

GSA Council Meeting AGENDA
Monday, September 23 2013 at 6 pm
Telus 1-34

Special dinner session for new Councillors: Executive Director Ellen Schoeck will hold a Governance/GSA 101 session from 4:45-5:30 pm in the FGSR Boardroom in Triffo Hall (a selection of sandwiches will be served)

For continuing Councillors: a light, vegetarian dinner will be served at 5:15 pm

CLOSED SESSION (beginning at 6 pm)

1. Comments from the GSA President

OPEN SESSION (beginning at 6:30 pm)

2. Roll Call
3. Approval of the 23 September 2013 Agenda
4. Approval of the Minutes from the 15 July 2013 GSA Council Meeting
Attachments:
 - Minutes from the 15 July 2013 GSA Council Meeting
5. Changes in Council Membership
 - i. Introduction of New Councillors (*If you are new to Council, please let us know it is your first meeting*)
 - ii. Farewell to Departing Councillors (*If this is your last Council meeting, or if your last Council meeting is approaching, please let us know*)

Presentations and Councillor Announcements

6. Tuition for 2014/2015
Brent Epperson (President) will present the item

Guest: Martin Ferguson-Pell, Acting Provost and Vice-President Academic, Phillip Stack, Associate Vice-President Risk Management Services, and Colleen Skidmore, Vice-Provost (Academic), Mazi Shirvani, Dean of FGSR.
Presentation to begin at 6:30 p.m. Fifteen minute presentation with discussion to follow.
7. Changes to Pay Schedule for Student Scholarships
Brent Epperson (President) will present the item

**Attached
Numbered Pages**

***Previously
distributed as 4.0-
4.14***

Prepared by C. Thomas and A. Gordon for the Council Meeting of September 23, 2013

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Guest: Wayne Patterson, Director of HR Operations, Human Resource Services.

Presentation to begin at 7:30p.m. Fifteen minute presentation with discussion to follow.

8. Councillor Announcements

Action Items, Information Items, Elections, Appointments, Special Business

9. Information Items

- i. GSA Board's 2013-2014 Strategic Work Plan: Update (**FOR INFORMATION**)

Brent Epperson (President) will present the item

Attachments:

- Letter from President Brent Epperson (**attached**)

*Previously
Distributed as 8.0-
8.2*

10. Actions Items

- i. Standing Orders of Council: Proposed Changes to the Standing Orders (**FOR CONSIDERATION**)

Brent Epperson (President) will present the item

Attachments (attached)

- Outline of Issue: Standing Orders of Council
- Standing Orders of Council - 12 September 2013 (**attached**)
- Triple Column- Standing Orders of Council 12 September 2013 (**attached**)

**10.0
10.0-10.2
10.3-10.11**

11. Elections: GSA Standing Committee Nominees:

Michele DuVal (Nominating Committee member) will present the item.

Attachment:

- GSA Awards Selection Committee, Budget and Finance Committee, Elections and Referenda Committee Nominees: For Information (**attached**)

11.0-11.1

12. Special Business (**none at this time**)

Reports

13. President

- President's Report (**attached**)
- GSA Board (**attached**)
- Budget and Finance Committee (**will be meeting this month**)
- Governance Committee (**no meetings this reporting period**)

**13.0-13.3
13.4**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Nominating Committee <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Nominating Committee Report (attached) 	13.5-13.7
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 14. Vice-President Academic <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Vice-President Academic's Report (attached) 	14.0-14.1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 15. Vice-President Student Services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Vice-President Student Services' Report (attached) ii. Student Affairs Advisory Committee (joint chair: Vice-President Student Life) (no meetings this reporting period) 	15.0-15.3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 16. Vice-President Student Life <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Vice-President Student Life's Report (attached) ii. Awards Selection Committee (will be meeting this fall) 	16.0-16.1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 17. Vice-President Labour <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Vice-President Labour's Report (attached) ii. Negotiating Committee (will be meeting this fall) iii. Labour Relations Committee (attached) 	17.0-17.2 17.0
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 18. Senator <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Senator's Report (no written report this period) 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 19. Speaker <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Speaker's Report (no written report this period) (numerous meetings focusing on elections and referenda reform) 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 20. Chief Returning Officer <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Chief Returning Officer's Report (no written report this period) (numerous meetings focusing on elections and referenda reform) ii. Elections and Referenda Committee (attached) 	20.0-20.1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 21. GSA Management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Executive Director's Report (attached) 	21.0-21.5
 <u>Question Period</u>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 22. Written Questions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. "Has the GSA taken a stand on the matter of international differential fees (other than having intense consultations with graduate students, ref last meeting)? If so what is this position?" (Response from the GSA President attached) 	22.0

ii. "Will the GSA formally complain through the right channels about the communication process around the change in stipend payments that left graduate students with a pay check surprise last month right now before tuition is due?" **(Response from the GSA President attached)**

22.1

23. Oral Questions

Adjournment

**Meeting Minutes
15 July 2013
GSA Council Meeting**

[Note: All materials referred to in these Minutes are stored in hard copy in the Official File, as well as electronically]

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm.

Approval of Agenda

1. Approval of the 15 July 2013 Agenda

Members had before them the 15 July 2013 Consolidated Agenda, which had been distributed on 12 July 2013.

Brent Epperson (President) MOVED to approve the agenda. SECONDED by Hasin Haroon (Vice-President Student Life). Motion PASSED unanimously.

Approval of Minutes

2. Minutes

i. Minutes from the 17 June 2013 GSA Council meeting

Members had before them the 17 June 2013 GSA Council Minutes, which had been distributed on 5 July 2013.

Sarah Vela (Humanities Computing) MOVED to approve the minutes. SECONDED by Hasin Haroon (Vice-President Student Life). Motion PASSED unanimously.

Changes in Council Membership

3. Changes in Council Membership

i. Introduction of new Councillors

This was the first meeting for a number of Councillors: Jennifer Crawford, (Physical Education and Recreation), Luis Morales (Pharmacology), Waheed Asghar (Pharmacy), Mahima Kumar (Internetworking), Curtis Rollins (Resource Economics and Environmental Sociology), Michelle Garcia-Vega (Linguistics)

ii. Farewell to departing Councillors Yasmeen Krameddine (Psychiatry)

Presentations and Councillor Announcements

No Presentations at this time

4. Councillor Announcements

Action Items, Elections, Appointments, Special Business

5. 2012-2013 GSA Audited Financial Statements

Brent Epperson (President) presented the item. Members had before them an Outline of Issue, Auditor's Cover Letter, Report to the Board with Respect to Matter Arising from the Audit, and the 2012-2013 GSA Audited Financial Statements, which had been previously distributed on 5 July 2013. In addition, Brent Epperson (President) noted the following:

- Most Councillors have already seen audit in past;
- Many new Councillors attended Budget 101 with Ellen Schoeck last week;
- The Board was satisfied with the clean audit;
- The Board also had the opportunity to meet with Tom Gee and ask questions, they were satisfied with those answers;
- The Elected Officers are proud of the work that has been done to get the GSA to this point by Tom Gee (Auditor) and staff; *and*
- Tom Gee (Auditor), Ellen Schoeck (GSA Executive Director), Shirley Ball (GSA Accountant), and Dorte Sheik (GSA Financial Manager), are here to answer any questions Councillors may have.

Tom Gee (Auditor, Peterson Walker Chartered Accountants) noted the following:

- He will make some general comments about financial position of the GSA, but if anyone has a specific question he is happy to answer;
- With respect to the Report to the Board, p.2-3, we are satisfied with the audit and the standards conform with standards for nonprofit organizations;
- The financial position of the GSA continues to be very strong and has improved over the last year;
- One way we measure the financial health of an organization is the ratio of assets to liabilities, which should be at least two to one for a non-profit. In 2011 the ratio of 3.36 to one of assets to liabilities. In 2012 slipped a bit the ratio to 3.04, but this year, 2013, the total current assets has gone up because the ratio has gone up to 3.23. Therefore the financial position has improved;
- About three years ago, you might recall me comparing the GSA to a household that has a lot of money in the bank, but a leaky roof, bursting pipes, and poor infrastructure in general; *and*
- After the work that Ellen Schoeck (GSA Executive Director), Shirley Ball (GSA Accountant), and Dorte Sheik (GSA Financial Manager) have done, bringing in policy and

Prepared by E. Schoeck, C. Thomas, and M. Ediger for the GSA Council Meeting of July 15, 2013

procedures to beef up internal processes, total overhaul of infrastructure, I'm happy to say that the financial position is good and the process is good too.

