of the 25 May 2020 Consolidated Agenda**

Members had before them the 25 May 2020 Consolidated Agenda, which had been previously distributed on 22 May 2020. R Reklow **MOVED**; R Piazza **SECONDED**.

Motion **PASSED** unanimously.

### Approval of Minutes

#### 2. Minutes from the 20 April 2020 GSA Council Meeting

Members had before them the 20 April 2020 GSA Council meeting minutes, which had been previously distributed on 14 May 2020. J Grenke **MOVED**; R Piazza **SECONDED**.

Motion **PASSED**. R Reklow Abstained.

### Changes in GSA Council Membership

#### 3. Changes in GSA Council Membership

- i. **Introduction of New GSA Council Members:** A Boukouris (Medicine); P Chaudhuri Basu (CAL); G Cheruvellil (Business MBA); MS Chowdhury (CAL); N Daniel (CAL); A Hazrah (Chemistry); F Hernandez (Computing Science); M Huang (REES); T Kommanpalli (CAL); J McDevitt (Digital Humanities); GR Reddy (CAL); J Tang (Business PhD); L Trafford (Educational Psychology); E Wong (IGSA); L Zeenat (CAL); M Zubair (CAL).

- ii. **Farewell to Departing GSA Council Members**

There were no departing GSA Council members.

### GSA Council Member Announcements

#### 4. GSA Council Member Announcements

No GSA Council member announcements were made.

### Action Items

#### 5. Changes to Coverage under the GSA Health and Dental Plan

Marc Waddingham (President) and Sridhar Parasharamatham (Vice-President Student Services) presented the item and introduced the guest, Robyn Paches (Program Manager, Studentcare).

**MOTION BEFORE GSA COUNCIL:** That GSA Council **APPROVE**, on the unanimous recommendation of the GSA Board, that coverage under the GSA Health and Dental Plan be amended as noted below, beginning 1 September 2020 and with the fee associated with the Plan to remain at \$500.36 per Plan member for 2020-2021:

- Coverage for major restorative dental services to be increased from 0% to 30% per Plan member per policy year
- Coverage for vision care to be increased from \$150 to \$200 per Plan member per every two (2) policy years
- An annual drug maximum of \$10,000 for drugs covered under the Alberta Health formulary, and \$3,000 for drugs which require the Special Authorization or Drug Exception process, to be implemented
- Eligibility for claims under the Psychology/Counselling benefit to be increased to include additional designations of Master's in Social Work and/or Registered Clinical Social Worker

M Waddingham noted highlights of the proposed changes included: the implementation of a drug maximum; the inclusion of Registered Clinical Social Workers under psychology/counselling benefits; increased vision care; and added coverage for major restorative dental procedures. S Parasharamatham also added that any questions about the Plan can be directed to his email ([gsa.vpstudentservices@ualberta.ca](mailto:gsa.vpstudentservices@ualberta.ca)). R Paches explained the changes to the Plan and their reasoning, noting that the implementation of a cap for prescriptions of \$10,000 would allow the GSA to keep the cost of the Plan low while impacting very few members and the fee for graduate students for 2020-2021 remains unchanged, but less money per Plan member would be transferred into the GSA Health and Dental Plan Reserve Fund.

GSA Council members then posed questions including, but not limited to: if there was an estimate for the cost in future years (R Paches clarified that there will be no impact to the cost for the next two years as a result of these changes but increased usage would ultimately drive the cost up so future cost increases could be anticipated and the GSA may want to consider a moderate increase next year to offset other future increases) and the unprecedented decreased usage in the current year (R Paches noted this should be considered as anomalous and should not be used to forecast future plan usage).

**MOTION:** That GSA Council **APPROVE**, on the unanimous recommendation of the GSA Board, that coverage under the GSA Health and Dental Plan be amended as noted below, beginning 1 September 2020 and with the fee associated with the Plan to remain at \$500.36 per Plan member for 2020-2021:

- Coverage for major restorative dental services to be increased from 0% to 30% per Plan member per policy year
- Coverage for vision care to be increased from \$150 to \$200 per Plan member per every two (2) policy years

- An annual drug maximum of \$10,000 for drugs covered under the Alberta Health formulary, and \$3,000 for drugs which require the Special Authorization or Drug Exception process, to be implemented
- Eligibility for claims under the Psychology/Counselling benefit to be increased to include additional designations of Master's in Social Work and/or Registered Clinical Social Worker. Michael H **MOVED**; Sadie D **SECONDED**.

Motion **PASSED** unanimously.

## Elections

### **6. GSA Council Elections**

Radim Barta (GSA Nominating Committee Chair) presented the items.

- a. GSA Councillor-at-Large (1 vacancy):  
Neslihan Akpinar (Political Science)

R Barta asked the nominee the following question: "Taking 45 seconds, please tell us why you would like to serve as a GSA Councillor-at-Large?" The nominee was present and given the opportunity to respond to in front of GSA Council members.

- b. GSA Senator (1 vacancy):  
Kyle Shanebeck (Biological Sciences)  
Marla Palakkamanil (Public Health)

The nominees were not present to address GSA Council.

## Reports

### **7. President**

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

Members had before them two written reports (from the former and current President), which had been previously distributed on 22 May 2020. The reports stood as submitted. In addition, M Waddingham drew attention to a number of prominent issues (after welcoming new GSA Council members and expressing regret that they could not meet in person). He noted that, as announced at the 25 May 2020 meeting of General Faculties Council (GFC), the University will be undergoing an academic restructuring process under the management of the President-Elect Dr. Bill Flanagan. This process will decrease the number of faculties as well as alter the ways in which the University operates. The timeline for this process is quite ambitious and is expected to wrap up by the end of the 2020-2021 academic year. He also urged GSA Councillors to watch for vacancies on GSA Standing Committees, as involvement in this vein was crucial to the work of the GSA. Significantly, there was currently a vacancy on the GSA Board (GSAB), which was a body that can benefit greatly from diverse membership. Lastly, he urged members to complete the survey, "[Feedback on GSA Services and Advocacy Priorities](#)," and to encourage their friends and colleagues to do so as well, noting that participation strengthened the GSA's advocacy to the University and to various levels of government.

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

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 22 May 2020. The report stood as submitted.

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

No written report at this time.

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

No written report at this time.

### **8. Vice-President Academic**

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

Members had before them two written reports (from the former and current Vice-President Academic), which had been previously distributed on 22 May 2020. The reports stood as submitted. In addition, S Reddy highlighted that the GFC Executive Committee (GFC EXEC) was currently involved in planning for the Fall 2020 academic term, including which courses will be offered in-person. Decisions such as this were made by the Chief Medical Officer of Health, Deena Hinshaw. He also noted his work on the Non-Credit Credential Framework, which was tasked with a number of non-credit programs that may be used as ladders to graduate programs, depending on the individual department. Lastly, he noted that the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research Policy Review Committee (FGSR PRC) had been working on alternative means by which applicants to the MBA

program could meet English language requirements, namely by way of a combination of work experience and an interview.

#### **9. Vice-President External**

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

Members had before them two written reports (from the former and current Vice-President External), which had been previously distributed on 22 May 2020. The reports stood as submitted. In addition, A Fassih brought attention to a joint letter by Public Interest Alberta (PIA), the Alberta Graduate Provincial Advocacy Council (ab-GPAC), and other post-secondary stakeholders, addressed to the Minister of Advanced Education and slated for a 26 May 2020 release. He also noted that his primary priorities for the coming year included pathways for immigration for international students, affordably on- and off-campus housing, and continued support for Michener Park residents impacted by its closure.

##### **ii. GSA Awards Selection Committee**

No written report at this time.

#### **10. Vice-President Labour**

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

Members had before them two written reports (from the former and current Vice-President Labour), which had been previously distributed on 22 May 2020. The reports stood as submitted. In addition, U Nimmathi noted that he spent much of April shadowing former Vice-President Labour Shanawaz Mohammad and, more recently, had been involved in meetings for the negotiation of the 2020-2022 GSA Collective Agreement. In closing, he urged international graduate students to look into whether they qualified for the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB), and noted that the GSA Emergency Bursary was currently accepting applications from graduate students experiencing unexpected financial difficulties.

##### **ii. GSA Labour Relations Committee**

No written report at this time.

#### **11. Vice-President Student Services**

##### **i. Vice-President Student Services' Report**

Members had before them two written reports (from the former and current Vice-President Student Services), which had been previously distributed on 22 May 2020. The reports stood as submitted. In addition, S Parasharamatham welcomed new members and outlined the meetings he had attended in the past month, including the Peter Lougheed Leadership College Academic Oversight Committee, the COVID-19 Infrastructure and Planning Working Group, the U-Pass Advisory meeting, and the e-Scooters on Campus meeting.

#### **12. Senator**

##### **i. Senator's Report**

No written report at this time.

#### **13. Speaker**

##### **i. Speaker's Report**

No written report at this time.

#### **14. Chief Returning Officer**

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

No written report at this time.

#### **15. GSA Nominating Committee**

##### **i. GSA Nominating Committee Report**

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 22 May 2020. The report stood as submitted. In addition, R Barta encouraged GSA Council members to get engaged. The GSA Nominating Committee has positions currently available and more will soon open up. Members should consider what kind of time commitments their schedules will allow, as there were a range in the level of commitment required depending on the committee.

#### **16. GSA Elections and Referenda Committee**

##### **ii. GSA Elections and Referenda Committee Report**

No written report at this time.

#### **17. GSA Management**

### i. Executive Director's Report

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 22 May 2020. The report stood as submitted. In addition, C Thomas stated that the GSA was currently finalizing its annual financial audit, which will come to GSA Council in July. The financial team was looking closely at the budget implications resulting from COVID-19 prevention measures and would have more information for GSA Council in July; although the budget will be impacted, the GSA remains in a healthy financial position. C Thomas reminded GSA Council members that funding was available through the GSA Emergency Bursary program and that the GSA had also made additional funds available through the Supplementary Bursary program through Student Financial Support.

### Question Period

#### 18. Written Questions

No written questions were submitted.

#### 19. Oral Questions

PC Ifeonu asked about other student associations across Canada advocating for a reduction or waiver of summer tuition fees as well as for funding periods for graduate students to be extended, wondering if the GSA has a stance on this. M Waddingham responded that, as Vice-President External, he had participated in a meeting with Graduate Students of Canada, a grassroots activist organization advocating for these types of policies, which A Fassih will now participate in. He noted the GSA was still working to reduce fees that are not being used in the current circumstances (such as for the U-Pass and recreation facilities). He also noted that the GSA had brought concerns about tuition to University Administration, who have indicated they cannot facilitate this. Extending funding windows has also been under discussion with the Dean of the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research; funding for TAs and RAs are defined in letters of acceptance funded through faculties and departments so those decisions must be made at that level, although institution-wide, consistent implementation would be more desirable and M Waddingham was advocating for this. A Fassih added that, at this point, no other University in Canada had waived tuition. M Waddingham reiterated his opinion that there were other priorities that could be aimed for that might be more productive than a tuition waiver, which was a significant request and unlikely to be considered by University administration and that discussions were ongoing.

