GSA Council Meeting MINUTES  
Monday, 25 February 2019 at 6:00 pm  
2-100 University Hall, Van Vliet Complex

IN ATTENDANCE:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position or Field</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sasha van der Klein (President)</td>
<td>Teddy Carter (Business MBA)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jonathan Lai (Human Ecology)</td>
<td>Khushmol Dhaliwal (Paediatrics)</td>
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<td>Masoud Aliramezani (VP Academic)</td>
<td>Rongrong Zhang (Business PhD)</td>
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<td>Deanna Starr (IGSA)</td>
<td>David Tandio (Pharmacology)</td>
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<td>Fahed Elian (VP Student Services)</td>
<td>Hareem Shafi (Chemical &amp; Materials Engineering)</td>
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<td>Kristoffer Angelo Soliven (Networking)</td>
<td>Mattia Sorgon (Philosophy)</td>
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<td>Pranidhi Baddam (Speaker)</td>
<td>Michael Armstrong (Chemistry)</td>
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<td>Janita Frantsi (Kinesiology, Sport &amp; Recreation)</td>
<td>Kimberley Dice (Physical Therapy)</td>
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<td>Vahid Ayan (Chief Returning Officer)</td>
<td>Lindsay Moore (Communication Sciences &amp; Disorders)</td>
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<td>Jiao Yu (Lab Medicine &amp; Pathology)</td>
<td>David Purschke (Physics)</td>
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<td>Ahsan Ahmed (Senator)</td>
<td>Dylan Ashley (Computing Science)</td>
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<td>Julia Guy; Tabatha Plesuk (Library &amp; Info Studies)</td>
<td>Yilun Wu (Physiology)</td>
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<td>Peter Jun (Councillor-at-Large)</td>
<td>Julia Piche (Dentistry)</td>
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<td>Alexander Rice (Linguistics)</td>
<td>Daniela Gomez (Psychiatry)</td>
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<td>Kanishk Patel (Councillor-at-Large)</td>
<td>Kenzie Gordon (Digital Humanities)</td>
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<td>Milad Rezvani Rad (Mechanical Engineering)</td>
<td>William Service; Lane Liddle (Psychology)</td>
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<td>Marc Waddingham (Councillor-at-Large)</td>
<td>Xavia Publius (Drama)</td>
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<td>Nicole Noel (Medical Genetics)</td>
<td>Misha Miazga-Rodriquez (Public Health)</td>
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<td>Andrew Woodman (Councillor-at-Large)</td>
<td>Alex Sheen (Earth and Atmospheric Sciences)</td>
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<td>Nariman Sepehrvand (Medicine)</td>
<td>Lea Lavy (Religious Studies)</td>
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<td>Hongbing Fan (Agriculture, Food &amp; Nutritional Science)</td>
<td>Thomas Mamos (East Asian Studies)</td>
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<td>Shahnaz Shahtoosi (Modern Languages and Cultural Studies)</td>
<td>Jared Fath (Renewable Resources)</td>
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<td>Megan Paranich (Anthropology)</td>
<td>Areej Alshammiry (Educational Policy Studies)</td>
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<td>Subash Giri (Music)</td>
<td>Yicong Luo (Resources Economics &amp; Environmental Sociology)</td>
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<td>Brianna Greenwood (Biochemistry)</td>
<td>Chantal Labonté (Educational Psychology)</td>
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<td>Rebecca Long (Neuroscience)</td>
<td>Robert Piazza (Secondary Education)</td>
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<td>Ruhul Amin (Biological Sciences)</td>
<td>Qingna Jin (Elementary Education)</td>
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<td>Jennifer Stevenson (Nursing)</td>
<td>Samantha Wesch (Women's &amp; Gender Studies)</td>
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<td>Ashmita De (Biomedical Engineering)</td>
<td>Olivia Cornwall (History &amp; Classics)</td>
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<td>Braden Chow (Oncology)</td>
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Guests: Debby Burshtyn (Interim Dean of the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research); Ashley Hynes (ALES; Indigenous Graduate Students' Association (IGSA)); Tara Kappo (IGSA); Kristine Wray (REES; IGSA); Britt Voaklander (IGSA; Public Health); Kirk MacLeod (Board of Governor member); Amin Pourasghar (Mechanical Engineering); Amin Moazeni (Chemistry).