Ravi Singh (Business MBA) asked: There are no short-term investments listed under current assets after 2011. Can you clarify this?

Shirley Ball (GSA Accountant) responded: The investment in question was specifically with a particular investment company.

Tom Gee (Auditor) continued:

- From last year to this year, the GSA has turned around an operating deficit into an operating surplus;
- Part of the reason was because of the Health and Dental plan. Last year was a net expenditure in the area of health and dental, this year there is a net surplus, which is a significant swing of \$150,000;
- The other reason has to do with the unitized endowment pool. The GSA's share reflects what the GSA invested in the U of A endowment pool, how it performs depends on the market. The market has recovered from hit from 4-5 years ago;
- Overall, a good year for the GSA, financially and operationally. You're in good shape, in terms of numbers and internally in terms of staffing and controls implemented over the past couple years; *and*
- Though things look fine it is important for the GSA to maintain these improvements by reviewing and tinkering with internal processes.

After the presentation there were a number of questions:

Ellen Schoeck (GSA Executive Director) responded: With respect to the question from Ravi Singh (Business MBA), the 2011 short-term investments were invested in a high-risk instrument. As a non-profit, we felt should not invest in anything with a risk. In the hybrid GIC's there were both restricted and unrestricted funds, so we separated these out into completely separate funds.

Ravi Singh (Business MBA) asked: What are the commercial activities mentioned in the revenue column?

Tom Gee (Auditor): Commercial activities are things like money you earn from photocopying, Handbook. PC revenue took a nosedive into 2013.

Sarah Vela (Humanities Computing) asked: What are the commercial activities we are spending money on?

Tom Gee (Auditor) responded: The expenses include the Handbook publication, photocopier lease, photocopier meter, and paper.

Ravi Singh (MBA) asked: So most of this expense comes from the Handbook publication?

Tom Gee (Auditor) responded: Yes.

Ellen Schoeck (GSA Executive Director) responded: The Handbook is a remaining thing we do fundraising on. We try to get enough ads to cover print costs, but ads are down this year because budgets are tight. For the photocopier lease, we signed it back in 2009 without legal counsel. If we had legal counsel, I do not believe the lawyers would have advised us to sign it. When the lease runs out we won't renew it, we tried to break it but couldn't, it is a remainder of the old GSA system. In the new GSA any contracts we receive we will run by Tom Gee (Auditor) or the lawyers.

Qiang Lee (CAL): I see on p.15 of the Audited Financial Statements, under expense administration, there is a repairs and maintenance fee for \$559,000. Can you tell us more about this fee?

Tom Gee (Auditor): The repairs and maintenance fee is only about \$400. The \$559,000 expense you are looking at is staff salaries. This is normal, for non-profits salaries are generally the biggest or one of the biggest expenses. We didn't find anything unusual when we looked at the files for what is paid to staff. When a study was done 3 years ago on staffing, it found that staff were paid significantly below market rates, so the GSA has made adjustments for that.

There were no further questions.

Brent Epperson (President) MOVED that the GSA Council, acting on the unanimous recommendation of the GSA Board (GSAB) and the GSA Budget and Finance Committee (BFC), receive for information the attached 2012-2013 GSA Audited Financial Statements. Seconded by Ravi Singh (Business MBA). Motion PASSED with one abstention, Qiang Li (CAL).

6. GSA 2013-2014 Budget and Expenditure (Quarterly) Report

Prepared by E. Schoeck, C. Thomas, and M. Ediger for the GSA Council Meeting of July 15, 2013

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Brent Epperson (President) presented the item. Members had before them an Outline of Issue, the GSA 2013-2014 Budget and Expenditure (Quarterly) Report, the GSA 2013-2014 Restricted and Other Funding Budget and Expenditure Report (Narrative), and the GSA 2013-2014 Operating Budget (Including Capital Budget) Report (Narrative) which had been previously distributed on 5 July 2013. In addition, Brent Epperson (President) noted the following:

- He will be referring to Ellen Schoeck (GSA Executive Director) and other staff members in attendance to give more details on this item;
- The statements show that the GSA is on target for all budget categories; *and*
- He will defer to Ellen Schoeck for comments/questions.

Ellen Schoeck (GSA Executive Director) noted the following:

- Council just heard from the Auditor about situation 2009-2010. Councillors weren't getting regular feedback in Council and would approve budget without knowing what went on during the year;
- Those who did Budget 101 will have heard about the delegation or responsibility: if you delegate the oversight of a budget, you should be getting accountability up the line with quarterly financial statements;
- The GSA is in a recovery and change period, we don't have enough historical info to forecast properly, so you'll see variances that will settle as we become modernized;
- One example of the modernized GSA involves the monies that are given out for the Graduate Student Support Fund (GSSF);
- Formerly, when students got a PDA, the GSA would write a cheque, then the student would have to pick it up at the office. Now we have direct deposit so students don't have to come in. This also reduces staff time as staff do not have to deal with students at the front desk;
- The time that has been freed up is being used for initiatives such as the Department Liaison Initiative, and the Nominating Committee initiatives. We were able to say in a letter to the President that the Nominating Committee placed students on over 170 committees, task forces, and working groups;
- The GSA is replacing non-smart work with smart work that aligns with the Strategic Plan;
- A lot of what we talk about in Budget 101 is not just budgetary numbers, but also how these numbers relate to what is discussed in Council, so that human resources are directed towards the Strategic Plan;
- The GSA is on target in all areas, but will be over in some areas and under in others. There will be better forecasting in the future;

- For those who haven't met them, Shirley Ball is the GSA Accountant and Dorte Sheikh is the GSA Financial Manager;
- Shirley Ball's (GSA Accountant) work hours are reducing as system gets in shape;
- We can find any piece of financial information for the auditor. This year the fieldwork of finding the necessary documents only took half a day, as opposed to a few days last year. This saves money and reduces work;
- Myself (GSA Executive Director) and Courtney Thomas (GSA Associate Director) are the management team, we liaise with financial people to make sure that finances are in line with Council's aims;
- The budget when I came was 198 separate lines. If you wanted to see revenue for a particular item, for example, Awards Night, you would hunt through to line 196. The budget in front of you has been composed in a way that is easy to read; *and*
- Thanks are due to the rest of the GSA Finance and Management team, and to the Elected Officials who see all this in detail in the GSA Board.

Brent Epperson (President) responded: From the perspective of the GSA Elected Officials, as well as the experience I've had with other non-profits and government, I would like to respond to the questions about staffing. As an organization you have to ask yourself whether want to be mediocre, an organization that only reacts to things as they happen, has no staff retention, sometimes represents students, sometimes not, or whether you want to be a consistently effective organization. This is the question when it comes to management and staffing. I see the GSA Office as a smooth running machine. Those who have worked there and seen where the GSA has come from know this is an accomplishment worth every penny. We don't want an office not capable of serving students in a political climate like the one we're currently facing, we want to be effective as a GSA. Much of what we do would be impossible without management and staff.

Brent Epperson MOVED that the GSA Council, acting on the unanimous recommendation of the GSA Board (GSAB) and the GSA Budget Finance Committee (BFC) receive for information the GSA 2013-2014 Budget and Expenditure (Quarterly) Report (7.1 – 7.2 of the material before members). SECONDED by Zhen Li (Chemistry).

Ellen Schoeck (GSA Executive Director) responded: The staff and management salaries are benchmarked against University salaries for similar positions. Staff were underpaid by as much as \$5 an hour in the old GSA before salaries were raised. My salary is benchmarked against the Executive Director of the Calgary GSA and by Human Resources. Salary determination is not an arbitrary process, we look at similar jobs in similar places to benchmark. In the old GSA we did not have any staff who stayed longer than a year for

10 years. There were no job descriptions, only ads for job postings, as though staff were expected to leave. The organization was spending way too much energy on training and retraining.

Brent Epperson (President) responded: Coming from GU15 and having interacted with other GSA presidents, our capacity is the envy of a lot of many other GSA's. Every time you can go to a national conference, you hear horror stories about not having professional staff. The problem that student associations have is that from one election to another, you can have some teams who are not qualified. Without institutional memory, an elected team can drive the organization into the ground.

