GSA 101
What is the GSA?

- Established in 1959, and incorporated in 1972, formerly housed in the North Power Plant and moved to Triffo Hall in February 2008, contributing $188K to renovations

- *Post-Secondary Learning Act* establishes GSA as a separate corporate entity from the University; seat on the Board of Governors; negotiates a Collective Agreement (represents all graduate students but also acts as a union for academically-employed graduate students)

- Represents graduate students to the University and government; different from FGSR

- Is student-led and professionally managed with its own lawyers, auditor, chartered accountant, management, and staff

- Administers an operating budget of over $1 million and negotiates for over $800,000 in funding from the U of A, which is disbursed annually in grants, awards, and bursaries
2018 - 2019 GSA Directly-Elected Officers

President
Sasha van der Klein, PhD Student, Agricultural, Food & Nutritional Science

VP Academic
Masoud Aliramezani, PhD Student, Mechanical Engineering

VP Student Services
Fahed Elian, PhD Student, Medical Genetics

VP External
Zhihong Pan, PhD Student, Physics

VP Labour
Beth Richardson, PhD Student, Biological Sciences
2018 - 2019 GSA Council-Elected Officers

Speaker
Pranidhi Baddam, Medical Sciences

Deputy Speaker
Raji Chokkalingam, Internetworking

Chief Returning Officer
Vahid Ayan, MBA

Deputy Chief Returning Officer
Amritha Prasad, Agriculture, Food, and Nutritional Science

Senator
Ahsan Ahmed, Civil and Environmental Engineering
GSA Governance Structure

All graduate students are members of the GSA and, ultimately, all of the groups below are accountable to them.

*Legend:*

- = accountable to

- - - = works in concert with
Committees

The work of the GSA is supported by the efforts of a number of committees. There are two types of GSA committees.

Standing Committees – Standing Committees advise GSA Council and the GSA Board on policy relevant to their mandates, and have full authority to take actions set out within those mandates. Power is delegated to them by GSA Council (and they report back to GSA Council) and GSA Council elects their members.

The GSA has the following Standing Committees:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GSA Board</th>
<th>GSA Appeals and Complaints Board</th>
<th>GSA Awards Selection Committee</th>
<th>GSA Budget &amp; Finance Committee</th>
<th>GSA Elections &amp; Referenda Committee</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GSA Governance Committee</td>
<td>GSA Labour Relations Committee</td>
<td>GSA Nominating Committee</td>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
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Ad Hoc Committees and Subcommittees – GSA Council may from time to time create *ad hoc* committees to address issues that are outside of the purview of the standing committees of the GSA. Likewise, the GSA Board and Standing Committees may, at their discretion, form sub-committees deemed relevant to the execution of their mandates.
Management:

**Executive Director:** Courtney Thomas (BA, MA, PhD)

**Associate Director:** Julie Tanguay (BA, LLB, JD)

**Assistant Director:** Lisa Hareuther (BA, MA)

The GSA also has a Financial Manager and a Chartered Accountant who work part-time.
GSA Staff

Staff Represented by the Non-Academic Staff Association (NASA):

The GSA staff deal with aspects of the following:

- Assisting student groups;
- Managing IT and other infrastructure;
- Scheduling some 1,300 meetings for the elected officials and others;
- Electing graduate students to a cumulative total of over 150 U of A and/or GSA committees, working groups, etc through the GSA Nominating Committee;
- Processing some 1,100 awards, grants, and bursaries;
- Dealing with ~2,100 inquiries annually at the front desk, phone, and e-mail;
- Drafting weekly GSA newsletters and bulletins;
- Planning GSA events and orientations;
- Maintaining paper files and a Google Drive of some 45,000 documents.
GSA Advocacy to the University

• Seat on the Board of Governors and most Board of Governors standing committees

• Representation on General Faculties Council and the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research Council and their standing committees

• Representation on the Senate and Alumni Council

• Regular meetings with the Provost and Vice-President (Academic), the Dean of the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, and the Dean of Students

• Strategic meetings with the President and various Vice-Presidents
GSA External Advocacy

National Student Groups
• Canadian Alliance of Student Associations (CASA)
• ThinkGrad (formed after GU15 dissolved)
• Canadian Federation of Students (CFS)

Provincial Student Groups
• Alberta Graduate Provincial Advocacy Council (ab-GPAC) (graduate)
• Alberta Students’ Executive Council (ASEC) (undergrad)
• Council of Alberta University Students (CAUS) (undergrad)