Speaker Pranidhi Baddam in the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 6:04 PM. Speaker acknowledged the Traditional Territory of Treaty Six.

Roll Call
1. Roll Call of GSA Council Members in Attendance

Approval of Agenda
2. Approval of the 25 February 2019 Consolidated Agenda
Members had before them the 25 February 2019 Consolidated Agenda, which had been previously distributed on 22 February 2019. K Gordon MOVED; D Ashley SECONDED.

Motion PASSED unanimously.
Presentations:

3. Celebration for the New Seat on GSA Council for the Indigenous Graduate Students’ Association Representative

S van der Klein (President) welcomed the members of the Indigenous Graduate Students’ Association (IGSA) and introduced guest speaker Rocky Morin. She told a personal story of her own experience learning about the Indigenous Peoples of Canada. She noted that, as an international student, she did not even know what ‘indigenous’ meant and that she had learned a lot working at the GSA and even more through working with the IGSA. S van der Klein further explained the path that led to the creation of the seat on GSA Council for an Indigenous graduate student (as elected by the IGSA) and the work put in to make this happen. She added that this was a partnership effort between the GSA and the IGSA. S van der Klein then explained the significance of the presence of R Morin and the custom of the gifting of tobacco, and then invited R Morin to speak.

R Morin greeted GSA Council members in Cree, thanked S van der Klein for her offering of tobacco, and explained the significance of the offering to GSA Council members. He also spoke about the importance of acknowledging the land, the significance of the drumbeat, and the importance of reconciliation. R Morin then shared a song with GSA Council members, and invited them to connect with the drumming in their own way in that moment.

S van der Klein thanked the guest for his contribution and introduced the new GSA Council member, IGSA representative Deanna Starr and invited her to introduce herself. D Starr offered information about her background and offered thanks to S van der Klein, R Morin, and Teddy Carter (IGSA members and GSA Councillor). The IGSA then shared tea and bannock with GSA Council to celebrate the creation of their GSA Council seat.

Approval of Minutes

4. Minutes from the 28 January 2019 GSA Council meeting

Members had before them the 28 January 2018 GSA Council Minutes, which had been previously distributed on 15 February 2019. K Gordon MOVED; D Ashley SECONDED. Motion PASSED. X Publius Abstained.

Changes in GSA Council Membership

5. Changes in GSA Council Membership
   i. Introduction of New GSA Council Members: T Mamos (East Asian Studies); J Guy (Library & Info Studies).
   ii. Farewell to Departing GSA Council Members: None.

Councillor Announcements

6. Councillor Announcements

S van der Klein (President) reminded GSA Council that there will be another Labour Town Hall on 5 March 2019 at 10:00 AM and encouraged all academically-employed graduate students to attend and provide feedback.

K Gordon (Digital Humanities Councillor and GSA Nominating Committee Vice-Chair) informed GSA Council of the creation of a graduate student component to the University Signature Area: Research at the Intersection of Gender. She added that there would be a workshop aiming to make connections with students working on projects in gender related studies. Details will be circulated.

J Lai (Human Ecology Councillor) invited graduate students to attend Engage MacEwan: Building Innovative Community Research Partnerships taking place 5 March 2019 in MacEwan Roundhouse. More information can be found here.

S Wesch (Women’s and Gender Studies Councillor) informed GSA Council of the Women’s and Gender Studies Graduate Conference on 16 March 2019 and an associated workshop on 15 March 2019. Both events are open to all and details will be circulated.

