GSA Vice President Academic
Report to Council

To: Council Colleagues
From: Nima Yousefi Moghaddam
Date: September 15, 2011

Once again, summer is over and with the beginning of the school year most of the committees are meeting more frequently. There are some structural changes in the administration that are affecting the VPA portfolio and I will report on some of these. I would also like to give you a few updates on other business that I've reported on previously.

Next week, we will have our first FGSR and GFC Council meetings with the newly appointed GSA representatives.

With this introduction, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of our hardworking staff and volunteers who helped us in holding a wonderful orientation.

My special thanks goes to Vikki Northrop for her dedication in representing GSA on a number of committees.

GFC and GFC CLC

- **General Faculties Council Executive (GFC EXEC) Committee** met on August 29, 2011. Dr Amrhein (Provost) gave us updates on the Deans' Retreat (with the President and VPs also attending) where conversations about the future of the institution were entertained.

The GFC Executive Committee agreed with the FGSR New course designator: AGRMT, presented by Dr. Shirvani.

Team Provost: There has been a review of the Provost's portfolio – the report will be out in 2012. With the departure of Dr. Marshal (Deputy Provost), this position will be vacant until the review report is ready. Until then, Dr Colleen Skidmore is appointed as Vice-Provost and Associate VP Academic. Along with other changes, Dr Bill Connor is appointed as Interim Vice-Provost (Academic).

- **Committee on the Learning Environment (GFC CLE)** met on September 7, 2011. Dr Skidmore chaired the meeting and introduced Bill Connor as the new chair of the committee. Along with the other 2 co-chairs, I presented a progress report of the

Subcommittee on Attributes and Competencies, and got the terms of reference and Membership of that subcommittee approved. There was also an oral report on the work of the joint Subcommittee on the GFC Committee on the Learning Environment (CLE)/Teaching, Learning and Technology (TLAT) Council Fostering Pedagogy of Technology Report.

- Roy and I had an interesting coffee meeting with Dr Skidmore, where we discussed her new role as the Vice-Provost and Associate VP Academic. She outlined the distribution of her past portfolio among the newly appointed people and also what is still left with her from her past portfolio.
    - Among those is **Provost's Advisory Committee on Quality in Graduate Supervision** where she would be still looking for a champion to lead the committee. Following up on VPAC August report, and with regard to this committee, we are still working closely on our search for the appointment of a provost fellow or a special advisor to Provost, and I will report to the council on this on a regular basis.
- The SU VPA and I had a joint meeting with Bill Connor (September 14, 2011). Bill gave us an introduction to the history of his collaboration within the University as the past Dean of Student Services, his role in developing the academic plan in 2001 and also the period of time he worked as the special advisor to Provost. He offered his support to both associations in pursuing our top priorities and the GSA will follow up with him once our strategic plan is approved.

Follow ups:

- **CLE Subcommittee on Attributes and Competencies** is meeting today for the first time with the full membership. I am pleased to let you know that we have two additional graduate students on board: Anne Mcintosh (CLE member at large) and Ashlyn Bernier (appointed by GSA). Dr Skidmore will be giving opening remarks and there will be a presentation from Heather Kanuka (Center for Teaching and Learning).
- **Undergraduate Research Initiative (URI) Advisory Committee** met on September 14, 2011. We discussed the progress of the URI website and the draft funding proposal, with two lines of funding: one bigger pot ($180K) for funding the research assistantship for undergrads and a smaller pot ($20K) providing support for undergraduate research (shared by faculties, grad students, post docs and undergrads). We also were informed that $10K was granted for the SU undergraduate research symposium, which is going to be held annually.

Background related to above committees:

- **Provost's Advisory Committee on Quality in Graduate Supervision.** In March 2011, the GFC Committee on the Learning Environment (CLE), whose mandate includes oversight of implementation of the university's academic plan, recommended establishment of an advisory committee to the Provost and Vice-President (Academic) to investigate and make recommendations concerning the quality of graduate supervision. The purpose of the committee is to research and report on the quality of graduate supervision, broadly defined, based on qualitative and quantitative data concerning both students and supervisors (excerpt from the TOR of the committee).

- **Undergraduate Research Initiative (URI) Advisory Committee**.The Undergraduate Research Initiative (URI) will bring students and opportunities together, supporting undergraduate students as they develop discipline-specific and interdisciplinary research skills and scholarly attitudes that prove useful for employment, research, and service in the community. The URI will fill a key interdisciplinary brokering role, and integrate with existing experiential learning and engagement initiatives across campus without duplicating activities and responsibilities. An Advisory Committee and Academic Director have been established to provide counsel, advice and direction in the planning and implementation of the URI. The day-to-day activities of the URI will be supported by staff from CAPS: Your U of A Career Centre.

- **CLE Subcommittee on Attributes and Competencies**. Following the approval of the University of Alberta's 2011-2015 Academic Plan entitled Dare to Deliver, graduate attributes have become a subject of thoughtful discussion across campus. On April 7 2011, the Committee on the Learning Environment Subcommittee on Attributes and Competencies was struck at a joint CLE-TLAT meeting. The committee will work in accordance to the statement pertaining to graduate attributes in the Academic Plan: "Attributes and Competencies Upon Graduation: *Articulating and supporting the development of core sets of skills, attributes and values* to be incorporated into graduate and undergraduate programs, while recognizing that each Faculty will best decide how to move in this direction, which could include reviewing and updating the curriculum." (Excerpt from the TOR of the committee).