Councillors voted on the MOTION, MOVED by Brent Epperson (President) and SECONDED by Zhen Li (Chemistry), that the GSA Council, acting on the unanimous recommendation of the GSA Board (GSAB) and the GSA Budget Finance Committee (BFC) receive for information the GSA 2013-2014 Budget and Expenditure (Quarterly) Report (7.1 – 7.2 of the material before members). Motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

7. Elections: GSA Standing Committee Nominees

Lacey Fleming (Vice-Chair of the Nominating Committee) presented the item. Members had before them the nominees for the Governance Committee from the Nominating Committee, for information. In addition, Lacey Fleming (Vice-Chair of the Nominating Committee) noted the following:

- As Councillors can see in the report, there were two positions advertised on the governance committee. The advertisement was distributed on May 24. There were no additional nominations by July 12. Micaela Santiago and Rob Found were therefore elected to the Governance Committee.

Lacey Fleming (Vice-Chair of the Nominating Committee) MOVED to receive for information the GSA Governance Committee: Nominees. SECONDED by Michelle Borowitz. Motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Reports

8. President

i. President's Report:

Members had before them a written report, which had been distributed on 12 July 2013. The report stood as submitted. In addition, Brent Epperson (President) made the following comment:

- Will open discussion of parts of the report in closed session, but will answer questions on the rest of the report in open session.

There were a number of questions:

Ravi Singh (Business MBA) asked: Your report includes consultations with students and departmental associations on potential tuition fee hikes. What was the outcome of these tuition forums?

Brent Epperson (President) responded: We did have a number of forums and follow-ups on tuition, market modifiers, mandatory non-instructional fees, and international differential fees. As of now, the only confirmed increase from administration is international differentials for graduates and undergraduates. When we have the numbers we will bring them to Council.

Ravi Singh (Business MBA) asked: When will the increase be implemented?

Brent Epperson (President) responded: International differential fees are not regulated by any government controls, so this could be implemented for this fall or after. For the other tuition fees, there was a freeze mandated by government, so universities will make a proposal to government if they want to raise tuition. If they want new market modifiers, I'm guessing this will take them longer than this fall, possibly next year. There is no regulatory framework for mandatory non-instructional fees, not only the GSA but other students lobbies agree that there should be one, and we will be asking this year. For now there isn't one and administration can levy any new fees they wish, so your guess is as good as mine as to when they would do this.

Ravi Singh (Business MBA) asked: What is the position of the GSA on the increase in international differential fees?

Brent Epperson (President) responded: The position of the GSA is to have an intense consultation with graduate students across campus. This has never been done before. We want our policy and stance to be built on an informed perspective. Graduate students have been almost unanimously opposed to increases, but the process is not over, it will continue through July so that we can complete a report in August for the President and Acting Provost. We may also submit this to the Board of Governors or to the Ministry of Advanced Education, though we haven't decided yet. Thanks to those who have sent letters, it's important to legitimize the stance we take. There is a risk that some may say our opinion is not representative, through these letters, we're making sure it is.

Ravi Singh (Business MBA) responded: I was in consultation with students in the MBA student associations, they are opposed to raising international differential fees.

Brent Epperson (President) responded: Thank you for your feedback, please follow up with your president and send it to us in writing.

Sarah Vela (Humanities Computing) asked: How completely unregulated is the control on mandatory non-instructional fees? Can they levy a new fee between terms such that students who were formerly able to afford their payments can no longer pay?

Brent Epperson (President) responded: I don't know if I can give you an accurate answer. They are not regulated in the same sense as tuition which was indexed to CPI. The multiplier used to calculate international differentials has no regulation so they can do pretty much anything. It is not practical from an accounting perspective to change fees mid-term, but the government does not regulate them in any substantial way.

Richard Zhao (CAL) asked: Who benefits from tuition freeze? Both undergraduates and graduates?

Brent Epperson (President) responded: We are all covered by the freeze, undergraduates and graduates. The government can reverse the freeze as easily as they implemented it. There is a freeze this year, but our administration and other university administrations are making the case for why those freezes are bad in their view for the quality of education. We didn't lobby for a freeze, we supported the CPI indexed increase. There's a history behind that going back several years, and the government decision took us by surprise.

There were no further questions.

Brent Epperson (President) MOVED to go into closed session. SECONDED by Colin More (Vice-President Academic). Motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Brent Epperson (President) MOVED to go into open session. SECONDED by Colin More (Vice-President Academic). Motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

ii. GSA Board

Members had before them a written report, which had been distributed on 12 July 2013. The report stood as submitted.

iii. Budget and Finance Committee

Members had before them a written report, which had been distributed on 12 July 2013. The report stood as submitted.

iv. Governance Committee

It was noted on the Agenda that no meetings were needed for the Governance Committee that month. The Committee will be dealing with editorial changes to Bylaw and Policy in the next month.

9. a) Nominating Committee

i. Nominating Committee Report

Members had before them a written report, which had been distributed on 12 July 2013. The report stood as submitted.

In addition, Lacey Fleming (Vice-Chair of the Nominating Committee) noted the following:

- Would like to highlight Nominating Committee's work to fill positions on bodies external to GSA, four of five positions on the Arts Graduate Council were filled by Jamie Hirschberg, Jennifer Hinnell, Susan Cake, and Pushpa Achary, who will serve until May 31;
- Also filled a position on the Health Centre Advisory Group, Sanjesh Roop;
- Two positions on the Community Standards Review committee were filled by Eileen Clearsky and Richard Zhao;
- A position on the University of Alberta Art Collection Art Acquisitions Committee was filled by Svitlana Panenko;
- For the OneCard student advisory group the nominating committee is still reviewing applications we will let Council know;
- Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry had no applications so the Nominating Committee is beginning a search for a suitable candidate; *and*
- For the Animal Care and Use Committee, the Nominating Committee will be looking for applications until July 24.

10. Vice-President Academic

i. Vice-President Academic's Report

Members had before them a written report, which had been distributed on 12 July 2013. The report stood as submitted.

In addition, Colin More (Vice-President Academic) noted the following:

- Would like to highlight part of the report in response to how long it will take university to deal with the budget cuts; *and*
- Martin Ferguson-Pell (Acting Provost) said there would be a three-year period over which cuts will be spread out; *and*

- Now there are indications that government will only let the university take two years, so there may be a painful 57 million cut next year. This means that this year is important for consultation with administration.

There were a number of questions:

Zhen Li (Chemistry) asked: What do you mean that next year will be worse?

Colin More (Vice-President Academic): This year 27 million dollars were cut in in soft targets such as graduate student supports and scholarships. Now that the university has already cut these as much as possible, in the second year they will have to cut twice as much and use non-soft targets.

Isaac Odoom (Councillor-at-Large and CRO) asked: The previous Vice-President Academic was looking into completion times for grad students and candidacy times. Do you have an update on that?

Colin More (Vice-President Academic) responded: According to a new FGSR policy PhD students have to complete all program requirements by the end of their third year. This is so people have a year or two to work on their thesis. For completion times many people talk about it but no one has any idea what causes long completion times, no moves to change anything as of yet.

Isaac Odoom (Councillor-at-Large and CRO) asked: Is this issue still being considered on the FGSR table?

Colin More (Vice-President Academic) responded: Not officially. People are talking about it but there are diverse perspectives that make it difficult to form into policy.

There were no further questions.

11. Vice-President Student Services

i. Vice-President Student Services' Report

Members had before them a written report, which had been distributed on 12 July 2013. The report stood as submitted.

ii. Student Affairs Advisory Committee (joint chair: Vice-President Student Life)

It was noted on the Agenda that no meetings were needed for the Student Affairs Advisory Committee that month.

12. Vice-President Student Life

i. Vice-President Student Life's Report

Members had before them a written report, which had been distributed on 12 July 2013. The report stood as submitted.

In addition, Hasin Haroon (Vice-President Student Life) noted the following:

- Other than a visit from his parents, the month was uneventful
and
- The tuition forums went very well.

ii. Awards Selection Committee

It was noted on the Agenda that no meetings were needed for the Awards Selection Committee that month.