P Chaudhuri Basu pointed out that the University was thinking about increasing student intake, which would help with revenue generation in light of the government cuts to funding and asked how the GSA was thinking of advocating to maintain the quality of graduate student education? M Waddingham pointed out that in these discussions the main conceit is that there was a difference between increasing undergraduate numbers and increasing graduate numbers, the latter requiring an increase in capacity at an institution level before demand could be met. In Alberta, there was an expected surge in the next three to four years among domestic students, based on population demographics. This could apply to course-based or practical programs. M Waddingham agreed that this is a concern and noted that the GSA was sensitive to it. M Waddingham also encouraged GSA Council members to get involved at their department or faculty level to help ensure graduate student voices are heard in these discussions and mentioned the President-Elect's town hall on Tuesday, 2 June, which was open for all to attend and where this issue would also be discussed.

MS Chowdhury asked if the discontinuation of residency at Michener Park would be postponed, given the current situation. A Fassih responded that there had been no change in administration's decisions to close Michener Park and that it had been made clear that the closure plans would not be altered. He noted that the GSA would continue advocating for moving support or possibly suitable replacement housing. M Waddingham also noted that there may be space available in other residences as enrolment was expected to be down in the fall and it might benefit Residence Services to fill these empty spaces, even at a reduced rate, by making them available to Michener Park residents.

### **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 pm.



Dear Colleagues,

5 June 2020

As many of you may recall, each spring the GSA Directly-Elected Officers (DEOs) develop a GSA Board Strategic Work Plan (SWP). The SWP serves to identify our priorities, key initiatives, and to direct the GSA's efforts in the immediate future, while simultaneously identifying areas where we can work with others in the University community.

This latest iteration builds upon past SWPs and continues on the work of past DEO teams on important issues such as improving the quality of graduate student supervision and other matters within its three broad themes of *Connect, Support, and Advocate*. This outward facing document will be released to University administration, other stakeholders, our advocacy partners, as well as to our membership at large; additionally, my team and I have set an array of goals for ourselves to track internally. These include, among others, improving engagement with GSA Council, extending outreach to GSA members, continuing advocacy for enhancing pathways to permanent residency for graduate students, extensive involvement throughout the Academic Restructuring initiative, and advocating for sustainable funding for the University of Alberta to the provincial government.

Perennial areas of importance which we will continue to engage with include but are not limited to discussions around tuition and fees for graduate students, supports for international graduate students, supports for Indigenous students, maintenance and development of GSA services and engagement opportunities, financial supports for graduate students, and the growth of the GSA's activities as a labour union for academically-employed graduate students. We have also built this SWP and our associated internal goals to mitigate the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on our membership, recognizing that the GSA will need to tackle a largely unforeseen future and the needs of our members for additional supports.

In developing these goals, members of the executive team participated in two discussion/development sessions in addition to our weekly discussions of initiatives at GSA Board meetings, hosted a virtual town hall for all graduate students on 22 May 2020, and solicited feedback via a survey to all graduate students, the results of which are currently under review. While consultation for this document has completed, we continue to be receptive to inputs from our members throughout the year and look forward to hearing from you should issues arise needing to be addressed.

Following GSA Council's receipt of our SWP for information, it will be circulated to University Administrators and we will begin meeting with key individuals to present our Plan and associated goals. As always, reports on our progress with these initiatives will be provided to GSA Council in October, January, and April, in addition to the oral and written reports we provide monthly.

Along with the Vice-Presidents, I am looking forward to a productive and engaging year working closely with the University's administration team, other stakeholders, and all of you as we pursue these goals on behalf of our constituents. I encourage you all to read the full 2020-2021 GSA Board SWP and look forward to discussing it in more detail at our June meeting.

In your service,

Marc Waddingham  
GSA President



## Outline of Issue

### 2020-2021 GSA Board Strategic Work Plan

#### Suggested Motion for GSA Council:

That GSA Council **RECEIVE FOR INFORMATION** the 2020-2021 GSA Board Strategic Work Plan.

#### Background:

The 2020-2021 GSA Board Strategic Work Plan (Board SWP) is prepared by the Directly-Elected Officers (DEOs), to direct efforts in the coming year and identify areas in which to work with others in the University community.

This year's Board SWP development started with the DEOs participating in two sessions to discuss initiatives for 2020-2021 (in addition to discussion at weekly GSA Board meetings). The DEOs hosted town hall to seek feedback from graduate students on 22 May and an online survey was also circulated through the GSA newsletter and the May GSA Council Summary. The feedback gathered through all these mechanisms has been incorporated into the materials before members. The GSA Board approved and forwarded for information to GSA Council the SWP on 3 June 2020.

#### Jurisdiction:

##### Post-Secondary Learning Act (PSLA), Section 94(3):

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

##### GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section F: GSA Standing Committees, GSA Policy, GSA Standing Committees, Section F.POL.3.2.a

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



# The Graduate Students' Association Board Strategic Work Plan 2020-2021

# Connect Support Advocate



## Our Vision and Mission

To advocate for all graduate students to the University of Alberta and all levels of government in pursuit of a safe, supportive, respectful, accessible, and inclusive community that fosters the multi-faceted roles played by graduate students.

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



### What is a Graduate Student?

A graduate student is a junior colleague who contributes to their field of study in pursuit of an advanced degree through collaborative work with the professoriate in research, teaching, and the development of University learning environments. These contributions may be accomplished through: extensive coursework and the development of capstone projects, theses, or dissertations (in pursuit of which graduate students are charged tuition and fees); academic employment (for which graduate students are paid); the co-creation and writing of scholarly work; contribution to the securing of academic funding; and participation in the community via presentations, conferences, and community engagement. The multi-faceted role of the graduate student takes place in an environment of mutual respect and fairness aimed at developing skills and knowledge for future careers, and is one that merits appropriate remuneration for labour in service of the enhancement of the institution.

### What is the GSA Board's Strategic Work Plan?

The GSA Board's Strategic Work Plan is the document that steers and prioritizes the work and initiatives of the GSA. The GSA sees this as a living document, shifting directions as needed as the provincial, federal, and University landscapes change. It is developed annually with reference to the Strategic Work Plans of previous GSA Boards, and provides a planning document for this and future years.

It is with special regard for the incalculable impact of the COVID-19 pandemic that the GSA executive team has developed the 2020-2021 Strategic Work Plan. The GSA is committed to continuing the work of supporting graduate students whose academic progress, financial situation, or physical and mental health were and continue to be affected by this pandemic.



Graduate students elect GSA leaders each February. Here are the 2020-2021 GSA Directly-Elected Officers (from left to right): Vice-President Academic, Sachiketha Reddy; Vice-President Student Services, Sridhar Parasharamatham; President, Marc Waddingham; Vice-President External, Anas Fassih; and Vice-President Labour, Umesh Nimmathi.

## The Graduate Students' Association

The GSA, as established by the *Post-Secondary Learning Act*, represents graduate students at the University of Alberta and provides a wealth of services to its members to enrich the graduate student experience. As a separate corporation, it is both *a part* of the University of Alberta and *apart* from the institution. The GSA Board believes that a healthy organization is nurtured through effective relationships with all stakeholders. To sustain the organization's long-term health and protect its excellent reputation, the GSA fosters a culture of respect and professionalism among staff and graduate student leaders, engages in regular review of governance processes, is committed to transparency and accountability, and ensures an annual transition process that facilitates the ongoing training of elected graduate student leaders.



*The GSA provides a wealth of benefits and services to its members that both enrich the graduate student experience and forge connections between graduate students.*

The GSA will:

- ◆ Continue to foster a culture of equity, diversity, and inclusion among its members
- ◆ Provide guidance to graduate students and aid them in navigating University processes and structures, while advocating for greater transparency around expectations and outcomes for graduate students
- ◆ Maintain engagement in discussions about space on campus

The GSA will create opportunities for graduate student awareness of and engagement with the GSA by:

- ◆ Ensuring the GSA remains responsive, effective, and efficient by regularly reviewing services and seeking feedback from members
- ◆ Evaluating communication methods to broaden engagement with our members, including academically-employed graduate students for whom the GSA acts as union
- ◆ Offering orientation and information sessions on key issues
- ◆ Offering engagement and recognition events
- ◆ Connecting with and supporting departmental graduate student groups and other graduate student groups and networks
- ◆ Developing a new outreach framework for GSA Council members and their constituents

### Did you know?

The GSA has:

- ▶ graduate student lounges at Triffo Hall
- ▶ rooms available for booking
- ▶ several fun events per year
- ▶ two large orientations specific to graduate students (we also participate in 45-50 departmental orientations annually)
- ▶ a weekly newsletter, website, and social media profiles that highlight events and ways to get involved

The GSA will foster collaborative and positive relationships with:

- ◆ The Government of Alberta, including the Minister of Advanced Education, and the City of Edmonton
- ◆ Members of senior University administration (such as the President, the Dean of the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, the Provost and Vice-President (Academic), the Dean of Students, the Chair of the Board of Governors, and the Chancellor)
- ◆ Other campus stakeholder associations such as the Students' Union, the Association of Academic Staff of the University of Alberta, the Postdoctoral Fellows' Association, the Non-Academic Staff Association, and the Alumni Association



# Support

*All graduate students are entitled to a safe and respectful study and work environment characterized by positive supervisory relationships and free from harassment, discrimination, and bullying.*

*In its role as a union, the GSA champions, advances, and protects the rights of its members as workers.*

The GSA will:

- ◆ Actively participate in campus wide health and wellness (including mental wellness) initiatives, as well as work (where applicable, in concert with University units) to develop graduate-specific opportunities in this vein
- ◆ Work to optimize the experience of its members during any academic employment appointment and to ensure the rights of graduate student workers are protected
- ◆ Continue work to ensure campus-wide compliance with the provisions of the Graduate Student Assistantship Collective Agreement, as well as work with the University to provide unique support for academically-employed graduate students whose employment is impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic
- ◆ Continue to provide financial supports to graduate students through the Graduate Student Support Fund
- ◆ Continue to support workshops and services that assist graduate students with their academic progress

## Did you know?

The GSA offers:

- ▶ GSA Emergency Bursaries
- ▶ GSA Child Care Grants
- ▶ GSA Academic Travel Grants
- ▶ GSA Graduate Student Group Grants
- ▶ GSA Recognition Awards
- ▶ GSA Health and Dental Plan

The GSA will:

- ◆ Support and collaborate with partners and stakeholders with respect to the establishment of a variety of high-quality professional development, internship, and co-operative education opportunities in recognition of the diverse future career paths ahead of graduate students
- ◆ Support the services offered by the Campus Food Bank
- ◆ Push for the ongoing review and improvement of safety and security on campus
- ◆ Support initiatives and programs aimed at environmental stewardship and sustainability



# Advocate

*A lack of stable funding and unpredictable increases in educational and other costs can cause significant strain on graduate students' health and wellness and can inhibit academic progress.*

*The GSA believes that graduate students should be provided with professional development opportunities that are essential for future career success.*

The GSA will:

- ◆ Continue the work of advocating to the provincial government, and sometimes the municipal and federal governments, to ensure that graduate students receive a level of education becoming of the University of Alberta as an internationally-recognized institution
- ◆ Continue the work of collaborating with the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research during the pilot phase and initial implementation of a new student-supervisor reporting and feedback framework, as well as continue advocacy alongside the Faculty for the establishment of a supervisory college
- ◆ Continue its advocacy work with the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research and the Office of the Provost on providing adequate and sustained funding packages for PhD students as well as developing special administrative considerations for students whose academic progress was and continues to be hindered by COVID-19
- ◆ Advocate for increased financial supports for all graduate students (as well as greater accessibility to these supports) in the face of coming tuition increases and the adverse effects of COVID-19
- ◆ Continue to campaign for new initiatives and programs (and support existing ones) that specifically support Indigenous graduate students

