Slide 1

NARRATOR: “Welcome! As you embark on your program at the University of Alberta, you’re joining some 8,000 graduate students -- talented and dedicated scholars who are learning, teaching and pursuing research in a wide range of fields.

“The Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research is your home faculty. And Dr. Brooke Milne is your vice-provost and graduate dean. Here’s a message from Dr. Milne.”

Slide 2

DEAN MILNE: “My name is Brooke Milne. I’m the Vice-Provost and Dean of the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research.

“I’m pleased to welcome you to Graduate Studies at the University of Alberta.

“It’s an unusual year, with unusual challenges, but also new opportunities. This year is sure to be like no other, as our community contends with the challenges presented by COVID-19.

“But it may also give you a chance to engage with your colleagues and your studies in new and creative ways.

“This module will give you a quick overview of what you need to know about the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research: your home faculty as a graduate student.

“We may be quiet at times. You may not deal directly with us every day. But we’re always here, working with your disciplinary department to make every stage of your academic journey a success.

“Our mission is to support you by providing the highest quality service to ensure that you reach your full potential both as a scholar and a professional.

“In a normal year, I’d invite you to visit us in our beautiful home, the historic Triffo Hall. This year, we’re available remotely to support you. Just email us when you have a question; the contact information to do so will follow.

“For now, though, I just want you to know how much we appreciate you joining us this year to share your energy, your creativity, and your talents.

“I hope you make the most of all that FGSR and the University of Alberta have to offer you, as you embark on your journey of growth and discovery.

“A special thank you to the Graduate Students’ Association for making this module possible. They are another important partner in your success.”
NARRATOR: “As Dean Milne noted, FGSR is here to advocate for you, and to support every aspect of your graduate program experience.

“We play two key roles. First, we offer support to your department graduate administrators, giving guidance on policy and governance related to your program. We also help to resolve any larger issues that cannot be resolved at the departmental level.

“We also lead initiatives that support the mental health of graduate students, enhance the quality of graduate student supervision, and provide professional development opportunities. Our goal is to collaborate with your departments to ensure that you have a quality graduate school experience.”

NARRATOR: “Now, graduate students make up 20 per cent of the total campus student population. Nearly 40 per cent are international students. More than 20 per cent are parents.

“In short, you’re part of one of the most diverse communities on campus. And at FGSR, we understand that you are more than just a student ID number. You are an adult with lives and responsibilities outside of your graduate school work.

“We’re here to make sure your graduate experience is well balanced and supports you in all aspects of your life.”

NARRATOR: “So how do we do that? Well, as Dean Milne noted, FGSR is often quiet, working behind the scenes. But we’re always here, supporting grad students through every step of their journey.

“And while your first point of contact is normally your disciplinary department, you’ll interact with FGSR frequently throughout your time with the University of Alberta.

“That’s true when you receive your official admission letter. When you clear your admission conditions. When you apply for awards and scholarships. When your student loan is confirmed, or your enrolment is verified for your study permit.

“Your graduate program also includes a professional development requirement that is administered by FGSR -- and you may take some of our specialized PD programming. Likewise, FGSR provides mandatory ethics and academic integrity training, and helps to enhance
graduate students’ teaching skills via the Graduate Teaching and Learning program.

“Along the way, you may need to make changes to your program, or consult with an Associate Dean about some aspect of your studies. That’s under our umbrella too.

“And when you complete your program, we’re involved...right up to convocation day, when you’ll receive your parchment from the Dean of FGSR.”

Slide 6

NARRATOR: “So how do you stay in touch with us? Normally the answer is easy: you can call or drop by our offices at the U of A’s beautiful and historic Triffo Hall.

“But at the moment, due to the COVID-19 situation, our office is closed. We’ll let you know when that changes, but the good news is that our staff are working just as hard and continue to serve graduate students remotely. You can send us your questions at grad.mail@ualberta.ca.”

Slide 7

NARRATOR: “Before we go, we should talk about three things you should do right away.

“First, make sure you’ve met your admission conditions. Your official admissions letter will include a list of documents that you must submit to FGSR. These are due by December 31, 2020. If you have concerns about providing these documents, please email grad.admissions@ualberta.ca.

“Second, make sure you’re registered in courses. You may already be registered, but please check your Beartracks or talk with your department to make sure that this is done. The deadline for Fall Term 2020 is September 15. If you have problems registering, please contact the Program Administrator in your department.

“Third, the U of A is the first Canadian university to implement the Professional Development (PD) Requirement. It’s an initiative to help graduate students recognize their talents, pursue their interests, and acquire the professional skills they need to be successful in different career paths after graduation.

“You may not be thinking about life after graduation yet, but please do keep an eye out for ways to participate in the various offerings within your department and through FGSR.

“Check out this slide for more details.”
[The slide notes that “Students in a few departments fulfill the PD requirement through their program instead. If you’re unsure, please check with your grad administrator.”]

NARRATOR: “And again, don’t hesitate to contact us at grad.mail@ualberta.ca. Have a great year...and welcome to the FGSR community!”