13. Vice-President Labour

i. Vice-President Labour's Report

Members had before them a written report, which had been distributed on 12 July 2013. The report stood as submitted. In addition, Monty Bal (Vice-President Labour) noted the following:

- Some information about indirect costs were raised in forums with the arts faculties.
- He met with Phyllis Clark and Lorne Babiuk and got some numbers on indirect costs and will share these with Council.
- Of the 500 million in research funding the University of Alberta receives, 200 million is from the federal government. 18.5% of that comes back in the form of Tri-Council Grants.
- 200 million comes from the private sector and 100 million from the province, and there is no indirect cost recovery for this or it's a minimal 1.5%;
- If the University of Alberta was getting the 20% this would be an extra 18 million. It's a large chunk of money to not collect;
- He raised to both VP's that it is interesting that they're asking students to subsidize the costs of private research;
- Another issue is RA/TA contracts. When people have problems usually after contracts have been signed; he encourages Councillors and students that if they have questions about their contracts, please come see us before signing, there's a lot more we can do before rather than after;
- May be able to negotiate a cooling off period so students don't have to sign right away; *and*
- Stand up for Edmonton was alright.

After the presentation, there was one question:

Waheed Asghar (Pharmacy) asked: Is anyone talking about raising rates for RA/TAs?

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Monty Bal (Vice-President Labour) responded: In collective bargaining it's our job to try to get you more money. We will talk about that and hopefully they will see our logic.

There were no further questions.

ii. Negotiating Committee

It was noted on the Agenda that no meetings were needed for the Negotiating Committee that month, but that a meeting was anticipated in August.

iii. Labour Relations Committee

It was noted on the Agenda that no meetings were needed for the Labour Relations Committee that month, but that a meeting was anticipated in August.

14. Senator

i. Senator's Report

No report was required at this time. But Roy Coulthard (Senator) noted the following:

- He attended the first meeting of the Senate task force looking to connect with U of A communities around Edmonton and Alberta;
- The group is about 10 Senators and the Vice-President External of the Students' Union;
- He encouraged the direction to be an investigation of how much Albertans buy in to what the U of A does, stating that if Albertans don't buy in to the U of A as a flagship, it's hard to achieve that in this political climate;
- Trying to help the Senators understand the importance and the implications of how people feel about the university; *and*
- A group is hashing out the terms of reference, the Committee will meet every couple of weeks through the summer, will keep Council updated.

15. Speaker

i. Speaker's Report

No report was required at this time. In addition, Daniel Prins (Speaker) noted the following:

- Thanks to Roy Coulthard (Senator and Deputy Speaker) for acting as Speaker in his absence.

16. Chief Returning Officer

i. Chief Returning Officer's Report

No report was required at this time.

ii. Elections and Referenda Committee

It was noted on the Agenda that no meetings were needed for the Elections and Referenda Committee that month.

17. GSA Management

i. Executive Director's Report

Members had before them a written report, which had been distributed on 12 July 2013.

In addition, Ellen Schoeck (Executive Director) noted the following:

- She had bought flood boots because the GSA offices in Triffo Hall flooded for the third time in a week;
- There was a major flood on Monday and the office was closed on Tuesday. The office flooded on Saturday night, Facilities and Operations were quick to respond, and it flooded again today. Part of the problem is that there's something plugged under the sidewalk between Deweys and Triffo;
- Triffo has a system for collecting rainwater to flush toilets, also need to look at if these collection units can't cope with rain;
- Have emergency procedures now, server room is fine;
- Highlights from report: the one remaining budget problem for the GSA is now resolved;
- One earlier concern was cash flow. So proud of GSA and the way in which University Financial Services looks at what the GSA is doing. They are advancing the GSA the fees from students, instead of collecting then giving them to us. We asked for an extension of the agreement and got a 2 year extension, and are very happy about that;
- Shirley Ball (GSA Accountant) was happy with the presentation of the financial materials and the questions asked by Councillors. Shirley Ball (GSA Accountant) has made a huge difference for the GSA, and it is important with a huge budget for a CA to do oversight, so please thank Shirley for her hard work;
- With respect to the continuous staff turnover that occurred in the old GSA, we have accomplished the benchmarking of staff and retention of staff, and set in place an early call for talent so talented people are retained;
- The legal fees budget cut from 80K to 20K, spent less than \$2000 last year; *and*
- Have started on a vast project of Bylaws and Policy Review, with input from Isaac Odoom (Councillor-at-Large and CRO) and Daniel Prins (Speaker), will be looking at awards and grants policy in particular. The Governance Committee will be busy as well as other committees that are involved. This will be a big piece in the recovery of the GSA.

Question Period

18. Written Questions

No written questions were received prior to the meeting.

19. Oral Questions

No questions were asked.

Brent Epperson (President) noted: In event that we don't have Council in August, would anyone have had that as last Council? Thank you to Amanda Lim (English and Film Studies), Lena Saleh (Political Science), Cory Tam (Psychology) for your service.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:46 pm.

PS from the Speaker and Executive Director: If anyone has gotten this far in reading the Minutes, please raise your hand after the Minutes are approved.

GSA Council 23 September 2013
GSA Board's 2013-2014 Strategic Work Plan: Update

Dear GSA Council,

As continuing members may recall, **the GSA Council received the GSA Board's 2013-2014 Strategic Work Plan at its May 13, 2013 meeting.** The SWP (which is available online for your review at http://www.gsa.ualberta.ca/en/~media/gsa/SWP/GSA_Strategic_Plan_2013-2014_Final_Version_for_General_Distribution.pdf) was prepared by me, along with my fellow directly-elected officers and GSA management, to direct our efforts and identify areas where we can work with others in the University community. It was also **prepared in consultation with the 2012-2013 team of directly-elected officers, a process which ensures continuity for the GSA in terms of strategic goals, planning, and advocacy.**

As I related to you in May, **the Board's 2013-2014 SWP provides us at the GSA with a planning document for this year as we enter a critical time in the University's history** related to the provincial budget and its effects on the University and the graduate student community.

Since releasing the GSA Board's SWP, the GSA directly-elected officers have met with members of University administration to discuss common goals, and devise strategies to implement aspects of the plan of mutual interest. Several months into our terms, and at the beginning of the academic year, I would like to offer you **an update concerning the GSA's progress thus far in pursuing the strategic goals outlined in the GSA Board's 2013-2014 SWP.**

THE PROVINCIAL BUDGET AND POTENTIAL INCREASES TO TUITION AND FEES

The issue of potential increases to graduate student tuition and fees (as well as the potential introduction of new market modifiers) in the wake of the March 2013 release of the provincial budget, which resulted in heavy cuts to post-secondary funding in Alberta, has **kept the GSA extremely busy over the past few months.** In addition to regular meetings with government, various lobbying organizations, and administration on this issue, the GSA **held nine forums over the summer to hear from the graduate student population and to formulate a stance on the U of A's proposals for across the board tuition increases, market modifiers and MNIFs. We heard from graduate students in every Faculty with a graduate program and have generated a white paper (over 100 pages in length) which will inform our discussions moving forward.** The white paper has also been shared with University administration. Additionally, the GSA has **formed a coalition with the AAS:UA, NASA, SU, and PDFA** to address the current funding concerns at the U of A and the effect the provincial cuts will have on the graduate post-secondary experience on campus. Unanticipated delays in communication between the Government of Alberta, the University of Alberta administration, and the GSA have required us to formulate policy on a moving target; however, **this issue remains a top priority for the GSA and you will be updated regularly in Council on all developments.** We are very grateful for all the thoughtful feedback we received from graduate students on this critical issue.

PRAYER SPACE

In the GSA Board's 2013-2014 SWP, we promised to lobby for **consistently accessible and suitable prayer space for religious groups on campus** and I am pleased to report that, due to the efforts of the Vice-President Student Life, Hasin Haroon, **we have made progress in our pursuit of this strategic goal.** He and I have met with the President, Dean of Students, Vice-President (Facilities and Operations), UAI, and the University Architect on this issue, as well as garnering support from the SU and researching the issue of campus prayer space across Canadian post-secondary institutions. **Discussions remaining ongoing and Council will receive updates.**

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

All developments on this initiative have been positive and we are particularly grateful for the work that Renée Polzhein in FGSR has put into this matter. The Vice-Presidents Academic and Student Services, Colin More and Megha Bajaj, are **working closely with FGSR and other stakeholders (including the Alumni Association and the Centre for Public Involvement) on the development of professional development initiatives for graduate students.** You will be updated throughout the remainder of their terms on this issue.

PERMANENT RESIDENCY APPLICATION ASSISTANCE

In discussions with administration, **the GSA was asked to research this issue and speak to other stakeholders, such as UAI.** We have **prepared a white paper that will be shared with administration** and will continue to lobby for this.

