GSA Council Meeting MINUTES
Monday, 28 October 2019 at 6:00 pm
2-100 University Hall, Van Vliet Complex

IN ATTENDANCE:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position/Role</th>
<th>Field/Degree</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fahed Elian (President)</td>
<td>Allan Yarahmady (Biochemistry)</td>
<td>Saurab Jingga (Internetworking)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dylan Ashley (VP Academic)</td>
<td>Jessica Grenke (Biological Science)</td>
<td>Abbie Schenk; Elaine Yip (Kinesiology, Sport, &amp; Recreation)</td>
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<td>Marc Waddingham (VP External)</td>
<td>Nicholas Ruel (Pharmacology)</td>
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<td>Shanawaz Mohammad (VP Labour)</td>
<td>Kevin Solar (Biomedical Engineering)</td>
<td>Hamdah Al Nebaihi (Pharmacy &amp; Pharmaceutical Sciences)</td>
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<td>Chantal Labonté (VP Student Services)</td>
<td>Ke Feng (Business PhD)</td>
<td>Julia Guy (Library &amp; Information Studies)</td>
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<td>Pranidhi Baddam (Speaker)</td>
<td>Calvin Chow (Cell Biology)</td>
<td>Nishant Agrawal (Mathematical &amp; Statistical Sciences)</td>
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<td>Alesha Reed (Senator)</td>
<td>Alvaro Omaña (Chemistry)</td>
<td>Shahed Taghian Dehaghami (Mechanical Engineering)</td>
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<td>Harleen Kaur Dhaliwal</td>
<td>Julie Piche (Dentistry)</td>
<td>Kevin Joannou (Medical Microbiology &amp; Immunology)</td>
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<td>Braulio Marfil Garza</td>
<td>Colette Slevinsky (Drama)</td>
<td>Marcus Jackson (Medicine)</td>
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<td>Claudia Holody</td>
<td>Qi Chen (Earth and Atmospheric Sciences)</td>
<td>Nathan Nadolski (Medical Genetics)</td>
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<td>Ronan Noble (Councillor-at-Large)</td>
<td>Jasen Aussant (Economics)</td>
<td>Jared Fath (Renewable Resources)</td>
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<td>Armin Norouzi Yengeje</td>
<td>Areej Alshammiry (Ed Policy Studies)</td>
<td>Brittany Fedor; Charbel Baaklini (Neuroscience)</td>
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<td>Konstantin Tebenev (Councillor-at-Large)</td>
<td>Jingyang Gao (Educational Psychology)</td>
<td>Arnel Ramic (Nursing)</td>
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<td>Sasha van der Klein</td>
<td>Yina Liu (Elementary Education)</td>
<td>Valene Cheah (Occupational Therapy)</td>
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<td>Srujana Mekala</td>
<td>Jane Allred (History &amp; Classics)</td>
<td>Braden Chow; Shayla Mosley (Oncology)</td>
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<td>Kyla Cangiano (Anthropology)</td>
<td>Deanna Starr (Indigenous Graduate Students’ Association)</td>
<td>Matthew Benson (Ophthalmology)</td>
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Guests: Dr Lesley Cormack (Dean of the Faculty of Arts); Marcel Roth (Director, University of Alberta Protective Services); Dr Brooke Milne (Dean of the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research); Nayar Shahid (Pharmacology); Joanne Smith (Oncology); Alex Ouellette Zuk (Neuroscience; GSA ACB nominee); Atm Abir (Civil and Environmental Engineering, GSA ACB Nominee).

Speaker Pranidhi Baddam in the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 6:01 pm. Speaker acknowledged the Traditional Territory of Treaty Six.

Approval of Agenda

1. Approval of the 28 October 2019 Consolidated Agenda

Members had before them the 28 October 2019 Consolidated Agenda, which had been previously distributed on 25 October 2019. L Liddle MOVED; D Ashley SECONDED.

Motion PASSED unanimously.
Approval of Minutes

2. Minutes from the 16 September 2019 GSA Council meeting
Members had before them the 16 September 2019 GSA Council Minutes, which had been previously distributed on 18 October 2019. D Ashley MOVED; M Waddingham SECONDED.

Motion PASSED unanimously.