Action Items:


Svan der Klein (President) presented the items. S Ball (Accountant) and D Sheikh (Financial Manager) were present to answer questions.
i. **MOTION BEFORE GSA COUNCIL**: That GSA Council **APPROVE**, having been unanimously recommended by the GSA Budget and Finance Committee and the GSA Board, the Annual Operating and Capital Budget (2019-2020) (found on pages 7.4 to 7.12 in the attached material in the “2019-2020 Budget for Approval” column bordered in red on each page) and the Restricted and Other Funding Budget (2019-2020) (found on page 7.24 in the attached material in the “2019-2020 Budget for Approval” column bordered in red).

S van der Klein noted the recommendation for a 2% decrease to the GSA fee, while still achieving a balanced budget. She added that the Three-Year Budget/Business Plan also detailed a plan to decrease the GSA fee by 2% each year for the next two years. She noted that this reduction would still allow for a balanced budget and planned increases to services for graduate students including increases to the amount of subsidies currently offered to the Campus Food Bank (founded by the GSA), Writing Resources, and the Career Centre. She also noted that another highlight of the 2019-2020 budget was the maintenance of a budget line to facilitate accessing a consultant to assist with ongoing work associated with the development of a strike fund. There were no questions.

**MOTION**: That GSA Council **APPROVE**, having been unanimously recommended by the GSA Budget and Finance Committee and the GSA Board, the Annual Operating and Capital Budget (2019-2020) (found on pages 7.4 to 7.12 in the attached material in the “2019-2020 Budget for Approval” column bordered in red on each page) and the Restricted and Other Funding Budget (2019-2020) (found on page 7.24 in the attached material in the “2019-2020 Budget for Approval” column bordered in red). F Elian **MOVED**; M Waddingham **SECONDED**.

Motion **PASSED**. X Publius Abstained.

ii. **MOTION BEFORE GSA COUNCIL**: That GSA Council **RECEIVE FOR INFORMATION**, having been reviewed and advised upon by the GSA Budget and Finance Committee and the GSA Board, the Annual Operating and Capital Three-Year Budget/Business Plan (2019-2022) and the Restricted and Other Funding Three-Year Budget/Business Plan (2019-2022) (pages 7.4 to 7.12 and 7.24 in the attached material).

**MOTION**: That GSA Council **RECEIVE FOR INFORMATION**, having been reviewed and advised upon by the GSA Budget and Finance Committee and the GSA Board, the Annual Operating and Capital Three-Year Budget/Business Plan (2019-2022) and the Restricted and Other Funding Three-Year Budget/Business Plan (2019-2022) (pages 7.4 to 7.12 and 7.24 in the attached material). M Aliramezani **MOVED**; J Fath **SECONDED**.

Motion **PASSED**. X Publius Abstained.

8. **GSA 2018-2019 Winter Term Budget and Expenditure Report**

S van der Klein (President) presented the items. S Ball (Accountant) and D Sheikh (Financial Manager) were present to answer questions.

**MOTION BEFORE GSA COUNCIL**: That GSA Council **RECEIVE FOR INFORMATION** the GSA 2018-2019 Winter Term Budget and Expenditure Report.

S van der Klein thanked the financial team for all their work and highlighted that the GSA was on track overall.

B Chow asked about replacement of a GSA staff member who had retired (this staff member, who was part-time, would not be replaced).

**MOTION**: That GSA Council **RECEIVE FOR INFORMATION** the GSA 2018-2019 Winter Term Budget and Expenditure Report. K Gordon **MOVED**; M Waddingham **SECONDED**.

Motion **PASSED**. X Publius Abstained.


S van der Klein (President) presented the item.

**MOTION BEFORE GSA COUNCIL**: That GSA Council **APPROVE**, having been unanimously recommended by the GSA Budget and Finance Committee and the GSA Board, the recommended changes to GSA Policy, Section K: Finances and GSA Policy: GSA Standing Committees, as shown in the attached double column document and effective upon approval by GSA Council.
S van der Klein noted that these recommended changes restructured and streamlined existing policies and noted that there was a consolidation of “practices” and “procedures” under the heading “procedures.” There were no questions.