DEPARTMENT LIAISON INITIATIVE (DLI)

This summer the GSA, under the direction of the Vice-Presidents Student Services and Student Life, Megha Bajaj and Hasin Haroon, launched the DLI. I am pleased to report to you that **the Initiative has enjoyed great success.** Over **20 vacant departmental seats on Council have been filled** and **the GSA has visited 31 departments across campus to provide an orientation and connect with graduate students.** We have also developed a draft constitution for departmental GSAs and will be meeting with the Dean of Students and Student Group Services to develop a new MOU.

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

The Vice-President Labour, Monty Bal, along with the GSA's Labour Professional, have met with several students to discuss labour issues and Monty will be leading the upcoming **negotiations for the Collective Agreement governing Academically-Employed Graduate Students** as this is a negotiating year. Monty will update Council regularly on the process of collective bargaining.

ON-CAMPUS HOUSING, RENT INCREASES, AND LEASE AGREEMENTS

The Vice-President Student Life, Hasin Haroon, has been engaging regularly with University administration on **a series of important issues related to graduate student housing** and will continue to work for graduate students' interests in this area.

MENTAL HEALTH

Led by the Vice-President Academic, Colin More, our participation in the administration's ongoing mental health review has resulted in an initiative on the part of Associate Dean of Students Robin Overall to establish **a dedicated graduate student counseling space in Triffo Hall.** This space will be **open for graduate student access in September as a satellite office of the University's Mental Health Centre.** The Vice-President Student Life, Hasin Haroon, will also be actively participating in the upcoming Mental Health Awareness Week.

MODERNIZING GSA INFRASTRUCTURE

There have been a number of strategic goals identified by the GSA concerning infrastructure which I am proud to report we have met. **The implementation of a robust online social media presence and the GSA Media Tracker** (we update the Media Tracker daily on the GSA website and share news stories and other updates related to the provincial budget and other issues affecting post-secondary education through it) are completed and constitute a huge step forward for the GSA.

THE GSA'S LONG-TERM HEALTH

The ongoing, targeted hard work of the GSA staff, management, and financial team has ensured **that the GSA is developing into an organization that will remain strong.** The Audited Financial Statements which were shared with Council in July and the next round of quarterly financial statements which will be brought forward in October are **a powerful indication of the health of the GSA.** An ongoing and thorough review of GSA Bylaws and Policy are also an important component of this work.

MOVING FORWARD

Your GSA directly-elected officers will continue to work hard in pursuit of the goals outlined in the GSA Board's 2013-2014 SWP. In the coming terms we will continue our advocacy efforts with both government and administration. We have enjoyed **a strong and collaborative working relationship with FGSR** and will continue to build up and strengthen this affiliation. The GSA directly-elected officers, in particular the Vice-President Student Services, continue to work on the **development and construction of the PAW Centre.** A number of other key issues, including the **development of university policy surrounding academic bullying,** remain on the list of upcoming projects for the GSA.

The GSA also **continues to be highly involved in provincial advocacy on post-secondary education and to expand our lobbying presence on the national level.** To this end, I will be attending both the Canadian Association of Graduate Studies and Canadian Alliance of Student Associations Policy Week conferences this fall to advocate on behalf of graduate students at the U of A to ensure that your voices are heard.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brent L. Epperson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "B".

Brent Epperson, GSA President

Outline of Issue

Standing Orders of Council: Proposed Changes to the Standing Orders of Council

Suggested Motion:

GSA Council is asked to consider the following Motion:

That the GSA Council **approve** the proposed changes to the Standing Orders of Council, effective immediately.

Note: The proposed changes were developed by Executive Director Ellen Schoeck in consultation with former Speaker Fred Wu and current Speaker Daniel Prins and come before you with their recommendation. The suggested changes are largely editorial in nature and will bring the Standing Orders into alignment with current practice. In addition to the triple column we have provided a draft of what the Standing Orders will look like if the changes are approved.

Jurisdiction:

GSA Bylaws, Part III, Section 3.5.2

“Council has the authority to make alterations to the Standing Orders of Council by a simple majority vote at one meeting of Council.”

Background:

The Standing Orders of Council were approved at the January 23, 2012 meeting of Council. See above for additional background.

**Graduate Students' Association of the
University of Alberta**

Standing Orders of Council

GSA Council Meeting Procedures

Authority of Council:

Post-Secondary Learning Act:

95(2)d: "The council of a student organization may make bylaws governing ... the calling of meetings of the council and the quorum and conduct of business at those meetings."

Composition of Council:

As set out in Part III §2.1 of GSA Bylaws, Council is comprised of the following:

- "All Officers [of Council]"
- "One Councillor from each department, faculty, or extra-departmental unit at the University that offers a graduate program"
- "Ten Councillors-at-Large"
- "The GSA Directors as non-voting members"

Meetings of Council: The Speaker of Council sets the meeting dates annually. Council normally meets monthly on Mondays at 6:00 pm in the Telus Centre, room 134. If lacking sufficient agenda items, up to two meetings may be cancelled at the discretion of the Speaker and President – but never two sequential meetings.

Council meetings are attended by Council members, GSA management, staff and invited guests. Members of the public are required to sign in with the Speaker and will be given a guest placard. They may not speak or vote. Council may choose to close meetings by a simple majority vote, in which case only Council members and GSA staff may attend; others require a Council vote. With reasonable notice, special meetings may be called by the Speaker or GSA Board.

Council Coordinator and Recording Secretary:

The GSA Executive Director will assign a manager as the Coordinator of Council and a staff member as Recording Secretary to Council.

Normal Agenda Template:

Approved by GSA Council 23-Jan-2012

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- I: Approval of Agenda
- II: Approval of Minutes
- III: Receiving Names of New Councillors and Introductions
- IV: Presentations and Councillor Announcements
- V: Action Items, Elections, Appointments, Special Business
- VI: Reports from Officials, GSA Committees and Management, and Questions
- VII: Question Period
- VIII: Adjournment

Agenda: Agenda items normally come to Council from the GSA Board. Councillors who wish to place an item on the Agenda should contact the Speaker.

Copies of the first Agenda mailing (ie the bulk of the agenda material) is sent to all GSA Council members at least one week prior to the date of the meeting by the Recording Secretary to Council on instruction by the Speaker. Substantive items received after this initial mailing date are added at the discretion of the Speaker. Reports for information are emailed the Friday before a Monday meeting.

Changes to the Agenda made at meetings require a two-thirds majority vote of those present.

Minutes: Council Minutes are taken by the Council Recording Secretary and are circulated with the Agenda for the following meeting. Open session Minutes are posted on the GSA website. Closed session Minutes are confidential; brief notes will be taken by the Executive Director or delegate.

Role of Speaker: The Speaker strives to act in a neutral capacity and maintains order and decorum in Council so that Council can conduct its business in a fully-informed, fair fashion. If the Speaker is unable to perform any of his/her duties, the Deputy Speaker will act. If neither is available, the President will act.

Discussion: The Speaker regulates the flow of discussion.

Motions: A Motion is a formal proposal that the Council take certain action. To move a Motion, the member of Council is recognized by the Speaker (ie raise your hand). A Motion must be seconded; a second simply indicates that the seconder agrees that the Motion should be debated and not that the seconder necessarily favours the Motion.

Notice of Motion:

A Notice of Motion is a written advance notice that a Motion will be presented and debated at a future meeting of the Council. It must be presented in time to be circulated with the first mailing of the Agenda. Contact the Speaker for details.

Amendments to a Motion: An amendment must be germane; that is, it must be closely related to the subject of the Motion. Friendly Amendments are those which are acceptable to the mover and seconder of the Motion being amended.

Approved by GSA Council 23-Jan-2012

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Motion to Refer: A Motion to Refer allows Council to refer an issue to another body, usually a committee of Council.

Motion to Defer: A Motion to Defer enables the discussion of a substantive issue to be put off to a later, specified time.

Motion to Table: A Motion to Table allows Council to lay aside a Motion until some future time. This Motion is not debatable, except with respect to when the Motion will return to Council.

Motion to Rescind: A Motion to Rescind allows Council to cancel or stop an entire Motion that had already been adopted.

Motion to Reconsider: A Motion to Reconsider allows Council to return to a Motion that has been voted on *at the meeting*, in an instance where new information emerges or the situation changes, allowing Council to consider and vote anew, as if Council had not previously voted on the Motion.