Changes in GSA Council Membership

3. Changes in GSA Council Membership
   i. Introduction of New GSA Councillor Members
New GSA Council members introduced themselves: S Mekala (Agricultural, Food & Nutritional Science); S Taghian Dehaghani (Mechanical Engineering); E Sammons (Political Science); Q Chen (Earth & Atmospheric Sciences); S Mosley (Oncology); Y Liu (Elementary Education); A Ramic (Nursing); J Aussant (Economics).

   ii. Farewell to Departing GSA Council Members
This was the last meeting for J Smith (Oncology).

Councillor Announcements

4. GSA Council Member Announcements
   J Grenke noted that the Field Research Activities Council was looking for graduate student members from fields outside of STEM. She asked to be contacted for more information.

M Miazga-Rodriguez noted that the School of Public Health was hosting This is Public Health Week from 4 November to 8 November 2019, and it would include a key note presentation on health and climate change on 7 November at 6 PM in 2-190 ECHA.

M Waddingham noted that the Free Expression Advisory Group would be hosting a town hall on 1 November 2019 at 12 PM in Council Chamber to present the final draft of the Statement on Freedom of Expression at the University of Alberta.

F Elian noted that the GSA had sent out, through the GSA newsletter, a survey on student-supervisor relationships and he invited GSA Council members to fill out the survey and encourage their peers to also fill it out. He added that the survey would close at 12 PM on 4 November 2019.

Presentations

5. University of Alberta United Way Campaign
Marc Waddingham (Vice-President External) presented the item and introduced the guest, Dr Lesley Cormack (Dean of the Faculty of Arts and former U of A United Way Committee Co-Chair). L Cormack noted that United Way funds community programming aimed at reducing poverty. She also noted that any funds raised in Edmonton would stay in the Edmonton community. She specified that over 135,000 people in the Edmonton area lived in poverty and that about 40,000 of those were children. She explained that the United Way supported a suite of charities focused on breaking the cycle of poverty, lifting people out of poverty, and creating support networks. She added that, for graduate students who wanted to participate in the campaign but weren’t able to do so financially, there were volunteering opportunities. She then presented a short video featuring the work of the United Way. She noted in closing that the campaign began on 9 November and was ongoing until 25 November 2019.

C Baaklini asked how graduate students could find out more about volunteering; L Cormack directed GSA Council members to the University’s United Way webpage.

6. Proposed Changes to Code of Student Behaviour
Fahed Elian (President) presented the item and introduced the guest, Marcel Roth (Director, University of Alberta Protective Services). M Roth presented on proposed changes to Code of Student Behavior (CoSB) with regards to weapons on campus. He indicated that this change would consist of an addition to the CoSB to prohibit actual and imitation weapons on campus, as incidents with weapons had been increasing (including robbery) to ensure the safety of the community. It was noted that other institutions had similar policies. He presented a short clip on imitation weapons and the consequences associated with them with respect to the response from officers, who might presume an imitation weapon to be real. It was noted that they were hoping to have Board of Governors approval for this new provision before the fall of 2020 but that they would consult widely with stakeholders before moving forward with the approval process. He also added that they were hoping to develop a prohibition on weapons that would apply to faculty members and staff at the University. It was also noted that the majority of weapons complaints were from residences, campus was not an appropriate place to bring weapons (even if no criminal intent was present), and most weapons complaints on campus were for imitation weapons.

Prepared by F Robertson and M Toghrail for GSA Council 28 October 2019
Matters raised in discussion included (among others): if incidents involving weapons were concerned students or members of the public (M Roth noted that more than half of weapons complaints were in residences, and not all were substantiated; in cases where culprits of robberies were identified they were perpetrated by individuals without any affiliation to the University); if any of the weapons complaints were due to hunting equipment (M Roth responded that most complaints were imitation weapons so there was little connection there); if there was any theory as to why there was an increase in incidents (it was explained that imitation weapons were becoming more popular and easier to access); clarification on how imitation guns were used for recreation (it was noted that there had been reports of irresponsible use in such circumstances, not always by the owner, and that “responsible ownership” would be considered in a later phase of the consultation process and later rollout); whether there was a link between possession of weapons and likelihood of suicide on campus, and if so whether, there should be better partnership with other resources on campus (M Roth noted that weapons were not frequently used in suicide cases on campus); how law enforcement responded to reports of weapons on campus (it was noted that the response would vary depending on the initial report but that it could include interventions from patrol members and the Edmonton Police Services tactical team); and whether this update to the CoSB would impact law enforcement responses (M Roth clarified that this update would only shape how the University reprimanded the offender). Further inquiries can be directed to roth@ualberta.ca.