The GSA will:

- ◆ Advocate for sustainable, cost-effective, and well-maintained housing for graduate students, and support and assist graduate students living in residences, with particular regard for students displaced due to the Michener Park residence closure
- ◆ Campaign for enhanced supports and community building opportunities for graduate students who parent, and their families
- ◆ Advocate for new initiatives and programs (and support existing ones) that specifically support international graduate students
- ◆ Encourage the development and implementation of initiatives to prevent homelessness
- ◆ Advocate for high-quality graduate-level programs and courses and opportunities to provide graduate students with international research and study opportunities

## Did you know?

The GSA:

- ▶ meets regularly with the Dean of the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research and the Dean of Students
- ▶ is a member of the provincial advocacy group the Alberta Graduate Provincial Advocacy Council
- ▶ has seats on the Board of Governors, the General Faculties Council, and their sub-committees
- ▶ works individually with students to help them



# Events:

GSA Fall Orientation	Late August
GSA Fall Event	Early October
GSA Winter Orientation	Early January
GSA Winter Event	Mid February
GSA General Election	Late February
GSA Volunteer Appreciation	Early March
GSA Awards Night	Late March
GSA Coffee Breaks	One Friday Monthly

\*events subject to cancellation or change due to COVID-19 prevention measures



Come visit us at  
The Graduate Students' Association  
1-49 Triffo Hall  
University of Alberta  
T6G 2E1



780-492-2175  
gsa.frontdesk@ualberta.ca  
uab.ca/gsa



**GSA NOMINATING COMMITTEE (GSA NoC)****SPEAKER (ONE (1) POSITION FOR A GSA MEMBER) and DEPUTY SPEAKER (ONE (1) POSITION FOR A GSA MEMBER): TWO (2) NOMINEES FOR SPEAKER AND ONE (1) NOMINEE FOR DEPUTY SPEAKER**

As per GSA Bylaw and Policy, the GSA NoC will open nominations for Speaker, Deputy Speaker, CRO and DRO “on or about 1 May of every year” and nominations will be submitted in writing to the GSA NoC “by 30 May or the next working day” (Section D: GSA Officers, GSA Bylaw, GSA Officers, Council-Elected Officers, Section D.BYL.3.1.b and Section D.BYL.3.1.c). These positions were first advertised in the GSA newsletters of 8, 15, and 22 May 2020 with a nomination deadline of 27 May 2020. Two (2) nominations were received for the position of GSA Speaker. One (1) nomination was received for the position of GSA Deputy Speaker.

**There will be an electronic vote held at the 15 June 2020 GSA Council meeting to elect the Speaker and Deputy Speaker for 2020-2021.**

*If you and your alternate are unable to attend the 15 June 2020 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 15 June 2020 in order to cast your vote in advance of the GSA Council meeting.*

**Nominees for these positions are listed in alphabetical order by last name and will be presented in *reverse alphabetical* order on the ballot. ‘None of the Candidates’ will also be considered a nominee.**

**GSA Speaker**

1. Praniidhi Baddam (Dentistry)
2. Michael Trites (Physiology)

**GSA Deputy Speaker**

1. Priyanka Maripuri (Medical Genetics)

**Jurisdiction:**Section D: GSA Officers, GSA Bylaw, GSA Officers, Section D.BYL.3.1.d

*“The GSA NoC will follow its legislated process in forwarding one (1) or more nominations to GSA Council, except that the GSA NoC may not waive advertising. Note that the legislated GSA NoC process specifies that all vacancies will be advertised at least twice in advance of the nomination deadline. “*

Section E: Nominating, GSA Policy, Nominating, Section E.POL.3.2.a

*“The GSA NoC provides GSA Council with the names of nominees for all GSA Council-Elected Officer positions. These positions will be advertised at least twice in advance of the nomination deadline noted in the advertisement.”*

**Biographies and brief resumes of the nominees for Speaker and Deputy Speaker are BELOW on pages 6.2-6.4. Biographies and brief resumes are presented as received (ie not edited).**

Speaker and Deputy Speaker

**Qualifications as set out in Section D: GSA Officers, GSA Policy, GSA Officer Portfolios, D.POL.12**

D.POL.12.4.a “The Speaker must have a good working knowledge of the GSA, its structure, and its governing documents.”

**Duties as set out in Section D: GSA Officers, GSA Bylaw, GSA Officers, D.BYL.3**

D.BYL.3.3.c “The Speaker is responsible for presiding over all meetings of GSA Council.”

D.BYL.3.3.d “Duties of the Deputy Speaker and DRO are to assist the Speaker and CRO as needed.”

**Duties as set out in Section D: GSA Officers, GSA Policy, GSA Officer Portfolios, D.POL.12**

**D.POL.12.1 Duties of the Speaker**

D.POL.12.1.a The Speaker is responsible for presiding over all meetings of GSA Council and for acting in a neutral capacity and maintaining order and decorum in GSA Council so that GSA Council can conduct its business in a fully-informed, fair fashion.

D.POL.12.1.b The Speaker is responsible for dealing with any breaches of confidentiality arising in GSA Council.

D.POL.12.1.c The Speaker will see that an agenda package is prepared for all meetings of GSA Council.

D.POL.12.1.d The Speaker is ultimately responsible for review of the Minutes of meetings of GSA Council prior to their being distributed to GSA Council for approval.

D.POL.12.1.e The Speaker is responsible for tracking attendance at meetings of GSA Council.

D.POL.12.1.f The Speaker oversees the archiving of the official copies of the GSA’s governing documents and is responsible for ensuring that up-to-date copies thereof are available to members on the GSA website.

D.POL.12.1.g The position of Speaker totals approximately two (2) hours per week on average, except for weeks where there is a GSA Council meeting, in which case there is an average of approximately five (5) hours.

**D.POL.12.2 Duties of the Deputy Speaker**

D.POL.12.2.a As per Section D: GSA Officers, GSA Bylaw, GSA Officers, D.BYL.3.3.d, the “duties of the Deputy Speaker [...] are to assist the Speaker [...] as needed.”

**D.POL.12.3 Restrictions**

D.POL.12.3.a The Speaker and Deputy Speaker may not act in any other representative position for the GSA except as provided for in GSA Bylaw and GSA Policy.

D.POL.12.3.b The Speaker and Deputy Speaker will not campaign for or endorse any candidate or team whatsoever in a GSA General Election or by-election (see Section I: Elections, GSA Bylaw, Elections, Section I.BYL.5.4).”

**Nominations for GSA SPEAKER  
(ONE (1) VACANCY FOR A GSA MEMBER)  
Two (2) Nominees**

**1. Pranidhi Baddam**

<b>Other governance bodies you currently serve on (whether GSA or UAlberta)</b>	GSA Speaker (2019-2020)
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<b>Statement of Interest</b>
The skills I've gained from being the GSA Speaker for the past 2 years will be an asset for me to continue in this role. These two years have allowed me to develop an understanding of student governance in addition to GSA Council operations. I strongly believe that I have demonstrated my ability to manage challenging discussions meanwhile ensuring that every council members' voices are being heard. Additionally, in the two years, I have displayed an utmost commitment to my role as a GSA speaker by attending all pre-council and council meetings barring two. Moreover, I believe that I have been amicable and approachable to everyone including administrative staff and have ensured civility is maintained at all times during council proceedings.
<b>Bio</b>
I was born in India and raised in Edmonton. I am fluent in four languages (Hindi, Telugu, Punjabi and English) and I play and coach Badminton during my free time. I completed my Bachelor of Science Degree with a Major in Biological Sciences and Minor in Sociology at the University of Alberta in 2016. During my undergrad, I have been part of several student-run and student group services organized committees including being the Vice-President of the Heart and Stroke Students' Association; President of Canadian Foundation for AIDS Research Students' Association; Member of Student Group Services Granting Committee, Student Group Services Constitution Review Committee, Bears and Pandas Sports Legacy Fund Granting Committee as well as Interdepartmental Science Students' Society Granting and Constitution committees. I was also part of the organizing committee of Women in Scholarship, Engineering, Science and Technology's (WISEST) 35th Anniversary. During graduate school, I have been involved in my department's student research group, GSA council as well as being a Support Group Facilitator for Diabetes Canada. Overall, I am very passionate about learning new things and giving back to my community and I hope this is conveyed through my involvement in various groups while at UAlberta.
<b>Summary Resume</b>
I am a 4 <sup>th</sup> year PhD student in the Department of Medical Sciences (Oral Biology Specialization) studying the effect of Bone Morphogenetic Protein 7(Bmp7), a signaling molecule, on cartilage development. I work in Dr. Daniel Graf's lab and collaborate with several departments on campus including the Metabolomic Information Centre, Biological Sciences, Medical Genetics and Physiology. I am interested in being re-elected as GSA Council Speaker as this unique opportunity challenges me to work on my communication skills in addition to being informed about graduate student governance. Furthermore, my experience as a speaker for the past two years has been very positive as I had the opportunity to meet and learn from like-minded individuals who share the same passion for Student Governance as me. Lastly, I believe that if re-elected, I would bring stability and commitment to my role as GSA speaker which I believe has become a necessity during this time of uncertainty.

## 2. Michael Trites

<b>Other governance bodies you currently serve on (whether GSA or UAlberta)</b>	
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<b>Statement of Interest</b>
I have knowledge on how to facilitate a council meeting while maintain an impartial demeanor from my previous experience working as the speaker of the student council during my undergraduate degree at Acadia University. I have also worked for Elections Canada during the past two federal elections, most notably being on the leadership team for the Advance Polls on the University of Alberta the past two federal elections.
<b>Bio</b>
I am currently a 3 <sup>rd</sup> year PhD student in the Department of Physiology. Although my academic and professional interests are centered in basic sciences I have a strong personal interest in ensuring our governance is carried out in a democratic and appropriate fashion, hence my involvement with Elections Canada. Additionally, I am a highly competitive marathon runner being sponsored by The Running Room.
<b>Summary Resume</b>
My main professional attributes for this position would be my previous experience in both academic and federal governance. Specifically, I was the speaker for Acadia University's student council, presiding over a council of 20 members. Additionally, the speaker of Acadia's student council also oversees the electoral process. Additionally, I have held a variety of rolls during the previous two federal elections. Most notably, I was a member of the leadership team for the advance polling stations at the University of Alberta. I also helped facilitate hospital voting as well as was acted as a central poll supervisor on election day.