Motion to Adjourn: This Motion must be seconded, is not debatable, and requires a majority vote of those present.

Council Members' Prerogatives: Any member may ask a question for information or about the decorum of Council.

Voting: Voting is by majority vote of those present unless otherwise stated. Abstentions are called for at the discretion of the Speaker.

Councilor Voting Ethics: All members of GSA Council are charged with promoting and protecting the well-being of the GSA and serving their constituents. Councilors are charged with acting ethically and rising above local interests.

Challenging the Speaker:

If a member of Council considers that a ruling made by the Speaker is not in order, a Councilor may appeal the Speaker's ruling. If this happens, the Speaker will give a brief explanation of his/her ruling. After questions and debate, the Speaker then asks this question: "Is the ruling of the Speaker upheld?" A majority (or tied) vote is needed for approval of the Speaker's ruling.

If the ruling of the Speaker is overturned, the Speaker is bound to take the necessary remedial action to correct the situation.

GSA Standing Orders

Current Standing Orders	Proposed Changes (<i>Deletions noted by a strikethrough and additions underlined</i>)	Rationale
<p>GSA Council Meeting Procedures Authority of Council:</p>		
<p><i>Post-Secondary Learning Act:</i></p> <p>95(2)d:“The council of a student organization may make bylaws governing ... the calling of meetings of the council and the quorum and conduct of business at those meetings.”</p>	<p><i>No change</i></p>	
<p>Composition of Council:</p> <p>As set out in Part III §2.1 of GSA Bylaws, Council is comprised of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “All Officers [of Council]” • “One Councillor from each department, faculty, or extra-departmental unit at the University that offers a graduate program” • “Ten Councillors-at-Large” • “The GSA Directors as non-voting members” 	<p><i>No Change</i></p>	
<p>Meetings of Council: The Speaker of Council sets the meeting dates annually. Council normally meets monthly on Mondays at 6:00 pm in University Hall Council Chambers [NOTE FOR INFORMATION FROM THE GSA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: GSA Council currently meets in the</p>	<p>Meetings of Council: The Speaker of Council sets the meeting dates annually. Council normally meets monthly on Mondays at 6:00 pm in University Hall Council Chambers [NOTE FOR INFORMATION FROM THE GSA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: GSA Council currently meets in the</p>	<p>When the Standing Orders were revised by the former Speaker and outlined quorum, it was not realized that a GSA Bylaw already existed on quorum (Part III Council 3.4).</p>

<p>Telus Centre, room 134, rather than University Hall]. If lacking sufficient agenda items, up to two meetings may be cancelled at the discretion of the Speaker and President – but never two sequential meetings. Quorum is a simple majority of Council members in filled positions</p>	<p>Telus Centre, room 134, rather than University Hall]. If lacking sufficient agenda items, up to two meetings may be cancelled at the discretion of the Speaker and President – but never two sequential meetings. Quorum is a simple majority of Council members in filled positions.</p>	<p>The location of Council meetings is no longer University Hall Council Chambers.</p>
<p>Council meetings are attended by Council members, GSA support staff and invited guests. Members of the public are required to sign in with the Speaker and will be given a guest placard. They may not speak or vote. Council may choose to close meetings by a simple majority vote, in which case only Council members and GSA staff may attend; others require a Council vote. With reasonable notice, special meetings may be called by the Speaker or GSA Board.</p>	<p>Council meetings are attended by Council members, GSA <u>management</u>, support staff and invited guests. Members of the public are required to sign in with the Speaker and will be given a guest placard. They may not speak or vote. Council may choose to close meetings by a simple majority vote, in which case only Council members and GSA staff may attend; others require a Council vote. With reasonable notice, special meetings may be called by the Speaker or GSA Board.</p>	<p>Specifying that GSA management always attends GSA Council meetings.</p>
<p>Secretary to Council: The GSA Executive Director will assign a staff member as Secretary to Council.</p>	<p><u>Secretary to Council Coordinator and Recording Secretary</u> The GSA Executive Director <u>will assign a manager as the Coordinator of Council and a staff member as Recording Secretary to Council.</u></p>	<p>There are now two employees who assist with Council support.</p>
<p>Normal Agenda Template: I: Approval of Agenda II: Approval of Minutes III Introduction of New Councillors IV: Presentations and Councillor</p>	<p>Normal Agenda Template: I: Approval of Agenda II: Approval of Minutes III, <u>Receiving Names</u> of New Councillors <u>and</u> Introductions</p>	<p>Receipt of names attests to proper elections. Action items have been moved up.</p>

<p>Announcements V: Reports from Officials, GSA Committees and Management, and Questions VI: Action Items, Elections, Appointments, Special Business VII: Question Period VIII: Adjournment</p>	<p>IV: Presentations and Councillor Announcements <u>V: Action Items, Elections, Appointments, Special Business</u> <u>VI: Reports from Officials, GSA Committees and Management, and Questions</u> VII: Question Period VIII: Adjournment</p>	
<p>Agenda: Agenda items normally come to Council from the GSA Board or a GSA Committee. Councillors who wish to place an item on the Agenda should contact the Speaker. Copies of the first Agenda mailing (ie the bulk of the agenda material) is sent to all GSA Council members at least one week prior to the date of the meeting by the Secretary to Council on instruction by the Speaker. Items received after this initial mailing date are added at the discretion of the Speaker. Changes to the Agenda made at meetings require a two-thirds majority vote of those present.</p>	<p>Agenda: Agenda items normally come to Council from the GSA Board or a GSA Committee. Councillors who wish to place an item on the Agenda should contact the Speaker. Copies of the first Agenda mailing (ie the bulk of the agenda material) is sent to all GSA Council members at least one week prior to the date of the meeting by the <u>Recording</u> Secretary to Council on instruction by the Speaker. <u>Substantive</u> items received after this initial mailing date are added at the discretion of the Speaker. <u>Reports for information are emailed the Friday before a Monday meeting.</u> Changes to the Agenda made at meetings require a two-thirds majority vote of those present.</p>	<p>GSA Board reviews all agenda items that come through GSA Committees.</p> <p>Council reports are mailed the Friday before a Monday meeting in order to include the most up-to-date information as possible.</p>
<p>Minutes: Council Minutes are taken by the Council Secretary and are circulated with the Agenda for the following meeting. Open session Minutes are posted on the GSA website. Closed session Minutes are confidential; brief notes will be taken by the Executive Director or delegate.</p>	<p>Minutes: Council Minutes are taken by the <u>Recording</u> Council Secretary and are circulated with the Agenda for the following meeting. Open session Minutes are posted on the GSA website. Closed session Minutes are confidential; brief notes will be taken by the Executive Director or delegate.</p>	

<p>Role of Speaker: The Speaker strives to act in a neutral capacity and maintains order and decorum in Council so that Council can conduct its business in a fully-informed, fair fashion. If the Speaker is unable to perform any of his/her duties, the President will act.</p>	<p>Role of Speaker: The Speaker strives to act in a neutral capacity and maintains order and decorum in Council so that Council can conduct its business in a fully-informed, fair fashion. If the Speaker is unable to perform any of his/her duties, <u>the Deputy Speaker will act.</u> If neither is <u>available</u>, the President will act.</p>	<p>Standing orders did not previously address the position of Deputy Speaker.</p>
<p>Challenging the Speaker: If a member of Council considers that a ruling made by the Speaker is not in order, a Councilor may appeal the Speaker's ruling. If this happens, the Speaker will give a brief explanation of his/her ruling. After questions and debate, the Speaker then asks this question: "Is the ruling of the Speaker upheld?" A majority (or tied) vote is needed for approval of the Speaker's ruling. If the ruling of the Speaker is overturned, the Speaker is bound to take the necessary remedial action to correct the situation.</p>	<p><i>Moved verbatim to the end of the Standing Orders.</i></p>	<p>Moving this section to the end is a more logical order.</p>
<p>Discussion: The Speaker regulates the flow of discussion.</p>	<p><i>No Change</i></p>	
<p>Motions: A Motion is a formal proposal that the Council take certain action. To move a Motion, the member of Council is recognized by the Speaker (ie raise your hand or press the red button at your voting station in University Hall). A Motion must be seconded; a second simply indicates that the seconder agrees that the Motion should be debated and not that the seconder necessarily favours the Motion.</p>	<p>Motions: A Motion is a formal proposal that the Council take certain action. To move a Motion, the member of Council is recognized by the Speaker (ie raise your hand or press the red button at your voting station in University Hall). A Motion must be seconded; a second simply indicates that the seconder agrees that the Motion should be debated and not that the seconder necessarily favours the Motion.</p>	<p>Council no longer held in University Hall and there are no voting stations in University Hall.</p>
<p>Notice of Motion:</p>	<p><i>No Change</i></p>	