**MOTION:** That GSA Council APPROVE, having been unanimously recommended by the GSA Budget and Finance Committee and the GSA Board, the recommended changes to GSA Policy, Section K: Finances and GSA Policy: GSA Standing Committees, as shown in the attached double column document and effective upon approval by GSA Council. N Noel MOVED; D Ashley SECONDED.

Motion PASSED. X Publius Abstained.

**Presentations:**

10. **Guaranteed Minimum Funding Package Proposal**

Sa van der Klein (President) presented the item and introduced the guest, Deborah Burshtyn (Interim Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research).

S van der Klein explained that the guaranteed minimum funding package proposal was being presented for the purpose of consultation and had recently been discussed at the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research (FGSR) Council. She added that the GSA had been advocating to the University for the implementation of minimum funding packages for many years and she thanked D Burshtyn for her work on this proposal. S van der Klein then invited D Burshtyn to present the proposal.

D Burshtyn explained that the proposal was in the early stages and that the University was still trying to figure out some of the practicalities around it. She noted that a few Canadian institutions now offered minimum funding packages but the process took several years to implement. She noted that the proposal included a starting point for a minimum stipend of $18,000/per year for PhD students for their first four years. She specified that this amount was lower that what many departments already offered. She added that this was an all-in amount and that it would include all sources of University funding received by a graduate student. She noted that there were still many areas in the proposal that needed further discussion, some of which would provoke different viewpoints.

D Burshtyn also laid out the consultation pathway that was being pursued and which included the GSA and noted that, next, the proposal would go to the Provost’s Advisory Council of Chairs and then to General Faculties Council for early consultation. She stated that she was hopeful that, by next year, a fully formed proposal would make its way through the University’s governance structure. She added that, if this proposal became policy, it would fall under the Provost and Vice-President (Academic)'s purview and not that of the FGSR.

Councilors then posed a series of questions, including but not limited to, if combined PhD/Masters students would be included (D Burshtyn noted that funding would apply while students were engaged in full-time PhD study but it could be up to individual programs to decide when that was); if there was a breakdown available for the $2 million differential (D Burshtyn noted that, every year, there were about 200 PhD students that were fully self-funded, that much of that $2 millions gap accounted for graduate students that were somewhat funded but not up to $18,000, and that this funding could be anywhere between $1 and $17,999); how leaves of absence would affect funding (D Burshtyn responded that these rules needed to be thought through carefully); the additional constraints this may put on students’ time in terms of employment (it was noted that the limitation on hours of outside employment were lifted from other institutions and Tri-Council rules and that the proposal was looking for ways to provide funding that allowed graduate students to engage full-time in their studies, and that the numbers of permissible outside employment hours offered in the proposal was intended to just be a starting point for discussion); the requirement to apply for other scholarships (D Burshtyn responded that this was a standard clause in many support packages already on campus as graduate students were expected to seek out and to put in the effort for additional funding); tuition supports offered at other institutions (D Burshtyn replied that other institutions did not include tuition support (except where there were international students with a differential) and that this should be clarified in the proposal); if there was any discussion around graduate students with children and a possible increased minimum for them (it was noted that employers did not pay differently based on whether employees have kids and so it was not being considered for this proposal); if minimum funding packages could help students working full-time, such as those in Education programs, to alleviate some of their financial burdens and free up time for more on-campus involvement (D Burshtyn responded that overburden was a common issue for Education programs in particular as graduate students had many commitments); if there had been a discussion around offsetting tuition costs for international graduate students due to the international differential and the fact that their study permits restricted working hours (D Burshtyn noted that this proposal was not tied to tuition costs but FGSR was aware of this concern); the need for clear definitions for professional and executive doctoral programs (it was noted that changes to the Post-Secondary Learning Act gave a robust definition of executive programs, which were programs living outside of the tuition regulations and that it was unlikely that any PhD programs fell under that definition); if this proposal might disincentivize departments to enroll new graduate students (D Burshtyn noted that there was a possibility that departments might rethink their numbers); the current thinking around grandparenting current PhD students in this proposal (D Burshtyn responded that
grandparenting would most likely vary depending on the department, as not all of them had the same capacity to quickly take on this financial burden and some programs might chose to not fully grandparent in order to not have to close their admissions for some years); where the money for the minimum funding package proposal was from (it was noted that there was no new money to inject in the system to fund this proposal and that the money was already controlled by the Faculty Deans who would have to plan for a different distribution); how departments would transition from not funding their PhD students to having to provide minimum funding (D Burshtyn replied that this would vary greatly from one department to the next, and that it was a distribution question); and concerns about distribution of payment over the Fall and Winter terms and no payment in the Spring/Summer term (D Burshtyn responded that FGSR could recommend departments, where possible, split the distribution over the full year and she added that it would be really important to communicate the payment schedule, so that graduate students could plan accordingly).