**Nomination for GSA DEPUTY SPEAKER  
(ONE (1) VACANCY FOR A GSA MEMBER)  
One (1) Nominee**

**1. Priyanka Maripuri**

<b>Other governance bodies you currently serve on (whether GSA or UAlberta)</b>	GSA Speaker (2019-2020)
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<b>Statement of Interest</b>
The experience and skills I have gained from being GSA's Deputy Speaker (2019-2020) will assist me to continue to be GSA's Deputy Speaker this year if granted an opportunity. The vast experience I have gained over the last year is not limited to understanding how GSA council functions but also includes gaining a deeper understanding of my roles and responsibilities as a GSA Deputy Speaker. As Indian Students' Association's Spokesperson last year I have broadened my communication skills. With the skills I have gained so far, I promise to deliver my best and stay committed to my role as I did last year, if elected.
<b>Bio</b>
I have completed by Bachelor of Technology Degree in Bioinformatics at Sathyabama University, India in 2017. Later, I have moved to work at Indian Institute of Technology Madras as a Project Associate at a Computational Systems Biology Laboratory. Apart from analyzing cancer genomes at IIT Madras, I have been an active member of the IBSE Initiative. I have also been selected as the Campus Tour guide where I have had an opportunity to develop an interpersonal rapport with other students. Outside this, I also have a passionate volunteer at DESIRE Society, an NGO working for HIV/AIDS Infected Children in Hyderabad, India. I have also organized several fund-raising events for these kids. At UAlberta, I am pursuing my graduate degree in Medical Genetics under the auspices of the Maternal and Child Health (MatCH) Program where I have been appointed as a Graduate Research Assistant. Last year, I have been involved with the Indian Students' Association (INDSA) one of UAlberta's biggest student bodies as their Spokesperson. Currently, I have taken up the lead role to be INDSA's President. I am an avid book reader and I can speak Hindi, Telugu and English.
<b>Summary Resume</b>
I am a first year Masters student at the Department of Medical Sciences-Medical Genetics under the MatCH program. It's a two-year thesis based program. My work will be in understanding the enormous complexity in the living systems and in understanding the cause of the underlying disease conditions by analyzing genomic data. My research program facilitates an interdisciplinary collaboration with departments of medical Genetics, Pediatrics, Obstetrics and Gynecology. I am interested in this position because I would like to explore and deepen my understanding of the student organizations whilst simultaneously improving my communication skills. I have always been a detail and task-oriented person with an ability to manage several projects at a time. I am also taking up the role of a supportive listener with the Canadian Mental Health Association this year. With all the experiences I have gained so far, I strongly believe that my skills will come in handy once again in assisting the Speaker with their duties. If given an opportunity, I will continue to be an ardent team player who is passionate about the work that has been entrusted in me.

## GSA NOMINATING COMMITTEE (GSA NoC)

**GSA APPEALS AND COMPLAINTS BOARD (GSA ACB) (ONE (1) POSITION FOR A GSA MEMBER): ONE (1) NOMINEE**

Information regarding the position for one (1) GSA member was circulated via the GSA newsletters of 29 May 2020 and 5 June 2020 with a nomination deadline of 9 June 2020. One (1) nomination was received for one (1) GSA member vacancy. The nominee was then interviewed by GSA NoC members who have been trained in procedural fairness by the GSA and have a record of demonstrating impartiality through their work on the GSA NoC. A member of GSA management was also present for the interview. During the interview, the nominee was asked a series of questions aimed at assessing their awareness of the basic tenets of procedural fairness and their ability to adjudicate potential cases in accord with those tenets (note as well that all individuals elected to the GSA ACB receive training in procedural fairness).

**There will be an electronic vote held at the 15 June 2020 GSA Council meeting.**

*If you and your alternate are unable to attend the 15 June 2020, 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, 15 June 2020 in order to cast your vote in advance of the GSA Council meeting.*

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

**1. Janine Tine (Elementary Education)**

Current GSA ACB membership can be found [here](#).

**Jurisdiction:**

Section H: Performance, Conduct, Responsibilities, and Attendance, and the GSA Appeals and Complaints Board, GSA Policy, GSA Standing Committees, GSA Appeals and Complaints Board, GSA Policy, GSA Standing Committees, GSA Appeals and Complaints Board, Section H.POL.7.1.a and H.POL.7.1.b

*"Eight (8) GSA members elected by GSA Council as voting members [and] four (4) Departmental Councillors (including the Indigenous Graduate Students' Association (IGSA) Councillor), alternates, or recent former Departmental Councillors, elected by GSA Council as voting members."*

Section H: Performance, Conduct, Responsibilities, and Attendance, and the GSA Appeals and Complaints Board, GSA Policy, GSA Standing Committees, GSA Appeals and Complaints Board, GSA Policy, GSA Standing Committees, GSA Appeals and Complaints Board, Section H.POL.9.4

*"The GSA NoC will interview all nominees to the GSA ACB and forward selected nominees to GSA Council."*

**The biography and brief resume received for the one (1) nominee is BELOW on page 6.6. The biography and brief resume are presented as received (ie not edited).**

**Janine Tine**

<b>Statement of Interest:</b>
I am interested in the GSA Appeals Complaints Board because I believe that people should have the opportunity to have their voices heard and their appeals and complaints considered from a committee diverse in experiences, cultures, and worldviews. In my work with various communities across campus and in the broader community (as evidenced in my resume) I believe that I have listened to a diversity of opinions from others, which positions me well to join the committee with a spirit of openness and an intent of neutrality and fairness. Regardless of whether a complaint requires further attending to or not, I believe that the complainant and respondents must be treated with kindness, respect, and dignity.
<b>Bio:</b>
I was born in Victoria, British Columbia, and grew up in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. My dad is a Status Indian and my mom is European. I earned my Bachelor of Education through SUNTEP (2000) and Post-Degree Certificate in Special Education (2008) from the University of Saskatchewan, and a Master's in Education (2010) from the University of Alberta (U of A). My ten years of elementary school teaching experience includes working as a Grade Two Teacher, a middle years Gifted Education Teacher, and a Learning Assistance Teacher for Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools.
<b>Summary Resume:</b>
<p>I am a PhD student in the Faculty of Elementary Education at the University of Alberta. While a Master's and/or PhD Student at the U of A I have served on the Elementary Education Department Council as a Graduate Student Representative, as well as acted as a Research Assistant, Teacher Assistant, and Principal Course Instructor. I also worked for the Canadian Indigenous Language and Literacy Development Institute (CILLDI) and the Canadian Indigenous Language &amp; Literacy Educational Studies (CILLES) at the University of Alberta by facilitating the First Annual Young Women's Circle of Leadership for CILLDI and facilitating an Elders' Forum for CILLES. Lastly, I served on the Community Connections Awards Selection Committee, GSA Labor Relations Committee, as well as the Office of the Registrar Library Advisory Committee.</p> <p>My Community involvement as a PhD student includes being a member on The Beaumont and Area Early Childhood Development Mapping Project (ECMap) Coalition for two years, The Town of Beaumont Child Care Advisory Board for two years, and the Beaumont and Area Early Childhood Development Coalition for Beaumont Family and Community Support Services for three years. Currently as a member of the Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools Early Learning Area of Focus Committee for my second year in a row, I help develop and enact the early learning strategic plan for the division. I am also an officer on the Mother Teresa School Community Council and have held this position since September 2018. Further, I am completing my second year as a mentor for Indspire Rivers to Success—an organization that supports Indigenous students in their post-secondary education journey. For the past two summers I have volunteered at the 4th Annual Xwaaqw'um Quw'utsun Youth Culture and Leadership Camp on Salt Spring Island B.C. At the camp we provide land-based education for Indigenous youth, as well as work towards reconciliation between the Indigenous and settler community.</p>

**President**  
**Report to GSA Council for the 15 June 2020 Meeting**

To: GSA Council  
From: Marc Waddingham  
Date: 12 June 2020

To my colleagues in Council,

Before I begin this report, I would like to reiterate the stance communicated in the statement we released last week committing to our continued stand of solidarity with our members impacted by hatred, discrimination, and structural racism. I need not go into extensive detail within this report, but recent tragedies have once again shown the world that we in the North American context need to do much more to prevent injustices that have become all too familiar to far too many people. The GSA Executive remains committed to standing beside and advocating for our members disproportionately affected, and I look forward to many positive, progressive collaborations with the Black Graduate Students' Association and the Indigenous Graduate Students' Association over the year, building upon the mutual trust and successes of previous years.

For those of you still in the province, which I estimate to be a strong majority, I hope you have had a chance to take advantage of the latest phase of the provincial relaunch strategy. Many of you have likely returned to some form of modified research capacity, and from my discussions with Facilities & Operations, compliance with the new Occupational Health & Safety requirements has been commendable. However, in the event that you experience working conditions you do not deem safe, and hazards have not been mitigated to an acceptable level, it is recommended you make an anonymous tip to Environmental Health and Safety who can then follow up with a safety check of the unit in question. Masks, sanitizers, gloves, and occupancy rules are not just essential safety precautions; they are your rights as university workers to preserve your health.

The Academic Restructuring process is now well underway, led by President-Elect Bill Flanagan, and being internally managed by the Provost Steven Dew. If you attended the town hall hosted by Dr. Flanagan, then you are already up-to-speed on the high-level vision of the project, including increased student enrolment, streamlined program offerings, centralization of redundant processes, and a reduction in the number of faculties. While this is understandably jarring, the interest of the campus community is engaged and will be required to ensure the transformation of the University of Alberta is successful. I have invited President-Elect Flanagan and Provost Dew to join a council meeting over the course of this year, and I encourage council members to begin familiarizing themselves with the U of A for Tomorrow project.

On the provincial advocacy front, am I glad to announce that the Minister of Advanced Education has cancelled both the Performance Based Funding Model and concomitant expenditure targets for the 2020-21 academic year. These initiatives would not only have left the U of A in an even more dire fiscal position, but would have been complicated by the COVID-19 pandemic's impact on our provincial economy. While all post-secondary stakeholders had a role in the announced delay, I have it on good authority that the strong, reasoned positions of student advocates were a key component of the outcome. While we still have upcoming challenges, including next year's budget reductions and the Alberta Vision 2030 system-wide review, this is a major strategic victory for post-secondary education in the province. We will continue to hold the Ministry, and by extension the provincial government, accountable to evidence-based approaches and ensure proper stewardship of our post-secondary sector going into the future.

Finally, as we will have already discussed (and hopefully approved) by this stage in council, the GSA Strategic Work Plan for 2020-21 has been completed, and advance copies have been distributed to our key stakeholders on campus. While elements from previous years are still in force, including major strategic priorities such as the Graduate Student Supervisory Accountability Initiative, we have also included a number of commitments to address the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on graduate students. Many of these effects remain to be seen and their full impacts are yet to be



felt, but we are committed to advocating for resolutions wherever possible to ensure the quality of academic work and experience remains at a high standard.

In closing, I am also happy to report that we recently received word from the office of the Provost that the funding available for the Graduate Student Support Fund (GSSF), which supports GSA Academic Travel Grants, GSA Child Care Grants, GSA Emergency Bursaries, and GSA Recognition Awards, will continue for 2020-2021 in its current amount of \$964,000. We are pleased that we will continue to be able to provide these support funds to our members in the coming year.

I am glad to field any questions you may have.