<p>A Notice of Motion is a written advance notice that a Motion will be presented and debated at a future meeting of the Council. It must be presented in time to be circulated with the first mailing of the Agenda. Contact the Speaker for details.</p>		
<p>Amendments to a Motion: An amendment must be germane; that is, it must be closely related to the subject of the motion. Friendly Amendments are those which are acceptable to the mover and seconder of the Motion being amended.</p>	<p><i>No Change</i></p>	
<p>Motion to Refer and Defer: A Motion to Refer allows Council to refer an issue to another body, usually a committee of Council. A Motion to Defer enables the discussion of a substantive issue to be put off to a later, specified time.</p>	<p>Motion to Refer and Defer: A Motion to Refer allows Council to refer an issue to another body, usually a committee of Council. A Motion to Defer enables the discussion of a substantive issue to be put off to a later, specified time.</p>	<p>Separating out the two different motions discussed in this paragraph for clarity.</p>
	<p><u>Motion to Defer:</u> A Motion to Defer enables the discussion of a substantive issue to be put off to a later, specified time.</p>	
<p>Motion to Table: A Motion to Table allows Council to lay aside a motion until some future time. This Motion is not debatable, except with respect to when the Motion will return to Council.</p>	<p>Motion to Table: A Motion to Table allows Council to lay aside a <u>Motion</u> until some future time. This Motion is not debatable, except with respect to when the Motion will return to Council.</p>	<p>Capitalization</p>
<p>Motions to Rescind and Reconsider: The Speaker can provide advice on these Motions.</p>	<p>Motion to Rescind and Reconsider: The Speaker can provide advice on these Motions. <u>A Motion to Rescind allows Council to cancel or stop an entire Motion that had already been</u></p>	<p>Definition added.</p>

	<u>adopted.</u>	
	Motion to Reconsider: <u>A Motion to Reconsider allows Council to return to a Motion that has been voted on <i>at the meeting</i>, in an instance where new information emerges or the situation changes, allowing Council to consider and vote anew, as if Council had not previously voted on the Motion.</u>	Definition added.
Motion to Adjourn: This Motion must be seconded, is not debatable, and requires a majority vote of those present.	<i>No Change</i>	
Council Members' Prerogatives: Any member may ask a question for information or about the decorum of Council.	<i>No Change</i>	
Voting: Voting is by majority vote of those present unless otherwise stated. Abstentions are called for at the discretion of the Speaker.	<i>No Change</i>	
Councilor Voting Ethics: All members of GSA Council are charged with promoting and protecting the well-being of the GSA and serving their constituents. Councilors are charged with acting ethically and rising above local interests.	<i>No Change</i>	
	Challenging the Speaker: <u>If a member of Council considers that a ruling made by the Speaker is not in order, a Councilor may appeal the Speaker's ruling. If this happens, the Speaker will give a brief</u>	Moved verbatim from earlier in this section.

	<p><u>explanation of his/her ruling. After questions and debate, the Speaker then asks this question: "Is the ruling of the Speaker upheld?" A majority (or tied) vote is needed for approval of the Speaker's ruling.</u> <u>If the ruling of the Speaker is overturned, the Speaker is bound to take the necessary remedial action to correct the situation.</u></p>	
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Standing Orders of Council: Digest: DELETE

Current Standing Orders: Digest	Proposed Changes (<i>Deletions noted by a strikethrough and additions underlined</i>)	Rationale
<p>Councilor Voting Ethics: All members of GSA Council are charged with promoting and protecting the well-being of the GSA and serving their constituents. Councilors are charged with acting ethically and rising above local interests.</p>	<p>Councilor Voting Ethics: All members of GSA Council are charged with promoting and protecting the well-being of the GSA and serving their constituents. Councilors are charged with acting ethically and rising above local interests.</p>	<p>Both the current and former Speaker feel the Digest is not needed as the Standing Orders are now clearer and condensed.</p>
<p>Role of Speaker: The Speaker strives to act in a neutral capacity and maintains order and decorum in Council so that Council can conduct its business in a fully-informed, fair fashion. If the Speaker is unable to perform any of his/her duties, the President will act.</p>	<p>Role of Speaker: The Speaker strives to act in a neutral capacity and maintains order and decorum in Council so that Council can conduct its business in a fully-informed, fair fashion. If the Speaker is unable to perform any of his/her duties, the President will act.</p>	

<p>Motions: A Motion is a formal proposal that the Council take certain action. To move a Motion, the member of Council is recognized by the Speaker (ie raise your hand). A Motion must be seconded; a second simply indicates that the seconder agrees that the Motion should be debated and not that the seconder necessarily favours the Motion. The Speaker regulates the flow of discussion.</p>	<p>Motions: A Motion is a formal proposal that the Council take certain action. To move a Motion, the member of Council is recognized by the Speaker (ie raise your hand). A Motion must be seconded; a second simply indicates that the seconder agrees that the Motion should be debated and not that the seconder necessarily favours the Motion. The Speaker regulates the flow of discussion.</p>	
<p>Amendments to a Motion: An amendment must be germane; that is, it must be closely related to the subject of the motion. Friendly Amendments are those which are acceptable to the mover and seconder of the Motion being amended.</p>	<p>Amendments to a Motion: An amendment must be germane; that is, it must be closely related to the subject of the motion. Friendly Amendments are those which are acceptable to the mover and seconder of the Motion being amended.</p>	
<p>Voting: Voting is by majority vote of those present unless otherwise stated. Abstentions are called for at the discretion of the Speaker.</p>	<p>Voting: Voting is by majority vote of those present unless otherwise stated. Abstentions are called for at the discretion of the Speaker.</p>	
<p>Notice of Motion: A Notice of Motion is a written advance notice that a Motion will be presented and debated at a future meeting of the Council. It must be presented in time to be circulated with the first mailing of the Agenda. Contact the Speaker for details.</p>	<p>Notice of Motion: A Notice of Motion is a written advance notice that a Motion will be presented and debated at a future meeting of the Council. It must be presented in time to be circulated with the first mailing of the Agenda. Contact the Speaker for details.</p>	
<p>Motion to Refer and Defer: A Motion to Refer allows Council to refer an issue to another body, usually a committee of Council. A Motion to Defer enables the discussion of a substantive issue to be put off to a later, specified time.</p>	<p>Motion to Refer and Defer: A Motion to Refer allows Council to refer an issue to another body, usually a committee of Council. A Motion to Defer enables the discussion of a substantive issue to be put off to a later, specified time.</p>	
<p>Motion to Table: A Motion to Table allows</p>	<p>Motion to Table: A Motion to Table allows</p>	

<p>Council to lay aside a motion until some future time. This Motion is not debatable, except with respect to when the Motion will return to Council.</p>	<p>Council to lay aside a motion until some future time. This Motion is not debatable, except with respect to when the Motion will return to Council.</p>	
<p>Motion to Adjourn: This Motion must be seconded, is not debatable, and requires a majority vote of those present.</p>	<p>Motion to Adjourn: This Motion must be seconded, is not debatable, and requires a majority vote of those present.</p>	
<p>Council Members' Prerogatives: Any member may ask a question for information or about the decorum of Council.</p>	<p>Council Members' Prerogatives: Any member may ask a question for information or about the decorum of Council.</p>	

**AWARDS SELECTION COMMITTEE, BUDGET AND FINANCE COMMITTEE, ELECTIONS AND
REFERENDA COMMITTEE NOMINEES: FOR INFORMATION**

**PREPARED BY THE GSA NOMINATING COMMITTEE (NoC)
September 23, 2013 COUNCIL**

List of Nominees Previously Distributed to Council on September 17, 2013

Recommended Motion:

GSA Council is asked to consider the following Motion:

That the GSA Council, acting on the unanimous recommendation of the GSA Nominating Committee (NoC), **receive for information** the newly-elected GSA Council members for the GSA Awards Selection Committee, Budget and Finance Committee, and Elections and Referenda Committee.

