GSA PRESIDENT
REPORT TO COUNCIL FOR SEPTEMBER 26, 2011

To: Council Colleagues
From: Roy Coulthard, President
Date: September 11, 2011

Dear Colleagues,

Welcome back everyone to the 2011-2012 academic year. I am happy to report that things at the GSA are functioning smoothly.

On August 31, we had a successful **Fall Orientation** for almost 400 new graduate students. Many thanks to our sponsors who supported this event, including the Office of the Dean of Students, the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, Alumni Council, U of A Bookstores, Studentcare.net/works, Tim Horton's, the Royal Alberta Museum and l'Express . I would in particular like to thank the GSA staff for their hard work. Alongside our Orientation activities, we have also handed out all 3800 **handbooks**. We were able to fundraise, through advertising, the cost of producing the handbook.

The work of the **Fall Reading Week Task Force** continues. The Provost will be receiving a report shortly. Depending on future conversations we will be looking at how to best implement the fall break. I will let you know once our proposal begins its journey through Governance.

Following on the Deputy Provost search, there has been **reorganization in the Office of the Provost**. The Vice-Provost Academic Colleen Skidmore has been promoted to the Associate Vice-President Academic, taking on many of the responsibilities of the former Deputy Provost. In addition, former Dean of Students Bill Connor is taking on the role of Vice-Provost Academic through the end of December when he will take on the role of Vice-Provost Teaching and Learning. As of January 1st, former Dean of Graduate Studies Murray Gray will be taking on the role of Vice-Provost Academic. With all of these changes, the GSA Board is working with the Provost to ensure the GSA's interests are not lost in the shuffle. In particular, we have met with Dr. Skidmore to ensure that the Graduate Student Supervision and Graduate Funding Task Forces continue to be a priority. Furthermore, the members of the Board are taking steps to ensure that productive working relationships continue with all members within the Provost's Office.

The **Provost's Budget Advisory Committee** has met for the first time of this year. Administration is pursuing a 1.45% tuition increase, the maximum allowed under the Provincial Tuition Regulation Legislation. I am currently gathering information to ensure we can better understand how this will affect GSA members. We will do our utmost to ensure supports are in place for any graduate students negatively affected by any tuition increase.

The GSA Board toured the **Power Plant** so that we will be better informed for upcoming discussions on the future of the Dewey's bar space and the larger restaurant space. Following the Tory decant project we will be engaging in dialogue with the SU and Facilities and Operations to ensure that graduate

student interests are preserved in any future redevelopment of the building. The GSA currently holds a 15% profit sharing interest in Dewey's coffee shop and bar; we are currently entering renegotiations of this contract for its continuation beyond August 2012.

We are working with the SU to expedite negotiations around the final agreement governing the **PAW Centre**. We will report on this more orally at the Council meeting.

I will be meeting with the **Alberta Graduate Council** on the 17th of September. I will report orally on the meeting, and on progress towards achieving the goals of the Council motion of May 16th. Motion was as follows:

> GSA Council directs the President to negotiate, subject to Council's final approval, revisions to the structure of the Alberta Graduate Council at the upcoming 21 May 2011 AGC meeting, including provisions for incorporation as an legal entity, accountability to the GSA(s), a mandate limited primarily to lobbying and advocacy at the provincial level, and respecting, as much as possible, the principle of representation by population.

The GSA met with the University's **Web Strategy** people. We were pleased that they addressed a number of concerns we raised at prior meetings regarding the differentiation between undergraduate and graduate students. The early preview we had of the new U of A website that launched September 1st demonstrated their ongoing commitment to work with the GSA to ensure the graduate students and graduate studies are a visible part of the U of A's online identity. We are investigating migrating some of the GSA's website and other aspects of the GSA IT infrastructure to the University of Alberta servers. This would mitigate some of the capital and operating costs of the GSA.

I hope everyone has had a great start to the school year.

Roy Coulthard

GSA President

Date	Meeting
August 22	Meetings with the Executive Director and Director of Operations
	Council meeting
August 23	Lunch with the Vice-President Facilities and Operations
August 25	University Web Strategy meeting
August 26	Monthly SU/GSA Executive Breakfast
August 29	Budget Advisory Committee
August 30	Power Plant Tour
August 31	GSA Board meeting
	GSA Fall Orientation
September 1	Fall Reading Week Task Force
	Coffee with Provost Fellow Dr. Luth
September 6	Meeting with the Students' Union
September 7	Meeting with Dr. Skidmore
	GSA Board Meeting

September 9	Meeting with SU re: PAW
September 13	Meeting with VP Finance
	Coffee meeting with University Secretary
September 14	GSA Board
	GFC Academic Planning Committee
September 15	Fall Reading Week Task Force
	Meeting with VP SS and Director of Operations
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