Kind regards,  
Marc, President 2020-2021

*Please find below a list of meetings I attended between 25 May 2020 and 15 June 2020 (not inclusive of weekly GSA Board meetings). The meetings were accurate at the time of printing.*

25 May-15 June	Semi-Weekly COVID-19 Update Call with Crisis Management Team
26 May	Meeting with B Milne, Vice-Provost and Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research (FGSR) Dean
26 May	Board Finance and Property Committee (BFPC)
26 May	Canadian Alliance of Student Associations (CASA) Digital Foundations Conference
27 May	Board Governance Committee (BGC)
27 May	Academic Restructuring Working Group
27 May	President's Installation Committee Meeting
27 May	Meeting with Edmonton Students' Unions re: U-Pass
28 May	Monthly Meeting with A Costopoulos, Dean of Students
28 May	Alumni Council Year-End Meeting
29 May	Board Learning, Research, and Student Experience Committee (BLRSEC)
1 June	Meeting with S Dew, Provost
1 June	Meeting with Students' Association of MacEwan University (SAMU)
2 June	University President-Elect Town Hall
2 June	University Associations' Meeting
3 June	Meeting with Students' Union (SU) re Mandatory Non-Instructional Fees (MNIFs)
3 June	Dean of Students Retreat
3 June	Meeting re Graduate Residence Students' Association (GRSA)
4 June	Meeting with Edmonton Students' Associations re: U-Pass Negotiations
4 June	Meeting with C Swindlehurst, Interim Vice-President (University Relations)
5 June	Meeting with a Graduate Student
8 June	Meeting with B Flanagan, University President-Elect
9 June	Joint Student/University Oversight Committee on Mandatory Non-Instructional Fees (MNIFs)
9 June	Meeting with B Milne, Vice-Provost and Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research (FGSR) Dean
10 June	Academic Restructuring Working Group
11 June	General Faculties Council Academic Planning Committee (GFC APC)
12 June	Spring Convocation
15 June	Presidential Transition Meeting

**GSA Board  
Report to GSA Council for the 15 June 2020 Meeting**

To: GSA Council  
From: Marc Waddingham, GSA President  
Date: 12 June 2020

The GSA Board (GSAB) reports regularly to GSA Council by listing its agenda items, Motions/agreements, and main items of discussion (meeting reports are also offered at each meeting). Motions of Agenda approval and approval of the Minutes are not included unless there were amendments made. Closed session items are not minuted. GSA Council members are always able to ask questions about items that were discussed in closed session. Open session Minutes are available upon request. The President, Vice-Presidents, and the administrative team 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 17 (Executive Director's Report to GSA Council) on pages 17.1 - 17.5.

**27 May 2020 GSA Board Meeting:**

Main Agenda Items:

University Support for the Graduate Student Support Fund (GSSF) and Graduate Student Assistance Program (GSAP); COVID-19 Update; and Meeting reports.

Motions and Agreements:

None to report.

**3 June 2020 GSA Board Meeting:**

Main Agenda Items:

2020-2021 GSA Board Strategic Work Plan; Career Centre 2019-2020 Summary Report on Use of the GSA's Subsidy; COVID-19 Update; and Meeting Reports.

Motions and Agreements:

**MOTION:** That the GSA Board **RECEIVE FOR INFORMATION** the attached summary report, as submitted by the Career Centre. MW **MOVED.** AF Seconded. **CARRIED.**

Members **AGREED** that the relevant DEOs should meet with W Rodgers, ask that funding to GSAP not be cut (and that it be increased so that a referendum would not be needed and provide a deadline by which the GSA would need to know the future of the University's intended support so that it could plan for a referendum as needed.

Members **AGREED** that a statement of allyship should be issued by the GSA following its circulation to the Black Graduate Students' Association and the Indigenous Graduate Students' Association for feedback.

**10 June 2020 GSA Board Meeting:**

Main Agenda Items:

Statement of Solidarity with BIPOC; COVID-19 Update; and Meeting Reports.

Motions and Agreements:

None to report.

**Vice-President Academic  
Report to GSA Council for the 15 June 2020 Meeting**

To: GSA Council  
From: Sachiketha Reddy Paspula.  
Date: 12 June 2020

Dear Council Colleagues,

I hope you all are doing great in these warm and sunny days. I have attended several meetings in the past month, and I am happy to share a few updates from those.

- The President and I had a couple of meetings with Dr. Brooke Milne, Dean of the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research (FGSR):
  - She spoke about the budget cuts the University is facing and mentioned that FGSR is committed to support graduate students but this will be an ongoing topic of conversation.
  - We discussed program extensions; if the department feels that it is necessary to extend the program to the next semester, it is their choice to do that. FGSR is trying to accommodate in the same semester but in some exceptional cases like essential research, with practical outcomes are paused due to COVID-19.
  - B Milne made clear that a tuition reduction is not in FGSR's purview.
- I attended the first FGSR council meeting in my term:
  - The discussion about the dual degree, joint degree and its conditions are brought up. The student must meet the requirements of both the home institution and the partner institution to get admitted into the dual degree program.
  - B Milne offered the GSA a seat on a subcommittee of the Public Health Response Team (PHRT) - Action Team 5. This team will engage with the impacts of COVID-19 on incoming and outgoing students at the University.
  - Another emerging topic is deferrals. Grad students have an option to defer their admission for up to 1 year. If the deferral extends beyond Spring 2021, their tuition guarantee can be revised. We will continue to discuss this issue.
  - The School of Business MBA program is planning to conduct supplemental exams for students with a 'C' or lower grade in their program. Students should request these from the Chair of the department; this exam covers the entire program syllabus and is conducted only once. This grade will override the previous grade. This is planned to be implemented starting September 2021.
- We attended a retreat with the Dean of Students office, which was an open discussion session about the issues students are facing, and might face due to these uncertain times. Dean Andre Costopoulos mentioned that the University is committed to providing good learning environments for all students.
- Changes to Mandatory Non-Instructional Fees (MNIFs) were discussed in the Joint Student/University Oversight Committee on Mandatory Non- Instructional Fees (MNIFs) meeting. Changes in MNIFs for the fall term due to COVID-19 are subject to presidential approval.
  - One item of importance that arose from this meeting was the challenges faced by Athletics and Recreation due to loss of funding from cancelled events and competitions. Based on the discussion with the province's Chief Medical Officer, a decision concerning possible reopening of gym facilities might be made in the coming days. But, with reopening, costs will be higher than usual to maintain all of the safety measures and protocols for COVID-19 prevention. I am sure we will hear about the challenges facing this unit in coming meetings.

## 8.1

If you have any concerns about this report/concerns regarding any academic-related issue feel free to reach me at [gsavpaca@ualberta.ca](mailto:gsavpaca@ualberta.ca). I will be more than happy to answer your questions.

Regards,  
Sachiketha Reddy Paspula, Vice-President Academic 2020-2021

*Please find below a list of meetings I attended between 25 May 2020 and 15 June 2020 (not inclusive of weekly GSA Board meetings). The meetings were accurate at the time of printing*

26 May	Meeting with B Milne, Vice-Provost and Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research (FGSR) Dean
27 May	Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research (FGSR) Council
2 June	University President-Elect Town Hall
3 June	Meeting with Students' Union (SU) re Mandatory Non-Instructional Fees (MNIFs)
3 June	Dean of Students Retreat
9 June	Joint Student/University Oversight Committee on Mandatory Non-Instructional Fees (MNIFs)
9 June	Meeting with B Milne, Vice-Provost and Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research (FGSR) Dean
12 June	Situated Knowledges, Indigenous Peoples and Place (SKIPP) Session
12 June	Council on Student Affairs (COSA)
15 June	General Faculties Council Executive Committee (GFC EXEC)

**Vice-President External  
Report for GSA Council for the 15 June 2020 Meeting**

To: GSA Council  
From: Anas Fassih  
Date: 12 June 2020

Dear Council members,

I trust you are all well and are keeping spirits high in this difficult time. I am delighted to share a few highlights from the meetings I attended this month:

- I attended a Graduate Students of Canada Conference Call re COVID-19 on 26 May and the main point was to write op-eds about reducing tuition fees for fall 2020 since everything is moved to online delivery. I raised that we are discussing the extension of funding years for graduate students and noted that our GSA President had written a letter to that end, which will be approved by the GSA Board prior to being sent. They requested that I share that letter with them so they can consider asking the same from their own institutions. This was the last meeting held with Grad Students Canada, as the subsequent two meetings were cancelled. For more updates, I'd recommend to follow their Facebook page.
- I attended the three-day Canadian Alliance of Student Associations (CASA) Digital Foundations Conference on 26-28 May. The main highlights included the CASA Strategic Work plan for the next year, which is underpinned by four key themes: affordability, accessibility, innovation and equality. The key priority area for CASA advocacy at this time is funding for digital infrastructure as most of its members/delegates raised the concern about the availability of internet in remote areas and, thus, some efforts are needed to advocate for more funding from Tri-Council agencies on this front. Other key areas for advocacy are: mental health funding; inclusion of Indigenous students in decision making processes across the board and beyond just land acknowledgement; combatting sexual violence on campuses; providing extra funding or loans for students who parent; and advocating for the waiver of non-instructional fees without consequences of laying off staff. I'd like to underscore that we are not a member of CASA; we are an observer and I attended for information useful in our own advocacy efforts.
- I attended an Alberta Graduate Provincial Advocacy Council (ab-GPAC) board meeting on 3 June. We worked on ideas for the ab-GPAC's strategic work plan for provincial advocacy. In line with my priorities as Vice-President External with GSA, I emphasized three pillars for advocacy: permanent residency for international students, funding for mental health and increase of scholarships for students, and housing.
- I missed the Alumni Council Year-End meeting on 28 May as I was attending the CASA conference. The GSA President attended on my behalf.
- I attended the University President-Elect Town Hall on 2 June. The President-elect presented his vision for the University, which is centered on a complete restructuring of the U of A, drawing primarily on UK and Australian models of higher education. With this, he pledged to raise the U of A's ranking and increase student enrolment by 25 percent.
- I attended the Michener Park Transition Advisory Committee (MPTAC) meeting on 3 June. 80 residents are still in the building; 30 of them have already filled out the form to move out by the end of June; another 30 will move out by the end of July; and the remaining 20 have not indicated anything about their plans. They continue to offer virtual check-ins as an alternative to door-to-door check-ins, and offer social support based on individual needs. The survey on what residents need received almost a 100% response rate in that 70 residents filled out the survey. Since 31 July, the deadline to move-out, falls on the Friday of the long weekend, they are offering a flexible move-out deadline, and residents can have until the Tuesday (August 2) to move without any penalty.

- Immediately after the MPTAC meeting, I had an individual meeting with K Huising, Associate Vice-President of Ancillary Services, to further discuss move-out plans for Michener Park residents. She said since there are only 20 residents remaining in the building without plans for moving, they will ensure that they get what they need. I further advocated and asked for alternative lodging for these residents with some discount on campus. If you know anyone of these 20 who may be stranded with no accommodation, connect them to me directly and I will see with Katherine to find an alternative for them. Katherine is willing to work with us to help these individuals.
- At the Dean of Students Retreat on 3 June, we had an informal discussion with some ideas about our respective advocacy plans and priorities.
- On 3 June, I had a meeting with a resident volunteer in Newton House, regarding her efforts to establish a Graduate Students' Residence Association. The GSA President and I expressed our willingness and strong support to help with whatever she needs in this initiative. The U of A Students' Union has also expressed their support for this course of action.
- On 4 June, on behalf of the GSA President, I attended the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Scoping Group meeting. In addition to a presentation on intersectionality on campus, the main highlight was that the University is committed to changing EDI award selection criteria, this arose because all 7 awards were recently awarded to white males (which strikes me as problematic).
- As for the ab-GPAC meeting with the Alberta Students' Executive Council (ASEC) on 10 June. C Chao, ab-GPAC Vice-Chair, made a presentation about what ab-GPAC is and our key priorities for advocacy. We also explored points of congruence in our advocacy frameworks and promised to continue the conversation about how we can work together on common areas of interest.
- On 9 June, I had a meeting with Public Interest Alberta (PIA), where we discussed the success we had with the open letter we wrote to the Minister of Advanced Education. There was high engagement on social media, which generated great public support. Our next course of action is op-ed writing. As a representative of ab-GPAC and, by extension, U of A GSA, I volunteered to write an op-ed for the Edmonton region. C Bell, ab-GPAC Executive Director, volunteered write an op-ed for the Calgary area.
- Finally, on 11 June I had a meeting with the ab-GPAC Advocacy & Outreach Committee. Since this was our first committee meeting, we first established if there is any conflict of interest among members. We also discussed our priority areas for the committee, which centered on media engagement, housing, permanent residency, as well as increasing our efforts to recruit the University of Lethbridge Graduate Student Association as the only graduate student body not involved with ab-GPAC.

