GSA Speaker
Report to GSA Council for the 18 March 2019 Meeting

To:       GSA Council
From:     Pranidhi Baddam
Date:     15 March 2019

Hello everyone,

Thanks to all GSA Council members who filled out the GSA Council survey at the 25 February 2019 meeting. Based on the results of the survey, I am happy to report that, overall, everyone seems happy with how meetings function and with their experiences serving on GSA Council. (As is to be expected, we did get a few comments about food, and some feedback that meetings should start earlier, along with feedback that meetings should start later.)

In response to the results of the survey, I wanted to draw your attention to a few reminders:

- There are a series of training and other ongoing supports available to GSA Councillors. The GSA Council Handbook, which is located online and sent to new GSA Councillors once they have submitted their Councillor Information form, is a useful tool to learn more about the GSA and how GSA Council functions. It also contains a list of abbreviations commonly used at GSA Council meetings. Additionally, prior to major items coming before GSA Council for consideration (such as the GSA’s budget, or the setting of the GSA Health and Dental Plan fee), an information session is scheduled for any GSA Councillor interested in learning more about these topics in-depth and in advance of the Council meeting where the item will be discussed. GSA office staff are also always available to provide training on specific topics upon request.

- GSA Council serves as a discussion forum for all graduate departments and programs at the U of A. In addition to the responsibility of GSA Departmental Councillors to report back to their constituents (graduate students within their department), I wanted to further encourage all of you to bring forward any issues that you hear from your graduate student colleagues. If there is an issue you want to bring forward that isn’t addressed on the agenda, you can always bring it up during the question period designated on each GSA Council agenda, or you can contact me at any point outside of a GSA Council meeting to find the best way to bring an issue forward.

Finally, there are two proposed changes that I wanted direct feedback from GSA Council members on:

- Whether members would like to see timed agenda items (so that the estimated start and estimated end time for each item would be listed on each agenda)?
- Whether members could like to see GSA Council elections moved to the start of the agenda?

If GSA Councillors are amenable to us trying out these two modifications, my suggestion is that we try implementing them at the upcoming two meetings of GSA Council (April and May), and re-evaluate at that point whether these changes seem to work in practice.

Best,

Pranidhi Baddam, Speaker