Reports

11. President
   i. President’s Report:

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 22 February 2019. The report stood as submitted. In addition, S van der Klein reported that the Alberta Provincial Advocacy Council (ab-GPAC) had been meeting with MLAs from multiple parties over the last few months to discuss graduate student issues and priorities in advance of the provincial elections coming this spring. She encouraged eligible GSA Council members to vote in the upcoming provincial election. She further noted that one of the priorities of ab-GPAC for the year was to reduce barriers for Indigenous students accessing graduate education, and indicated that ab-GPAC was still in the process of developing research procedures, and consulting with the Indigenous Graduate Students’ Association, and other Indigenous student stakeholders.

S van der Klein indicated that there was a proposal that would be brought forward to the University of Alberta Board of Governors in March, to increase international graduate tuition by 2.77% for 2019-2020. She reminded GSA Council members that the Government of Alberta had mandated that, after 2019-2020, international tuition would need to be guaranteed for a certain period of time, to ensure predictability, and indicated that the University would be consulting with the GSA around developing the process and timelines by which the University would guarantee tuition for the official length of programs for both undergraduate and graduate programs for international students (which would presumably be two years for Master’s programs, and four years for PhD programs).

M Armstrong noted that he had thought that during the November 2018 GSA Council presentation from the Provost and Vice-President (Academic), and the Vice-President (Finance and Operations) had discussed ways of mitigating cost increases for graduate students, which had included an emergency graduate student fund for those who could not pay tuition, and whether there had been conversations within the University to remove money from that fund to lower the current increase in tuition for international graduate students. S van der Klein clarified that part of the international differential fee (IDF) for international graduate students went towards bursaries for international students, and that this would be included as part of the discussion about the new system as it could be hard to forecast changes in education cost four years in advance and that the GSA would want to ensure that international students would not be paying more that their share of the cost to deliver education. She further estimated that the increases to international graduate tuition beyond 2019-2020 would likely be higher, given that tuition rates would need to be established for multiple years.

   ii. GSA Board Report

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 22 February 2019. The report stood as submitted.

   iii. GSA Budget and Finance Committee Report

No written report at this time.

   iv. GSA Governance Committee Report

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 22 February 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 22 February 2019. The report stood as submitted. In addition, M Aliramezani stated that during his term, he had been advocating for graduate students’ involvement in undergraduate research projects, and ensuring graduate students were recognized both academically and financially for this work. As such, he noted that he was working to propose an item through the Undergraduate Research Initiative (URI) Advisory
Committee to add a supplementary stipend specifically for graduate students involved in these projects as a supervisor or co-supervisor. He encouraged any GSA Council members who had any personal experiences being involved in an undergraduate research project to contact him if they thought any specific details should be included in this proposal.