That concludes my monthly report. Should you have any question, please do not hesitate to ask in our Council meeting or reach out to me directly at: [gsa.vpexternal@ualberta.ca](mailto:gsa.vpexternal@ualberta.ca).

Thank you!

Anas Fassih, Vice-President External 2020-2021

*Please find below a list of meetings I attended between 25 May 2020 and 15 June 2020 (not inclusive of weekly GSA Board meetings). The meetings were accurate at the time of printing.*

26 May	Graduate Students of Canada Conference Call re COVID-19
26-28 May	Canadian Alliance of Student Associations (CASA) Digital Foundations Conference
2 June	University President-Elect Town Hall
2 June	Graduate Students of Canada Conference Call
3 June	Alberta Provincial Advocacy Council (ab-GPAC) Board Meeting
3 June	Michener Park Transition Advisory Committee (MPTAC)

## 9.2

3 June	Meeting with K Huising, Associate Vice-President (Ancillary Services)
3 June	Dean of Students Retreat
3 June	Meeting re Graduate Residence Students' Association (GRSA)
4 June	Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Scoping Group
9 June	Brand Platform Advisory Committee Meeting
9 June	Graduate Students of Canada Conference Call re COVID-19
9 June	Public Interest Alberta (PIA) Post-Secondary Education Task Force
10 June	Alberta Provincial Advocacy Council (ab-GPAC) Meeting with Alberta Students' Executive Council (ASEC)
11 June	Alberta Provincial Advocacy Council (ab-GPAC) Advocacy & Outreach Committee

**Vice-President Labour  
Report to GSA Council for the 15 June 2020 Meeting**

To: GSA Council  
From: Umesh Nimmathi  
Date: 12 June 2020

Dear Council Colleagues,

I hope you are doing well and continuing to maintain social distancing and public health measures as we enter stage 2 of Alberta's reopening plan. Here are some of the highlights of the meetings that I have attended.

**Joint Work Site Health and Safety Committee Meeting:**

- **COVID 19 Returning to Campus safely:** To reduce building occupancy and the spread of COVID 19, work for most employees must continue remotely. Students and staff who are returning to campus for approved research/study activities have to complete the [COVID 19 return to campus safely training](#). There are also some provisions in place regarding both the use and acquisition of non-medical masks and other personal protective equipment and information about that is available [here](#). Non-medical masks will be available for purchase at cost in the University Bookstore for the Fall 2020 semester.
- **Work Refusal Process:** Under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* (Alberta), workers have the right to refuse to work or to do particular work at a worksite if they believe on reasonable grounds that there is a dangerous condition at the worksite or that the work constitutes a danger to health and safety. Additional information on the work refusal process can be found [here](#).
- **Workplace Violence and Harassment:** I raised an issue regarding report from graduate student worker concerning a department they believe did not respond to appropriately to anonymous reports of sexual harassment and racial/cultural discrimination from faculty members. Andrew Cooper (Risk Management Services) provided some useful guidance on escalating these reports. If you are facing workplace violence/discrimination/harassment and if your department doesn't respond to these issues, you can email me, and/or please report to one/all of the resources provided below:
  - 1) [Office of Safe Disclosure and Human Rights](#)
  - 2) [Dean of Students](#)
  - 3) [Sexual Assault Centre](#)

**Negotiations Update:**

Negotiations for a new Collective Agreement are about to commence; our introductory meeting between our Negotiating team and the University's team is scheduled for 22 June. The Negotiating Team, with our labour-related legal counsel present, will have a pre-meeting in advance of this to prepare. I also met briefly with the head of the University's negotiating team on June 11 to briefly discuss the process for negotiations in light of COVID-19 prevention measures.

If you have any questions or concerns about my report, please feel free to email me at [gsavplab@ualberta.ca](mailto:gsavplab@ualberta.ca). As always, if you are encountering a labour issue, please reach out to me as well.

Best Regards

Umesh Nimmathi, Vice-President Labour 2020-2021

*Please find below a list of meetings I attended between 25 May 2020 and 15 June 2020 (not inclusive of weekly GSA Board meetings). The meetings were accurate at the time of printing.*

22 May	Joint Work Site Health and Safety Committee (JWSHSC)
26 May	Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research (FGSR) Academic Appeal Hearing
27 May	Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research (FGSR) Council
28 May	Monthly Meeting with A Costopoulos, Dean of Students
2 June	University President-Elect Town Hall
3 June	Dean of Students Retreat
11 June	Meeting with a Graduate Student
11 June	Meeting with the Head of the University's Negotiating Team to Discuss Process



**Vice-President Student Services  
Report to GSA Council for the 15 June 2020 Meeting**

To: GSA Council  
From: Sridhar Parasharamatham  
Date: 12 June 2020

Dear Council Colleagues,

I hope you all are doing well. I have attended some important meetings since the last Council meeting. Firstly, I have attended a Days of Action (DOA) committee meeting. It was my first meeting with them. The organization and promotion of Suicide Prevention Day, Mental Health Day, World Hello Day, etc. come under the DOA committee. This group will be planning many campaigns over the year and developing budgets for them and I will work with them to promote the upcoming events in the GSA newsletter and on GSA social media platforms.

Secondly, I attended the Brand Platform Advisory Committee meeting, which is one of the high-level committees on campus dealing with branding of the University. This committee is ending phase 1 of its strategy and moving to phase 2. Many consultations and open sessions were completed in the Fall 2019 semester for phase 1. There was some discussion regarding the diverse culture at the U of A in terms of domestic, international and Indigenous students and the University noted that its decision to move to the Credit/Non-credit grading scheme would help to ensure equality across this diverse pool of students.

I also attended meetings regarding the U-Pass with the Students' Union (SU) and other Student Associations from the other post-secondary institutions in Edmonton. As the negotiations for a new U-Pass contract for 2021-2025 have started with Edmonton Transit System (ETS), discussion focused on our common priorities to be put forward to ETS. Also, as ETS is collecting fares starting 15 June, a Letter of Understanding was signed between the U of A and ETS regarding usage of the Winter U-Pass from 15-30 June. There are still ongoing discussions regarding the U-Pass for the summer and fall terms. I also attended some meetings related to Mandatory Non-Instructional Fees (MNIFs), which are covered in the Vice-President Academic's report.

Next, I attended the Suicide Prevention Framework (SPF) Policy Review Committee, where an overview of the rubric designed for the analysis of different scenarios was given. Also, the group will be further divided into groups of three, where the individual groups will meet to review various University policies related to this.

Finally, I also attended the Spring Thesis Writers' retreat presented by the GSA and the Academic Success Centre, where I gave welcoming comments to the graduate students on behalf of the GSA.

Feel free to reach out to me for any comments/concerns regarding this report or any other specific issue you want to discuss regarding services to students at [gsavpsse@ualberta.ca](mailto:gsavpsse@ualberta.ca).

Regards,  
Sridhar, Vice-President Student Services 2020-2021

*Please find below a list of meetings I attended between 25 May 2020 and 15 June 2020 (not inclusive of weekly GSA Board meetings). The meetings were accurate at the time of printing.*

27 May	Days of Action (DOA) Committee Meeting
27 May	Brand Platform Advisory Committee
27 May	Meeting with Edmonton Post-Secondary Student Associations re U-Pass Negotiations
28 May	Meeting with a GSA Councillor
28 May	Monthly Meeting with A Costopoulos, Dean of Students (28 May)
28 May	Campus Food Bank (CFB) Introductory Meeting (28 May)
2 June	University President-Elect Town Hall

## 11.1

3 June	Meeting with Students' Union (SU) re Mandatory Non-Instructional Fees (MNIFs)
4 June	Infrastructure and Operations Fall Planning Team
4 June	Meeting with Edmonton Post-Secondary Student Associations re U-Pass Negotiations
5 June	Meeting with the University and Other Edmonton Post-Secondary Institutions and Student Associations re U-Pass Negotiations
8 June	Suicide Prevention Framework (SPF) Policy Review Committee
9 June	Joint Student/University Oversight Committee on Mandatory Non-Instructional Fees (MNIFs)
12 June	Spring Convocation
11 June	Spring Thesis-Writers' Retreat Welcoming Remarks
11 June	Campus Food Bank (CFB) Board Meeting
15 June	World Suicide Prevention Day Working Group

**GSA Nominating Committee  
Report to GSA Council for the 15 June 2020 Meeting**

To: GSA Council  
From: Radim Barta  
Date: 12 June 2020

Dear Council Colleagues,

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

GSA Policy governing the GSA NoC is located in GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section E: Nominating. As provided for in its Terms of Reference, the GSA NoC has been conducting business via e-mail.

Sincerely,

Radim Barta, Chair of the GSA NoC

**Memorandum to GSA Councillors**

**There are a number of vacancies, both currently being advertised and which will be advertised in the coming weeks, on GSA Standing Committees for GSA Council Members (Departmental Councillors and Councillors-at-Large).** These positions play a pivotal role in the GSA's ongoing efforts to keep its processes transparent and itself accountable, since GSA Councillors on these committees help maintain clear and consistent connection between GSA Council and GSA Standing Committees. Long-term vacancies adversely impact these efforts and so GSA Council members are encouraged to consider serving on these committees when vacancies are advertised to you. For example, advertising for a GSA Departmental Councillor position on the GSA Appeals and Complaints Board (GSA ACB) has been ongoing since October 2019 with no nominations coming forward. This position will be advertised again in the fall; I encourage you to please consider serving on this board.

It is important to note that the time commitment for all of these committees varies greatly. While some meet regularly throughout the year (usually every two (2) to three (3) months – with the GSA Board meeting weekly), others meet less frequently and some do most of their work over email. New members are provided with as much training as they require in addition to the ongoing support provided by GSA management and staff to GSA Standing Committees and their members. **These service opportunities are also a great opportunity to add to your CV/resume.**

On behalf of the GSA NoC, GSA NoC Chair Radim Barta strongly encourages GSA Councillors to consider the next round of vacancies, which will be circulated to GSA Council electronically. In particular, the position on the GSA Board and the GSA NoC itself is critical and applications would be greatly appreciated – this vacancy will be re-advertised shortly. Questions can be directed to GSA NoC Chair Radim Barta at [radim@ualberta.ca](mailto:radim@ualberta.ca) or GSA Elections Coordinator Monica Brzak at [gsa.nomcomm@ualberta.ca](mailto:gsa.nomcomm@ualberta.ca).