7. Introduction to Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research Dean and Strategic Priorities
F Elian, introduced Dr Brooke Milne (Vice-Provost and Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research (FGSR)) who presented on FGSR’s strategic priorities. She noted that the first year of her term her team would be evaluating what had been done in the last few years and establishing where to go next. She added that where to go next would be developed in consultation with graduate students. She also noted that the quality of student-supervisory relationships was paramount to her and that it was important that there was consistency and transparency for graduate students around expectations (including what was expected of them, what they expect from their supervisors, and FGSR expectations of supervisors and graduate students). She also noted that the Provost’s office would be supporting FGSR in these efforts. She mentioned that the FGSR was working on developing two proposals related to this issue and that they would be thoroughly shared with stakeholders for feedback, including with GSA Council. She hoped that these proposals would be in effect starting in September 2020. She noted that other issues that her team was working on were graduate student mental health and graduate student funding. For the latter, she added that guarantee minimum funding would probably not be happening in the short term but that her team was looking at developing new awards. Finally, she noted that she wanted more clarity in graduate program structure.

Matters raised in discussion included (among others): enquiries as to how FGSR intended to navigate the balance between over and under regulating student-supervisory relationships (B Milne noted that there was currently no standardized regulations and that FGSR would work to centralize regulations to foster the best student-supervisory relationships); if there was any data on how acute the issue of bad student-supervisory relationship was (she noted there was currently no centralized data and that, coming from a different institution, that was something that a concern to her); what channels existed to relay information on equity, diversity, and inclusivity initiatives (it was noted that FGSR was looking at how they could present information on this topic and that this would fall under the portfolio of Bryan Hogeveen, FGSR Vice-Dean); initiatives FGSR was pursuing for improving overall supervisory skills (she noted that there was a number of possible avenues as demonstrated by other institutions that FGSR was currently exploring); what mechanisms were currently in place for supervisors who had received multiple complaints (she responded that there were degrees of escalation, with one of the more severe outcomes being that the professor in question would lose supervisory privileges and she noted that students could also bring complaints forward through the mechanisms outlined in the Association of Academic Staff at the University of Alberta Collective Agreement); and whether there were any policies for departments or initiatives targeted to graduate students who parent, specifically new parents (B Milne noted that there was a general policy of accommodation and she noted that the FGSR provided parental leaves).

In concluding, B Milne encouraged graduate students to utilize existing pathways to address pressing issues, such as contacting the GSA or FGSR Associate Deans. She then thanked GSA Council for having her and encouraged graduate students with any concerns to reach out to herself or any of the FGSR Associate Deans.

Action Items

8. Recommended Changes to GSA Bylaw and Policy on Elections and Referenda
Pranidhi Baddam (Speaker) presented the item.

MOTION BEFORE GSA COUNCIL: That the GSA Council, on the unanimous recommendation of the GSA Elections and Referenda Committee, APPROVE recommended changes to GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section I: Elections and Section J: Referenda, as shown in the attached double column document and effective upon approval by GSA Council.
P Baddam explained that, unfortunately, J Bertrand, Vice-Chair of the GSA Elections and Referenda Committee, was unable to attend. She explained that if there were any questions GSA management would answer them as best as they could, in the event they couldn’t answer the question, it would be forwarded to the GSA ERC and the motion would be reported to a later meeting. There were no questions.

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

Motion PASSED; F Elian, D Ashley, M Waddingham, S Mohammad, and C Labonté Abstained.

**Discussion Items**

9. **GSA Board Strategic Work Plan (SWP): Update to GSA Council**

F Elian (President) presented an update on the GSA Board 2019-2020 SWP and encouraged GSA Council members to read the full update. Each Directly-Elected Officer (DEO) then presented their highlights.

