Please find below an overview of the current bargaining process that the GSA is engaged with on behalf of the subset of its overall membership who are classified as academically-employed graduate students. The bargaining process is governed by provisions in the current Graduate Student Assistantship Collective Agreement (CA), GSA Bylaw and Policy (Section Q), and the Labour Relations Code.

**Overview of the Current Bargaining Process**

As per Article 5.02 of the current CA between the Graduate Students’ Association (GSA) and the University of Alberta Board of Governors, “the negotiating teams [those from the GSA and the University] will exchange written proposal to amend the agreement no later than November 1 preceding the expiry of the agreement.”

As the current CA expired 31 August 2018, the GSA began formulating its opening position (the “written proposal” noted above) in the fall of 2017. This was developed via input from the GSA Labour Relations Committee (GSA LRC) and direct consultation with graduate students regarding feedback on the CA and what they would like to see in a new agreement. These consultations took the form of individual meetings with departmental GSA Council representatives and a town hall held on 26 September 2017. This town hall was advertised in the GSA newsletter (sent to all graduate students) on 15 and 22 September 2017. Following the town hall, on 12 October 2017, a summary of the feedback received was sent to academically-employed graduate students (AEGSs; the members of the GSA’s bargaining unit).

Based on the feedback received, the opening position was developed by the GSA LRC. Prior to the opening position being submitted to the University, all AEGSs voted on the proposed bargaining priorities and goals that were contained within it. This vote closed on 26 October 2017 and the identified priorities were approved; the opening position was then submitted to the University.

In that opening position, in addition to expressing a desire for changes in the wording of the CA, the GSA asked for "an overall yearly increase (salary and award) of 2.5% in each year of the Agreement (assuming that base tuition remains frozen for 2018-2019)." The intent of an opening position is to advise those on the other side of the bargaining table of the negotiating priorities of the other side. The individual elements contained within it are then negotiated for.

Following submission of this opening position, the GSA Negotiating Team spent approximately 14 months bargaining with the University. Throughout, this process the
Vice-President Labour endeavoured to keep AEGSs* as updated as possible when there was new information to share. Email updates were sent on the following days:

- 13 December 2017
- 23 February 2018
- 4 May 2018
- 25 June 2018
- 26 September 2018

Additionally, a GSA Labour 101 session was held on 15 November 2017; this session was open for all graduate students to attend.

When it became apparent that there was not going to be further movement at the negotiating table on the GSA’s priorities, the GSA (in fulfillment of its duties as a union and after seeking appropriate legal advice) presented this offer to its bargaining unit.

However, before moving to a ratification vote, the GSA consulted AEGSs again on 30 November 2018; this communication detailed the legal advice that the GSA had received and specified the current offer from the University.

After addressing individually all feedback and concerns received (and having received no follow-up responses), the GSA then moved to the current ratification vote.

Should the current ratification vote not be approved, the existing CA continues to remain in effect (despite its expiry date of 31 August 2018) and the GSA Negotiating Team will explore next steps.

If you have any questions, you can contact the Vice-President Labour at gsa.vplabour@ualberta.ca.

*Please note that only people who were members of the bargaining unit (ie. held an appointment under the CA) at the time these communications were sent would have received them.