### GSA Standing Committees

**1) GSA Appeals and Complaints Committee (GSA ACB) (One (1) GSA Councillor Position)**

Information regarding this position for one (1) GSA Councillor was circulated via email to GSA Council on 29 May 2020 and 5 June 2020 with a nomination deadline of 9 June 2020. **No nominations were received; this vacancy will be advertised again.**

**2) GSA Appeals and Complaints Committee (GSA ACB) (One (1) GSA Member Position)**

Information regarding the position for one (1) GSA member was circulated via the GSA newsletter on 29 May 2020 and 9 June 2020 with a nomination deadline of 9 June 2020. **One (1) nomination was received; there will be an electronic vote (see Item 6b– Nominee for the GSA Appeals and Complaints Board).**

**3) GSA Board and GSA Nominating Committee (GSAB/GSA NoC) (One (1) GSA Councillor Position)**

Information regarding this joint position for one (1) GSA Councillor was circulated via email to GSA Council on 29 May 2020 and 5 June with a nomination deadline of 10 June 2020. **No nominations were received; this vacancy will be advertised again.**

### GSA Officers

**1) GSA Speaker (One (1) Position for a GSA Member)**

Information regarding this position for one (1) GSA member was circulated via the GSA newsletters of 8, 15, and 22 May 2020, with a deadline of 27 May 2020. **Two (2) nominations were received; there will be an electronic vote (see Item 6 – Nominees for Speaker and Deputy Speaker).**

**2) GSA Deputy Speaker (One (1) Position for a GSA Member)**

Information regarding this position for one (1) GSA member was circulated via the GSA newsletters of 8, 15, and 22 May 2020, with a deadline of 27 May 2020. **One (1) nomination was received; there will be an electronic vote (see Item 6 – Nominees for Speaker and Deputy Speaker).**

**3) GSA Chief Returning Officer (One (1) Position for a GSA Member)**

Information regarding this position for one (1) GSA member was circulated via the GSA newsletters of 8, 15, and 22 May 2020, with a deadline of 27 May 2020. **No nominations were received; this vacancy will be advertised again.**

**4) GSA Deputy Returning Officer (One (1) Position for a GSA Member)**

Information regarding this position for one (1) GSA member was circulated via the GSA newsletters of 8, 15, and 22 May 2020, with a deadline of 27 May 2020. **No nominations were received; this vacancy will be advertised again.**

**Executive Director  
Report to GSA Council for the 15 June 2020 Meeting**

To: GSA Council  
From: Courtney Thomas  
Date: 12 June 2020

Dear GSA Council Members,

As was the case with my previous report to you, alongside all regular work, the office staff's main focus over the past few weeks has revolved around exploring online means to deliver the GSA's fall orientation programming (both our large-scale orientation event and the approximately 40 departmental orientation presentations that we provide each fall). We are exploring some software upgrades that will enable this and also collaborating and information-sharing with other University units that are working to deliver online orientations. We are also working with the Vice-President Labour to support the upcoming collective agreement bargaining process with the University, with the President and Vice-President Student Services on upcoming U-Pass negotiations, and with the all three of those Directly-Elected Officers on issues related to the Graduate Student Assistance Program (the cost of the program will be increasing in 2021 and we need to work with the University to assess whether they can assist with offsetting these costs or if a referendum to increase the cost will be needed).

Additionally, and also as reported to you last month, as the GSA's fiscal year ended on 31 March 2020, we are in the process of finalizing our annual audit. The audit, as well the preparation of the first term's budget and expenditure financial report of our new fiscal year, will be completed this week, in advance of a meeting of the GSA Budget and Finance Committee on 22 June to review and discuss these items before they come forward to GSA Council in July. The GSA's audited financial statements will then proceed onward to the University Board of Governors, as per the requirements of the *Post-Secondary Learning Act*. As a separate corporation from the University, we are the signatories to multiple contracts, agreements, memorandums of understanding, etc. In advance of the audit coming forward to GSA Council next month, I have included the below list of all of the documents that define us as a corporate entity and which are constantly monitored by the staff team.

With respect to the first term quarterly financial statement, we are anticipating a significant decrease in fall enrollment levels. As enrollment levels (reflective of the revenue generated for the organization via the GSA membership fee) are the main driver of the GSA's operating budget, the financial team has been working hard to look for savings in other areas to offset this revenue decrease and be able to present a balanced budget. As I reported to you last month, low investment interest rates amidst the current economic climate will also affect the GSA's budget and we are working to mitigate these impacts. I look forward to discussing this in more detail with you all at the July meeting, where our auditor, Financial Manager, and accountant will also be in attendance.

My weekly reports to the GSA Board are attached (pages 17.5-17.7) and, as always, I am happy to answer any questions.

Best,

Courtney Thomas, Executive Director

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

NAME	SUMMARY	STATUS
<i>Agreements with Expiry Dates</i>		
Campus Food Bank	Regulates GSA involvement with Food Bank.	GSA gives \$20,000/annum to Campus Food Bank (increased in 2018-2019 budget, 2019-2020 budget, and 2020-2021 budget). Original MoU expired 30 April 2015. <b>Subsidy is set out annually in letters to the Campus Food Bank.</b>
Graduate Student Assistantship Collective Agreement	Sets out terms and conditions for graduate students serving as GTAs, GRAs, and GRAFs.	<b>Current agreement with the Board of Governors expired 31 August 2018, a new</b>

		agreement with a term ending 31 August 2020 was ratified by both parties in December 2019.
Agreement re GSSF	MoU that provides for funding allocations to the GSA for the GSSF.	Support from the University confirmed annually in advance of 31 March for the upcoming fiscal year.
Collective Agreement with NASA covering office staff	Sets out terms of employment for GSA staff.	Renegotiated in April 2012, 2015, and 2020. Current agreement expires in 2025.
Graduate Student Assistance Program (GSAP)	Provides for a wide range of personal counselling.	Referendum held; originally signed 31 December 2010 for a 2-year period with the possibility of four 2-year extensions; reviewed and re-signed in August 2013. Dependents added in December 2013. Current agreement expired 31 December 2014 but is described by Administration as a rolling plan. Reviewed annually. Support from the University confirmed annually in advance of 31 March for the upcoming fiscal year.
Health and Dental Agreement with Studentcare	Provides for Health and Dental Plan.	Provider changed in 2012. Re-signed in 2014 and 2020. Current agreement expires 31 August 2025. Service levels, claims, etc are reviewed annually.
Liability Insurance	General Liability insurance and Directors and Officers insurance.	Doubled our liability insurance in 2012. The GSA is not covered for alcohol use. Discussions in 2013-2014 and 2016-2017 with Administration and insurance experts surrounding the creation of an alcohol liability waiver for graduate student groups. Current General Liability insurance expires 17 May 2021.
North Power Plant and Dewey's	<p><b>2009 Memorandum of Agreement</b> with the Students' Union regarding the operation of Dewey's.</p> <p><b>2010 Memorandum of Understanding</b> with the U of A for use of North Power Plant Space for the Tory Building decant.</p> <p><b>1997 Memorandum of Agreement</b> with the U of A guaranteeing graduate social space in North Power Plant or at another location; 2004 Letter of Confirmation on this MoU from the Dean of Students. The space includes the current sustainability offices.</p>	<p><b>Expired August 2012</b> - conversations about use of space are ongoing.</p> <p><b>No Expiration</b> - conversation regarding Dewey's/NPP ongoing as part of this MoU.</p> <p><b>No Expiration</b> - conversation regarding Dewey's/NPP ongoing as part of this MoA.</p>
Officers/Directors' Insurance	Covers elected officials and administrative/professional staff.	Doubled coverage in 2013; switched brokers in 2016 and signed a new agreement. Current agreement expires 28 January 2021.
TDIMM	Provides for group auto and home insurance as well as some funding for GSA	Renewed in 2016 for a period of 5 years and with an increase in the sponsorship funds

	events and the TD Student Service Award (given out at GSA Awards Night).	provided by TD. <b>Current agreement expires 16 September 2021.</b>
Triffo Hall Lease	Detailed lease covering Triffo Hall office space.	First-ever lease was signed in June 2011; 5-year term, four renewals (three now remaining). <b>Re-signed in 2016 and current agreement expires 30 May 2021 (notification of desire to renew must be given 6-12 months before expiry).</b>
U of A Financial Services	Stipulates when GSA receives membership fees collected by the U of A on our behalf.	Re-negotiated and signed in April 2012. Re-negotiated again in 2013, 2016, and 2019. <b>Current agreement expires 30 April 2022.</b>
U-PASS Transit Agreement with U of A	Governs U-PASS.	Referendum held in March 2013. New agreement signed in September 2013. Referendum for a new four-year agreement passed in March 2017. The current agreement was signed in April 2018 and will expire when the U of A agreement with the municipalities expires.
U-PASS Agreement with Transit Providers	Governs U-PASS.	The University signs this agreement with the municipalities and the U of A and the GSA and SU then each sign a separate agreement. <b>Current agreement expires in 2021.</b>
<b>NAME</b>	<b>SUMMARY</b>	<b>STATUS</b>

<b>Agreements with No Expiry Dates (Ongoing)</b>		
Alberta Graduate Provincial Advocacy Council	Society under the <i>Societies Act</i> .	Registered in March 2015 along with U of C, U of L and AU GSAs. U of L withdrew in 2017/2018. <b>Annual Societies Act filing required.</b> (The former Alberta Graduate Council disbanded in 2013).
ATB Financial Banking	Operating account.	Switched from BMO to ATB in May 2016 (as they also manage the GSA's investments). <b>Signing authorities reviewed/updated annually.</b>
ATB Financial Investments	GICs, investments.	Agreement was signed on 11 April 2016. <b>Reviewed regularly.</b>
Career Centre and Student Success Centre Agreements	Provides for subsidy of certain Career Centre and Student Success Centre courses for grad students.	Annual subsidy of \$12,000 (increased in 2017-2018 budget, 2019-2020 budget, and 2020-2021 budget). <b>Reviewed annually.</b>
Ceridian (Payroll)	GSA staff and elected officials are paid by direct deposit.	Outsourcing is cheaper/more efficient than in-house production of cheques. Agreement signed 30 May 2011.
Info Sharing with Studentcare and University	Allows Studentcare access to specified graduate student personal information for strictly defined purposes regarding the GSA's Health and Dental Plan.	Reviewed with the U of A Privacy Officer and Studentcare in 2012 and new agreement signed on 3 May 2013. <b>GSA to give notice of 6 months if wanting to terminate.</b>