F Elian highlighted work being done on student-supervisory relationships and strengthening the relationship between the GSA and the city of Edmonton (including TEC Edmonton). He noted that improving supervisory relationships were a priority for the GSA and one shared by FGSR. He also added that this issue was a standing item for the Board of Governors Learning, Research and Student Experience Committee (BLRSEC) and was on the agenda for the upcoming meeting in November. F Elian added that he had met with representatives from the City of Edmonton to strengthen the GSA’s relationship with the City in several ways and further discussions with City Councillors on graduate student issues.

D Ashley highlighted his and F Elian’s attendance at the Canadian Association of Graduate Studies Conference and presentation on the topic of student-supervisory relationships and how they related to mental health. D Ashley also noted that he had met with a number of students with academic issues.

M Waddingham reported on the recent establishment of the Michener Park Transition Advisory Committee and defining of the Committee Terms of Reference and major milestones. M Waddingham also highlighted his work with the Alberta Graduate Provincal Advocacy Council (ab-GPAC), including hiring a new Executive Director, establishing Government Relations training for future directors, scheduling Advocacy Week, and developing a proposal for express entry for graduate students.

S Mohammad highlighted his work on the ratification of the Graduate Assistantship Collective Agreement (CA). He added that the proposed CA was awaiting ratification by the Board Human Resources Compensation Committee (BHRCC), after which we collective bargaining for the next CA would commence. He further encouraged GSA Councillors to attend Labour town halls when they were held later in the year. S Mohammad also noted that he participated in the Coalition of Graduate Employee Unions conference, attended by 145 unions representing academically-employed students from across Canada and the US.

C Labonté reported on developing an engagement plan for graduate student groups, which kicked off with a workshop held in August that was well received with another event being held soon. She also noted that, along with GSA management and F Elian, the GSA had recently circulated a Request For Proposals (RFP) for a GSA Health and Dental Plan provider as the GSA’s agreement with Studentcare was expiring in August. C Labonté highlighted the importance for due diligence in the GSA exploring options to ensure the best Plan possible for its members.

Questions asked of the DEOs included, but were not limited to, the process of how the Plan provider was selected (C Labonté noted that the GSA Board would make the final decision, after an interview process with selected providers who submitted a proposal; this decision would be reported to GSA Council) and if any further details could be provided in relation to the proposal for express entry for graduate students (M Waddingham noted that the proposal was still under discussion with the Ministers of Advanced Education and Immigration; any proposal must go through many stages of governance so it would likely take a few years but GSA Council would be updated whenever possible).

**Elections**

10. **GSA Council Elections**

Fahed Elian (President and non-voting member of the GSA Nominating Committee) presented the items and asked all nominees the following question, “taking 45 seconds, please tell us why you’d like to serve on the GSA ACB/ASC/Board.”

**Standing Committees**
a. Nominees for the GSA Appeals and Complaints Board (GSA ACB) (1 vacancy):
   Atm Abir (Civil and Environmental Engineering)
   Alexandra Ouellette Zuk (Neuroscience)

b. Nominees for the GSA Awards Selection Committee (GSA ASC) (2 vacancies):
   Arshad K. Khalafzai (Earth and Atmospheric Sciences)

c. Nominees for the GSA Board (GSAB) (1 vacancy):
   Shahed Taghian Dehaghani (Mechanical Engineering)

Reports
11. President
   i. President’s Report:
   Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 25 October 2019. The report stood as submitted. In addition, F Elian stated that the survey and feedback request from the Advisory Search Committee for the President had been sent to the campus community. He also noted that the government sent a letter regarding scholarships offered through FGSR, which the GSA could hopefully update GSA Council on soon. He also noted that, with the Provincial Government budget announced late last week, it was indicated that the cap on domestic tuition increase was now 7% (an increase from the previous cap which was tied to the Consumer Price Index). He also noted that it had been announced a 6.9% cut to the University’s Campus Alberta Grant and an increase to student loan interest.

