

GRADUATE STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION

ANNUAL REPORT 2022-2023

The GSA Annual Report offers GSA members—graduate students at the University of Alberta—a snapshot of annual work. Some aspects remain constant annually, such as services, but other focus areas—tuition hike protests or restructuring the Directly-Elected Officer team—shift in response to changing graduate student needs.

GSA services and events returned in-person for the first time since 2019 and included Fall and Winter Orientations and departmental orientations. We continued to offer a virtual option through eClass. Our popular Coffee Break series resumed with a Halloween costume and cookie decorating holiday version. Fall and Winter Social events had record breaking turnouts. Lastly, we hosted our Awards Night Ceremony with distinguished speakers, award recipients, friends, and family.

GSA members received over \$720,000 in grants and bursaries and the GSA Recognition Awards distributed over \$17,000 to exceptional graduate students. Partnerships with the Career Centre and the Academic Success Centre included \$12,000 in subsidies and yielded special programming for graduate students. Lastly, the GSA gave a \$45,000 one-time grant to the Campus Food Bank in addition to the regular GSA contribution.

Student leaders continued to work on essential, longer-term, priorities of addressing issues such as new technology. Since students and universities have been seeing an increase in A.I. technology use, the GSA has been committed to learn more about utilizing A.I. ethically.

As well, rising tuition costs represent a growing barrier to accessing post-secondary education, and funding opportunities that are crucial to the health, wellness, and ultimately, success of graduate students and their families. The GSA actively advocated for fair tuition by maintaining constructive dialogue with senior University administrators, the Board of Governors, valued service providers, as well as colleagues at other University-associated unions such as the Students' Union (SU), Non-Academic Staff Association (NASA), and the Association of Academic Staff of the University of Alberta (AASUA). In addition, the GSA worked with the SU to hold a protest against the rise of tuition costs.

We encourage you to direct any questions that arise during your reading of this document to gsa.frontdesk@ualberta.ca.

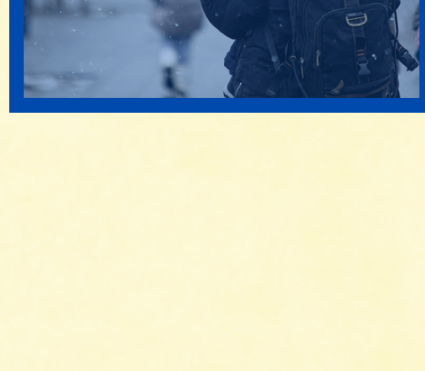
CREATING SOLUTIONS



This year's elected student leaders dedicated significant time to advocating for and collaborating with University administration on (among others) the following projects:

2022-2024 GSA Collective Agreement

The latest GSA Collective Agreement was ratified by Academically-Employed Graduate Students in November 2022 and the U of A Board of Governors in December 2022 and came into effect on 1 January 2023. With the assistance of the Public Service Alliance of Canada and the GSA Negotiating Team, the GSA was able to negotiate: a salary increase in Winter 2023 and Fall 2023, a designated leave for academic conferences, a designated leave for traditional Indigenous practices, and more detailed language on working additional hours.

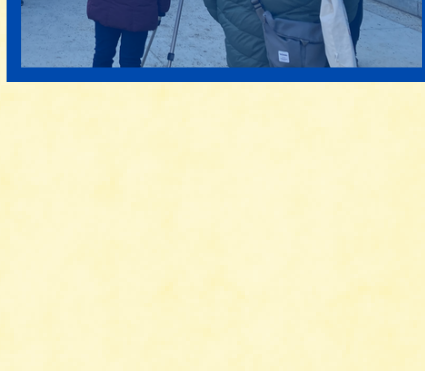


Ukrainian and Iranian Student Supports

The GSA advocated for supports for Ukrainian and Iranian students affected by political conflicts in their respective countries. As a result, FGSR committed to waiving application fees for Iranian students and admission deferrals that maintained funding offers for adversely impacted students.