PAW Centre	Sets out terms of operation of PAW. SU also a signatory to the Agreement.	Referendum held, agreement signed in April 2012.
PAW Centre Leased Space	Sets out terms of rights and obligations of SU and GSA with respect to the leased space in PAW.	Negotiated business terms with SU concerning the food vendor space (currently occupied by Chopped Leaf until September 2024) – agreement signed in April 2017. <b>Reviewed annually.</b>
Personal Information Sharing Agreement with the U of A	Provides specified graduate student personal information for strictly defined purposes, e.g. emailing the newsletter, elections.	Signed in May 2013.
Student Connect (Office of the Registrar)	Administers the GSA's Emergency Bursary program. GSA distributes funds.	2006 AEGS Memorandum of Settlement between GSA/BoG provides for establishment of emergency bursary program with terms of reference developed by GSA and "distributed through the University Bursary Program."
Student Group Services	Outlines the responsibilities of the GSA and Student Group Services with respect to the registration and oversight of graduate student groups.	Developed in 2011 and redrafted in 2018. <b>Reviewed annually.</b>
U of A Human Resources Direct Deposit	Provides for direct deposit through Bear Tracks of GSSF allocations to graduate students and T4A production by U of A.	Agreement negotiated in 2012. Major infrastructure change from cheque processing by GSA.
U of A IST	Provides service, support, and regular review of the GSA's IT infrastructure.	Signed in June 2017. <b>Reviewed annually.</b>
Western Archives	Provides secure shredding of GSA material once every two months.	Signed in July 2018 for a term of two years with automatic renewals annually after that. <b>Review annually.</b>
Xerox	Covers the leasing of two photocopiers.	Original agreement expired 31 March 2018. Thereafter the agreement renews automatically on a yearly basis. <b>Reviewed annually.</b>
<b>NAME</b>	<b>SUMMARY</b>	<b>STATUS</b>

<b>Other Corporate Documents</b>		
Audit (based on GSA Council-approved budget)	As a separate corporation from the University, we hire our own auditor. Requirement of the <i>Post-Secondary Learning Act</i> to provide audited financial statements to the Board of Governors annually.	<b>Audit occurs annually in May/June.</b> Audit field workers are typically on-site in late May/early June.
GSA Council Bylaw and Policy	Enabled by the <i>Post-Secondary Learning Act</i> . Sections pertaining to collective bargaining approved by the GSA Labour Relations	<b>Reviewed regularly.</b>



	Board as per the <i>Labour Relations Code</i> .	
Contract with ED/Letters of Appointment	Sets out terms of employment for administrative/professional staff.	The ED's contract and other standard appointment letters for administrative/professional staff have been reviewed by our lawyers. <b>Regular performance reviews conducted.</b>
Referenda Master File	All referenda questions that actively impact graduate students (eg U-PASS, PAW Centre, GSAP, GSA Health and Dental Plan, etc).	Compiled and filed. <b>Ongoing as referenda arise.</b>

### Management Report to the GSA Board, 27 May 2020

Management has been engaged with the following issues since the last GSA Board meeting on 20 May 2020:

#### Strategic

- Assessing potential implications for the GSA's budget in relation to COVID-19 prevention measures (enrollment is expected to be down and the GSA has seen decreases in the value of our investments).
- Preparing for the annual audit and meetings of the GSA Budget and Finance Committee (the GSA Accountant and the GSA Financial Manager are currently working periodically in the office to get things in order).
- Planning for a U-Pass referendum in 2021 and preparing for negotiations with the University for the Graduate Student Support Fund and the Graduate Student Assistance Program (and a possible referendum concerning the cost of the Graduate Student Assistance Program).
- Work associated with the Collective Agreement, including supporting negotiations processes (planning upcoming bargaining sessions (scheduled to begin in July after an initial discussion meeting on 22 June), and planning to research best practices with respect to strike fund establishment, maintenance, growth, and utilization (have received no responses from possible consultants so now reassessing how best to move forward – project temporarily on hold as the upcoming cycle of bargaining is being prepared for).

#### Operations

- Assessing alternate means to deliver fall orientation and departmental orientations (and associated needed software upgrades) and thinking about the format of the GSA handbook this year (limited print run for January onwards? Online delivery?).
- Troubleshooting various issues with IST.
- Hosting orientation sessions for newly elected CALs, updating the GSA's database of GSA Council member confidentiality forms, and working on the annual GSA Council remuneration process.
- Ongoing work with First Peoples' House concerning the creation of a recognition award for an Indigenous graduate student.
- Supporting the work of the GSA Elections and Referenda Committee and the GSA Nominating Committee (vacancies on the GSA Elections and Referenda Committee (1 GSA Councillor – to be advertised in September), the GSA Governance Committee (2 GSA Councillors – to be advertised in July), the GSA Appeals and Complaints Board (1 GSA Councillor and 1 graduate student – to be re-advertised on Friday), the GSA Board and the GSA Nominating Committee (1 GSA Councillor – to be re-advertised on Friday), and for the Speaker, Chief Returning Officer, Deputy Speaker, and Deputy Chief Returning Officer – to be re-advertised on Friday pending receipt of any nominations on 27 May at noon).
- Facebook = 1,447 likes (up 0 from 20 May) and 1,543 followers (up 0 from 20 May); Facebook posts reached 53 users last week and our "post engagement" count was 6. Twitter = 1,039 followers (up 1 from 20 May); our tweets earned 2,400 "impressions" over the past week. Instagram = 433 followers (up 5 from 20 May); our posts earned 600 "impressions" over the past week.
- GSA Academic Travel Grants = new funding period started 1 April (not accepting applications for travel, online costs still accepted); GSA Child Care Grants = new funding period started 1 April and closed 6 April (\$151,000 disbursed); GSA Emergency Bursaries = no funding periods for GSA EBs; GSA Graduate Student Group Grants = new funding period started 1 April. Next funding periods opens 1 July 2020. All funding is being closely monitored so we can direct it to where the most need is.

### Management Report to the GSA Board, 3 June 2020

Management has been engaged with the following issues since the last GSA Board meeting on 27 May 2020:

#### Strategic

- Assessing potential implications for the GSA's budget in relation to COVID-19 prevention measures (enrollment is expected to be down and the GSA has seen decreases in the value of our investments) – working on all this in preparing the first term financial report of the new fiscal year.
- Preparing for the annual audit and meetings of the GSA Budget and Finance Committee.
- Planning for a U-Pass referendum in 2021 (ongoing administrative discussions with the General Manager of the Students' Union) and preparing for negotiations with the University for the Graduate Student Support Fund and the Graduate Student Assistance Program (and a possible referendum concerning the cost of the Graduate Student Assistance Program).
- Work associated with the Collective Agreement, including supporting negotiations processes (planning upcoming bargaining sessions (scheduled to begin in July after an initial discussion meeting on 22 June), preparing regular updates to members of the bargaining unit, and planning to research best practices with respect to strike fund establishment, maintenance, growth, and utilization (have received no responses from possible consultants so now reassessing how best to move forward – project temporarily on hold as the upcoming cycle of bargaining is being prepared for).

#### Operations

- Assessing alternate means to deliver fall orientation and departmental orientations (and associated needed software upgrades) and thinking about the format of the GSA handbook this year (limited print run (coupled with offers of free advertising to some current sponsors as the print costs can be covered via already made ad sales and using funds budgeted in the GSA-Council approved budget) and moving some content online).
- Troubleshooting various issues with IST.
- Ongoing work with First Peoples' House concerning the creation of a recognition award for an Indigenous graduate student, as well as drafting GSA Bylaw and Policy associated with another new GSA Recognition Award discussed by the GSA Awards Selection Committee.
- Supporting the work of the GSA Elections and Referenda Committee and the GSA Nominating Committee (vacancies on the GSA Elections and Referenda Committee (1 GSA Councillor – to be advertised in September), the GSA Governance Committee (2 GSA Councillors – to be advertised in July), the GSA Appeals and Complaints Board (1 GSA Councillor and 1 graduate student – currently being advertised), the GSA Board and the GSA Nominating Committee (1 GSA Councillor – currently being advertised), and for the Chief Returning Officer and Deputy Chief Returning Officer – currently being advertised).
- Facebook = 1,449 likes (up 2 from 27 May) and 1,545 followers (up 2 from 27 May); Facebook posts reached 53 users last week and our “post engagement” count was 33. Twitter = 1,039 followers (up 0 from 27 May); our tweets earned 1,400 “impressions” over the past week. Instagram = 441 followers (up 8 from 27 May); our posts earned 268 “impressions” over the past week.
- GSA Academic Travel Grants = new funding period started 1 April (not accepting applications for travel outside the province; online costs accepted); GSA Child Care Grants = new funding period started 1 April and closed 6 April (\$151,000 disbursed); GSA Emergency Bursaries = no funding periods for GSA EBs; GSA Graduate Student Group Grants = new funding period started 1 April. Next funding periods opens 1 July 2020. All funding is being closely monitored so we can direct it to where the most need is.

### Management Report to the GSA Board, 10 June 2020

Management has been engaged with the following issues since the last GSA Board meeting on 3 June 2020:

#### Strategic

- Ongoing conversations with the GSA Accountant and GSA Financial Manager about potential implications for the GSA's budget in relation to COVID-19 prevention measures (enrollment is expected to be down and the GSA has seen decreases in the value of our investments).
- Facilitating the annual external audit, preparing the spring/summer term financial report, and preparing for a meeting of the GSA Budget and Finance Committee.
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- Drafting a GSA statement concerning the condemnation of racism and state-violence and allyship with BIPOC individuals.
- Planning for a U-Pass referendum in 2021 and a possible referendum in 2021 concerning the cost of the Graduate Student Assistance Program).
- Work associated with the Collective Agreement, including supporting negotiations processes (planning upcoming bargaining sessions (scheduled to begin in July after an initial discussion meeting on 22 June), preparing regular updates to members of the bargaining unit, and planning to research best practices with respect to strike fund establishment, maintenance, growth, and utilization (have received no responses from possible consultants so now reassessing how best to move forward – project temporarily on hold as the upcoming cycle of bargaining is being prepared for).

#### Operations

- Assessing alternate means to deliver fall orientation and departmental orientations (and associated needed software upgrades) and thinking about the format of the GSA handbook this year (limited print run (coupled with offers of free advertising to some current sponsors as the print costs can be covered via already made ad sales and using funds budgeted in the GSA-Council approved budget) and moving some content online).
- Setting future GSA Council meeting dates.
- Ongoing work with First Peoples' House and Advancement concerning the creation of a recognition award for an Indigenous graduate student, as well as drafting GSA Bylaw and Policy associated with another new GSA Recognition Award discussed by the GSA Awards Selection Committee.
- Supporting the work of the GSA Elections and Referenda Committee and the GSA Nominating Committee (vacancies on the GSA Elections and Referenda Committee (1 GSA Councillor – to be advertised in September), the GSA Governance Committee (2 GSA Councillors – to be advertised in July), the GSA Appeals and Complaints Board (1 GSA Councillor and 1 graduate student – currently being advertised), the GSA Board and the GSA Nominating Committee (1 GSA Councillor – currently being advertised), and for the Chief Returning Officer and Deputy Chief Returning Officer – currently being advertised).
- Facebook = 1,452 likes (up 3 from 3 June) and 1,574 followers (up 29 from 3 June); Facebook posts reached 49 users last week and our "post engagement" count was 3. Twitter = 1,044 followers (up 5 from 3 June); our tweets earned 591 "impressions" over the past week. Instagram = 453 followers (up 12 from 3 June); our posts earned 60 "impressions" over the past week.
- GSA Academic Travel Grants = new funding period started 1 April (not accepting applications for travel outside the province; online costs accepted); GSA Child Care Grants = new funding period started 1 April and closed 6 April (\$151,000 disbursed); GSA Emergency Bursaries = no funding periods for GSA EBs; GSA Graduate Student Group Grants = new funding period started 1 April. Next funding periods opens 1 July 2020. All funding is being closely monitored so we can direct it to where the most need is.