M Aliramezani also reported that he had heard from graduate students during his campaign in 2018 regarding concerns around the transparency of the adjudication process for scholarships and awards at the departmental and faculty levels, including the fact that an appeal process did not seem to exist for these decisions. He asked GSA Councillors to provide their thoughts or experiences with this matter, and encouraged GSA Councillors to email him with any additional feedback. Members posed a few questions, including but not limited to whether graduate students had any recourse if they found out that something had gone wrong with their scholarship application, such as the miscalculation of GPA at the departmental level, or graduate students being told by their department they had won an award when they had not actually won that award (M Aliramezani responded that he and S van der Klein had already discussed this issue with the Interim Dean of the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research (FGSR), and that he would be following up with these questions about departmental violations or accidents throughout the course of the scholarship adjudication process with the Interim FGSR Vice-Dean, B Hogeveen); and whether there were any recourses for students receiving larger scholarships mid-October, but did not have any source of funding until then (M Aliramezani indicated that he would also be bringing forward these questions to B Hogeveen).

13. Vice-President External
   i. Vice-President External's Report
   Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 22 February 2019. The report stood as submitted.

   ii. GSA Awards Selection Committee Report
   Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 22 February 2019. The report stood as submitted.

14. Vice-President Labour
   i. Vice-President Labour's Report
   Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 22 February 2019. The report stood as submitted. In addition, S van der Klein noted that B Richardson was unable to attend the GSA Council meeting, but that she had asked S van der Klein to update GSA Council on the fact that B Richardson hosted a Labour Town Hall on 22 February 2019, which was a successful two-hour discussion with the bargaining unit, and that this discussion had generated good ideas for moving forward with collective bargaining. She encouraged GSA Councillors to submit any feedback to the B Richardson if they were an academically-employed graduate student, and reported that the next Labour Town Hall would be held at 10 AM on 5 March 2019, in 2-100 Council Chambers.

   ii. GSA Labour Relations Committee Report
   No written report at this time.

15. Vice-President Student Services
   i. Vice-President Student Services' Report
   Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 25 January 2019. The report stood as submitted.

16. Senator
   i. Senator's Report
   No written report at this time.

17. Speaker
   i. Speaker's Report
   No written report at this time.

18. Chief Returning Officer
   i. Chief Returning Officer's Report
   Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 22 February 2019. The report stood as submitted. In addition, V Ayan noted that the 2019 GSA General Election was on track, and that voting would begin at 10 AM on Tuesday 26 February 2019, and would extend until Thursday 28 February 2019 at 10 AM. He encouraged all graduate students to vote in the election, and to visit the GSA website for more information.
19. GSA Nominating Committee  
i. GSA Nominating Committee Report  
Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 22 February 2019. The report stood as submitted. In addition, K Gordon (GSA Nominating Committee (GSA NoC) Vice-Chair) stated that the only current outstanding vacancy was for a graduate student position on the GSA NoC, and noted that it was a convenient committee to serve on, as it met almost exclusively over email.

20. GSA Elections and Referenda Committee  
ii. GSA Elections and Referenda Committee Report  
Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 22 February 2019. The report stood as submitted.

21. GSA Management  
i. Executive Director’s Report  
Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 22 February 2019. The report stood as submitted. In addition, C Thomas stated that she wanted to echo the GSA Chief Returning Officer’s report to GSA Council, and encouraged members to vote in the 2019 GSA General Election. She noted that the success of the organization was based on graduate students getting involved, and that the higher the voter turn-out, the stronger the mandate of the newly elected GSA Directly-Elected Officers was.

Question Period

22. Written Questions  
None at this time.

23. Oral Questions  
J Lai noted that an article in the Gateway announced that the SU Council had voted to close the Canada Post outlet in SUB in April due to a decline in usage and wondered if anyone had concerns about this. GSA Council discussed some concerns and some suggested alternate means of accessing Canada Post services. There were some concerns that this might disproportionately affect international students.

Adjournment  
The meeting was adjourned at 7:46 PM.