Individual requests for aid were handled on a case-by-case basis.

The GSA also made statements during the year in support of the people and students affected by gender-based violence in Iran and the Russian government's military assault on Ukraine.



Tuition Hike Advocacy and Protest

On March 24, 2023, the GSA joined the Students' Union (SU) and campus colleagues to protest the proposed tuition increases at the Board of Governors' meeting. Tuition remains an important advocacy priority for the GSA and our partners at the Alberta Graduate Provincial Advocacy Council (ab-GPAC). The GSA will continue to advocate for fair tuition costs, reduced fees, and increased student funding.



Restructured GSA Directly-Elected Officer Team

A proposed restructuring to the GSA Directly-Elected Officer team was passed by GSA Council in November 2022. As a result of the restructuring, a new Vice-President Student Life role was created. The Vice-President Labour role was changed to Associate Vice-President Labour and this role was elected through an election parallel to the GSA General Election where Academically-Employed Graduate Students (AEGSs) serve as the pool of eligible voters.



Doctoral Funding Packages

The GSA worked extensively with the Interim Provost Dr. Verna Yiu, and Interim Vice-Provost and Dean of FGSR, Dr. Roger Epp, to proceed with a proposal on an institutional minimum for doctoral funding packages. This advocacy point continues to be a high priority for the GSA, the Office of the Provost, and the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research (FGSR).

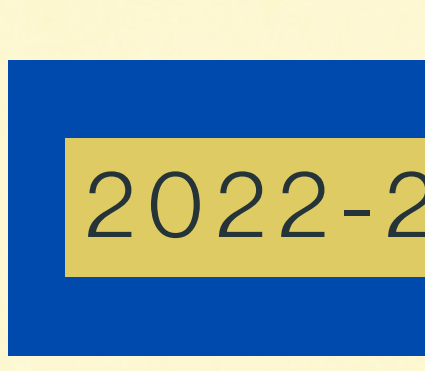


Campus Food Bank Support

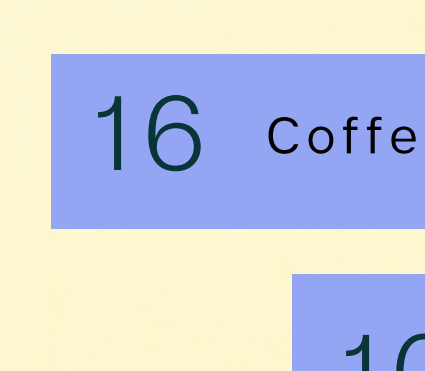
The GSA has been a long-time supporter of the Campus Food Bank (CFB), and each year dedicates a subsidy to support its mandate. In March of 2023, the Campus Food Bank reached a record high for the amount of students using its services. Recognizing the added need, the GSA dedicated a one-time grant in the amount of \$45,000 of its budget surplus from 2021-2022.

THE NEW LANDSCAPE

The GSA is proud to be run by and for graduate students. Whether it is through one-on-one meetings, specific service offerings, or in a broader setting, our work is defined by interacting with students. Below are just some of the ways we engaged with the graduate student body during 2022-2023.

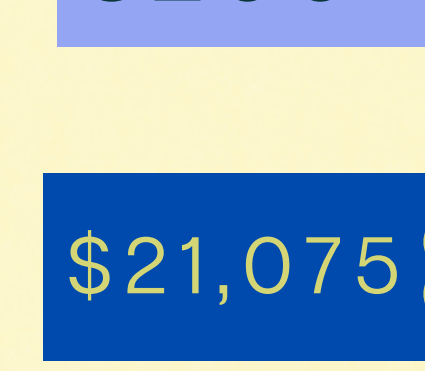


Graduate Student Orientations: The Fall Orientation and Info Fair returned in-person for the first time since 2019. The GSA also provided virtual orientations through eClass and in-person departmental orientation presentations. The orientations continued to provide information on the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, and University services available to graduate students.