Other Groups
• Edmonton Student Alliance (ESA)
• Public Interest Alberta (PIA)
• Canadian Association for Graduate Studies (CAGS)
GSA Services

- TDIMM Home and Auto Insurance
- GSA Health and Dental Plan
- U-PASS
- Graduate Student Assistance Program (GSAP)
- Awards, Grants, and Bursaries
- Collective Agreement and Advice
- Graduate Student Ombudsperson
- Subsidies to the Academic Success Centre, the Career Centre, and the Campus Food Bank (founded by the GSA)
TDIMM Home and Auto Insurance

- As a member of the Graduate Students' Association of the University of Alberta, you can benefit from special privileges, including preferred group rates.
- Home and car insurance may also be available for international students while in Canada.

For more details, visit melochemonnex.com/ualbertagsa or call (toll-free) 1-866-258-3036
GSA Health & Dental Plan

Health, Dental, and Vision

- Including travel insurance, diagnostic services, ambulance services, registered dietician services, and more!
- Visit [www.studentcare.ca](http://www.studentcare.ca) for a complete list of benefits and details
- All full-time registered graduate students are automatically enrolled
- Part-time students can choose to opt-in only during a specific change-of-coverage period

Student Health & Dental Plan Office SUB 6-14 (6th Floor)
Toll-free 1-866-795-4430
U-Pass

The Universal Pass for public transit during Fall Term, Winter Term, and Spring/Summer

- The U-Pass is a sticker that is applied to your ONEcard

  - Available from the ONEcard office (HUB) or Infolink centres (0-26 SUB, CAB, HUB)
  - Unlimited access to regular Edmonton, Fort Saskatchewan, Leduc, Spruce Grove, St. Albert & Strathcona County, Transit Systems
  - Automatically included in your non-instructional fees
  - Pro-Rated Replacement Cost Pilot

For each of 2018-2019 Fall, Winter, and Spring/Summer Terms, the cost is $148

www.upass.ualberta.ca
Graduate Student Assistance Program (GSAP)

First in Canada for grad students; same plan as faculty; supported financially in part by U of A

Lifestyle and Specialty Counselling Services: legal advisory services, family mediation, etc

Workplace Services: workplace advice line, cultural transition support, etc

Career Counselling Services: career development, shift worker support services, etc

Health Smart Coaching Services: nutrition, smoking cessation, 12 weeks to wellness, etc

AND MORE!

www.homewoodhealth.com
GSA Grants and Bursaries

GSA Academic Travel Grants Summary
- Up to $500 for Masters students during the degree program
- Up to $1000 for Doctoral students during the degree program (max. $500 per fiscal year)

GSA Child Care Grants Summary
- For children up to and including 12 years of age
- Dependent children with special needs up to 18 years of age
- Max. $1000 per child per fiscal year (April 1 to March 31)

www.gsa.ualberta.ca
GSA Emergency Bursaries Summary

- A non-repayable bursary of up to $2000
- Complete the online application and then make an appointment with the Student Financial Services Office

GSA Graduate Student Group Grants Summary

- Funding for seminars, guest lectures, colloquia, start-up funds, and more

GSA Grants Specialist
gsa.grants@ualberta.ca
Collective Agreement

Graduate Assistants are:
- Teaching Assistants, Principal Instructors, Research Assistants, and Research Assistantship Fellowships

The Collective Agreement covers:
- Minimum stipend rates
- Letters of Appointment
- Graduate student leave (eg parental leave)
- Assistantship Time Use Guideline Template
- Health and Safety
- Dispute Resolution

GSA VP Labour – Beth Richardson  
gsa.vplabour@ualberta.ca

GSA Associate Director – Julie Tanguay  
gsaad@ualberta.ca
Graduate Student Ombudsperson

Negotiated by the GSA in 2010 from part-time to full-time

For academic, discipline, supervisor concerns, or other University issues

gradomb@ualberta.ca

or visit

www.ombudservic.ualberta.ca
Get Involved!

- Vote in our General Election, run for office, get involved with your departmental graduate students’ association, or serve on one of 150+ GSA or University committees.

- Contact gsa.nomcomm@ualberta.ca for information on committee vacancies.

Visit us online or in person:

www.gsa.ualberta.ca

1-49 Triffo Hall

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