15 September 2011

Paul Walz
AGC President

RE: AGC Matters for Discussion Sept 17

Dear Paul,

I am writing on the assumption that you will be planning the agenda for our meetings on 17 Sept and hope the following suggestions are helpful. They are based on discussions by the GSA Board at the U of A and follow on the motion unanimously passed by the GSA Council on May 16, 2011 and subsequently discussed at AGC in May:

> **R20110516.2** That the 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 May2011 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.

These are the suggestions from the GSA Board, which sees AGC as a critical entity in advancing the graduate student agenda in Alberta:

- The GSA Board invites you, as AGC President, to our Council meeting on September 26 to talk about the role of AGC. Amanda, Franco and other AGC Councillors are also most welcome to attend.

- The GSA Board asks that you explain to Council the legal nature of the AGC as a provincially-registered lobby group and the consequent structure that is required, if any (e.g., by-law, annual budget, method of fee collection, accountability back to the GSA Councils that have approved a fee assessment on behalf of AGC).

- The Board asks that you to discuss the structure/composition/governance of the AGC; they have asked if the old structure still prevails and by what authority the new structure was approved.

- The Board understands the role of AGC as a lobby group representing UofC, UofL, AU and UofA, and believes that those who serve on the AGC's governing body should not participate in partisan politics while serving on AGC.

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- The Board is concerned about an appearance of bias on the part of the AGC, in particular when we are asked to send out information on behalf of leadership candidates for any political party. Our members have previously expressed a desire NOT to receive such political messaging. The AGC so clearly sponsoring such initiatives may create internal isues for the GSA that may affect our ability to participate in the AGC in the future.

- The Board also sees the AGC's role as relating primarily if not entirely to provincial lobbying, as envisioned in the referendum passed by our members in February 2000 when the AGC fee paid by the UA GSA was approved.

- The Board sees the following as some issues on the table: base funding; MNIF process; direct funding of graduate students (grants and bursaries). The Board also has questions about the Graduate Citizenship Award survey, and is concerned that the Students' Finance Board will not accept the word of the duly constituted representative students' associations (i.e. the GSAs).

I would be happy to meet with you beforehand to run through these questions in more detail. The Board has identified AGC in its Strategic Plan as one of the external bodies on which we want to focus on in coming years. We are also supportive of the Western Summit, GU15 and CAGS.

Finally, the Board is concerned about the letter that was sent to CASA on AGC letterhead and felt that the letter should have been signed only by those GSAs which were supportive of the letter. Having this letter sent on AGC letterhead indicated implicit U of A approval, which was not the case and which placed us in an awkward situation with our close partner, the U of A Students' Union. It may further complicate our relationships with other student groups across Canada.

Regards,
RC

CC: Amanda Nielsen, Franco Rizzuti

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