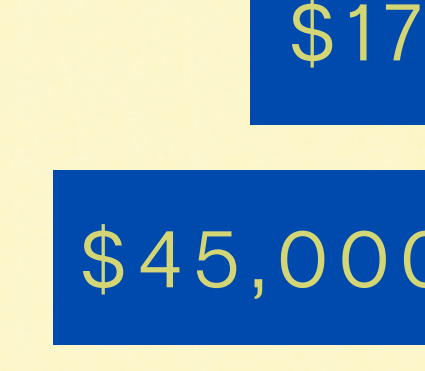


Health and Dental Plan Subsidy: Last Fall, the cost of the GSA Health and Dental Plan increased in response to inflating costs and a significant increase in usage. The GSA will utilize the GSA Health and Dental Plan Reserve Fund (GSA HDPRF) to help subsidize these costs for graduate students.

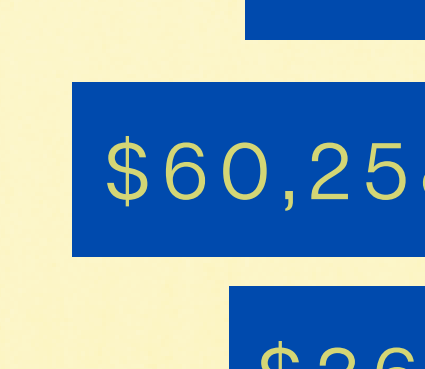
Reflecting continued cost increases, the GSA will increase the use of the HDPRF to \$69.44 from \$39.03 per graduate student for the 2023-2024 year. This reduces the planned cost increase experienced by graduate students to 15%.



GSA Fall and Winter Socials: The GSA Fall and Winter Socials returned for the first time since 2019. The socials bring a large cohort of graduate students together for an evening of mingling, games, and food. The GSA Fall Social had a record breaking turn-outs and both events were successful.



GSA Coffee Breaks: The popular GSA Coffee Breaks returned in-person to Triffid Hall in Summer of 2022. Graduate students were encouraged to "take a break" and join student executives and other peers for hot beverages and light snacks, courtesy of the GSA.



New Executive Director: The GSA's previous Executive Director, Courtney Thomas, left the GSA in mid-October 2022. After an extensive hiring process, the GSA hired Lewie Moodley, who began at the GSA in mid-April 2023.

GSA Awards Night: The GSA Awards Night also returned in-person for the first time since 2019. The GSA hosted a full suite of guests, distinguished speakers, award recipients, and friends to celebrate the accomplishments of graduate students and other members of our community. You can see the winners [here](#).

2022-2023 AT A GLANCE

16 Coffee Breaks

10 Academically-Employed Graduate Student Newsletters

50 GSA Newsletters Circulated

701 Virtual Graduate Student Orientation Participants

3200 GSA Planners Printed

\$21,075 Graduate Student Group Grants Disbursed

\$17,500 Recognition Awards Disbursed

\$45,000 Campus Food Bank One-time Grant

\$273,799 Academic Travel Grants Disbursed

\$60,258 Emergency Bursaries Disbursed

\$366,000 Child Care Grants Disbursed

Read more about the GSA's [Governance](#), [Services](#), [Funding](#), and [Collective Agreement](#).

Read more updates about Strategic Work Plan goals [here](#).

The GSA and the University of Alberta reside on Treaty 6 territory and the homeland of the Métis. This territory is a traditional gathering place for diverse Indigenous peoples including the Cree, Blackfoot, Métis, Nakota Sioux, Iroquois, Dene, Ojibway, Saulteaux, Anishnaabe, Inuit, and many others whose histories, languages, and cultures continue to influence our vibrant community. In acknowledging this traditional territory and its significance for the Indigenous peoples who lived and continue to live upon it, we recognize its longer history that reaches beyond colonization and the establishment of European colonies and recognize the GSA's ongoing collective responsibility in working with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit (FNMI) peoples and what that means for the work of the GSA as it aims to practice the principles of being Good Relations with FNMI peoples, Nations, communities, and lands.

CONTACT US

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