GSA Council members asked F Elian questions including, but not limited to, if there would be an increase to international student fees (F Elian responded that it had not been discussed yet and he added that there had been discussion on increasing internationals enrollment for the upcoming year to offset the cut in the Campus Alberta Grant, in conjunction with discussion around student financial support and aid); how the cut to the Campus Alberta Grant could affect the GSA (F Elian responded that at this stage the GSA was not looking at increasing GSA membership fees, noted that the GSA negotiates for the Graduate Student Support Fund from the University, which could be impacted, and emphasized that the GSA would push hard against tuition increases without sufficient rationale); if any specific action was being taken to lessen the impact of these cuts on students (F Elian noted that these conversations had started with University administration and they would be ongoing for many months); if there were any dates graduate students should pay attention to for further announcements (it was noted that the University budget for next year would be approved by the Board of Governors in March); clarification on the right to strike (it was clarified that rights as employees under the CA were separate from rights of individuals as students to protest and that the right to strike as an academically-employed graduate student was defined by Alberta labour legislation and could only occur in specific contexts, as opposed to protest action); and if there would be opportunities for graduate students to make their voices heard (F Elian invited graduate students to attend the University’s budget town hall that Wednesday).

   ii. GSA Board
   Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 25 October 2019. The report stood as submitted.

   iii. GSA Budget and Finance Committee
   Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 25 October 2019. The report stood as submitted.

   iv. GSA Governance Committee
   Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 25 October 2019. The report stood as submitted.

12. Vice-President Academic
   i. Vice-President Academic’s Report:
   Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 28 October 2019. The report stood as submitted. In addition, D Ashley stated that if international graduate students were looking into completing internships outside the University they should first speak to International Student Services to ensure they had a clear understanding of what rights under the conditions of their student visa.

13. Vice-President External
   i. Vice-President External’s Report

Prepared by F Robertson and M Toghrail for GSA Council 28 October 2019

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 28 October 2019. The report stood as submitted. In addition M Waddingham noted that he was still reading through the provincial budget document and would work with ab-GPAC to address graduate student concerns.

ii. **GSA Awards Selection Committee’s Report**
No written report at this time.

iii. **Alberta Graduate Provincial Advocacy Council (ab-GPAC) Report**
No written report at this time.

14. **Vice-President Labour**
   1. **Vice-President Labour’s Report**
   Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 25 October 2019. The report stood as submitted. In addition S Mohammad noted that noted that in early October academically-employed graduate students voted to ratify the proposed 2018-2020 Graduate Student Assistantship Collective Agreement (CA). He added that the Board of Governors would vote to ratify the proposed CA in late November and that negotiations for the next CA would commence shortly.
   2. **GSA Labour Relations Committee**
   No written report at this time.

15. **Vice-President Student Services**
   1. **Vice-President Student Services’ Report**
   Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 25 October 2019. The report stood as submitted. In addition, C Labonté stated that the Dean of Students office had circulated a call for volunteers including graduate students to work with both the Suicide Prevention program and the Students Who Parent program. She also encouraged GSA Council members to attend a town hall hosted by the GSA on the Mental Health Standard for Post-Secondary developed by the Mental Health Commission of Canada the following day at 1 PM to reflect on standards and what “good mental health” means for graduate students.

16. **Senator**
   1. **Senator’s Report**
   No written report at this time.

17. **Speaker**
   1. **Speaker’s Report**
   No written report at this time.

18. **Chief Returning Officer**
   1. **Chief Returning Officer’s Report**
   No written report at this time.

19. **GSA Nominating Committee**
   1. **GSA Nominating Committee Report**
   Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 25 October 2019. The report stood as submitted.

20. **GSA Elections and Referenda Committee**
   1. **GSA Elections and Referenda Committee Report**
   No written report at this time.

21. **GSA Management**
   1. **Executive Director’s Report**
   Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 25 October 2019. The report stood as submitted.

**Question Period**

22. **Written Questions**

Prepared by F Robertson and M Toghrail for GSA Council 28 October 2019

S van der Klein, Councillor-at-Large, asked if, considering the announcement of a $500 fee for the Alberta Immigration Nominee Program, the GSA or ab-GPAC was considering advocating for waiving this fee for those who completed their degree within Alberta. M Waddingham responded that the GSA planned to push back on this decision as an arbitrary fee did not incentivize international students to stay here in the long term and contribute to the provincial economy.

23. Oral Questions

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:35 pm.