Jurisdiction:

Policy Manual, Nominating, 6.6

“The NoC will provide Council with nominations for [...] all GSA standing committees [...]. Additional nominations may be made by Councillors, **in writing**, in advance of the Council meeting where elections will take place.”

No additional nominations were received by the deadline provided of 12 (noon) on Friday July 20, 2013. The candidates presented on this report are therefore declared **elected**.

Nominating Committee Mandate from GSA Policy Manual:

“Nominating, Expectations: Members of the NoC must have a demonstrated ability to be neutral and are expected to act impartially, including declaring conflicts of interest and rising above individual/departmental interests to ensure the **best fit between nominees and vacancies.**”

Budget and Finance Committee: Vacancy: ONE MEMBER OF THE GSA AND ONE GSA COUNCILLOR

The composition for BFC is:

iii....“One Councillor, elected by Council; and

iv. Two members of the GSA, elected by Council” (GSA Policy Manual, Standing Committees, Budget and Finance Committee).

Continuing Members on this Committee (2): Karen Vera Lyn Turpin (School of Public Health, GSA Member)

GSA Council Member Leaving this Committee (1): Tim Riordan (Sociology), Micaela Santiago (Nursing, GSA Councillor; resigned due to a scheduling conflict).

Newly elected GSA Council Member and GSA Member on this Committee:

1. Nathan Andrews (Political Science, Councillor-at-Large)
2. Dasha Smirnow (PhD Business, GSA member)

Awards Selection Committee: Positions: EIGHT TO TEN MEMBERS OF THE GSA

No set composition yet. In consultation with the ASC Chair (GSA VP Student Life) ASC will have approximately 8-10 members-at-large with as broad a representation of departments as possible.

Continuing Members on this Committee (4): Leigh Spanner (Political Science, GSA Councillor), Karen Vera Lyn Turpin (School of Public Health, GSA Member), Heather Stewart (Political Science, GSA Member), Cathleen Edwards (Physical Education and Recreation, GSA Member).

Members Leaving this Committee (5): Li Mao (Educational Policy Studies), Liang Chen (MSc Chemical and Materials Engineering), Babak Nikbakhtan (Civil and Environmental Engineering), Ravi Singh (MBA), Samuel Cardozo (MSc Chemical and Materials Engineering).

Newly elected GSA Members on this Committee:

1. Misha Miazga-Rodriguez (MSc Microbiology and Biotechnology)
2. Nitya Iyer (MSc Chemical and Materials Engineering)
3. Harsh Thaker (MSc Medicine)
4. Tran Tran (MSc Chemistry)
5. Richard Zhao (PhD Computing Science, Councillor-at-Large)
6. Yuxian Song (MA History)

Elections and Referenda Committee: Vacancy: ONE OR TWO MEMBERS OF THE GSA

No set composition yet. In consultation with the ERC Chair (GSA CRO) ERC will have approximately 4-5 members-at-large with ideally at least one GSA Council Member.

Continuing Members on this Committee (4): Virginia Pimmett (Cell Biology), Hamman Samuel (Computing Science, GSA Councillor), Richard Kanyo (Physiology).

Members Leaving this Committee (1): Asif Siddiqui (Political Science, CAL) and Hillary Sparkes (PhD Anthropology).

Newly elected GSA Members on this Committee:

1. Micaela Santiago (Nursing, GSA Councillor)

**President
Report to Council**

To: GSA Council
From: Brent Epperson
Date: September 20, 2013

Dear Colleagues,

My report to Council this month is the report to Councillors and participants of the tuition and fees forums that the GSA held this summer. The executive summary of the feedback provided in those forums, which was submitted to University administration, is also attached. I look forward to discussing this further with you in Council.

As always, you have also been provided with a list of meetings that I attended between August 20 and September 19.

Dear GSA Councillors and Graduate Student Colleagues,

I am writing to update GSA Councillors and attendees at our June and July tuition and fee forums about the GSA's position and ongoing dialogue with the administration. The executive summary of the forums is attached. The GSA Board extensively discussed the issue of a potential increase to tuition and fees over the summer. My team and I held numerous meetings with senior administration (including at MBAC/TBAC and meetings with individuals, including President Samarasekera and the Acting Provost and Vice-President (Academic), Martin Ferguson-Pell), which informed and shaped discussions in Board.

Based upon statements from President Samarasekera, Acting Provost Ferguson-Pell, Vice President Finance Phyllis Clark, and Associate Vice President Finance Phillip Stack, the GSA anticipated an inevitable onslaught of new graduate tuition and fee increase proposals between fall 2013 and fall 2015. We proceeded to hold our tuition and fee forums across campus in June and July, consulting with our membership to develop a position. At the forums and in the feedback that followed, graduate students overwhelmingly opposed any tuition increases beyond CPI, international differential increases beyond CPI, new mandatory non-instructional fees (MNIFs), or additional market modifiers.

In our numerous meetings with University administration, we have consistently attempted to come to a common position on tuition, market modifiers, international differentials, and the need for a new regulatory framework for MNIFs. These attempts to build a consensus have been unsuccessful thus far, in part because of differences of opinion on postsecondary funding principles, divergent interpretations of comparative Canadian university tuition data, and in some measure because the Government of Alberta has been noncommittal with regards to its stance on tuition and fee increases.

Many of you have expressed frustration both that the University administration has not publicly announced its intentions on tuition and fees and that the GSA has not taken a public position on these matters. The last few months have been frustrating for the GSA in the sense that we have been trying to develop a position on a moving target.

Based upon input from graduate students and departmental GSAs from all faculties during and since our tuition and fee forums, the GSA opposes across-the-board graduate student tuition increases beyond CPI, international tuition differential increases beyond CPI, new market-modifiers, and new mandatory non-instructional fees that do not result from a new regulatory framework negotiated between the University of Alberta administration and the GSA.

For the sake of full transparency, it is important that I clarify my own opinion, which does not unilaterally alter the position of the GSA or necessarily align with the views of the GSA Vice-Presidents, on both tuition for professional master's programs—as defined and differentiated from research-based master's programs according to best practices—and MNIFs. In the interests of the University's long-term economic stability, I believe that the GSA must continue dialogue with the University administration about the regulation of tuition for professional master's programs and the definition of these programs. In my view, professional master's programs are unique and should have differentiated tuition. Furthermore, for the purposes of preserving collegial governance, it is important that the GSA continue consultations with the University administration as we advocate for a new provincial regulatory framework for MNIFs. These consultations must also be balanced against the best interests of graduate students across campus. Alberta's post-secondary institutions have become overly reliant on MNIFs, imposing the highest in Canada during the preceding decades. Profound dissatisfaction with the exorbitance and non-transparency of these fees has sown distrust and animosity between provincial university administrators and student association leaders. However, risks to budgetary flexibility and array of service quality for both universities and student associations may emanate from the hasty implementation of a new regulatory framework. While lobbying the Government of Alberta for regulation of MNIFs, the GSA should work with University administration and our partners at the Students' Union to agree upon principles of a satisfactory consultation and approbation process.

Unless otherwise directed by the GSA Council and as long as this GSA Board remains in office, we will steadfastly oppose across-the-board graduate tuition increases or international differential increases beyond CPI. In any effort to develop a proposal with the University administration on the definition and tuition regulation of professional master's programs or the regulatory framework of MNIFs, I will work closely with the GSA Board. I will also present any such proposal to the GSA Council, which retains the authority to accept or refuse any proposed change to the GSA's position on these matters.

I thank all of you for providing the valuable input that underpins the GSA's position on graduate tuition, market-modifiers, international differential tuition, and MNIFs.

Best regards,

Brent Epperson, GSA President 2013-2014

Executive summary of GSA tuition and fee forums

Across the Board Tuition Increases and Additional Mandatory Non-Instructional Fees and Market Modifiers: Consultation with Graduate Students and Graduate Student Groups

The GSA sponsored nine forums for all faculties offering graduate programs between June 17 and June 20, 2013. We had feedback from students in every single faculty with a graduate program. Following the forums,

in addition to extensive verbal feedback from graduate students across campus, 108 students and 10 student groups provided detailed responses on behalf of their membership. The key messages that were communicated to the GSA are:

- **International students and their peers consider an increase to international student differential fees unsustainable.** In their feedback, international students communicated the challenges they would encounter if subjected to these fees. There are restrictions on the types of employment that they can hold with student visas, they are eligible for fewer awards and grants, and they already pay higher fees than domestic students. Many international students already live below the low-income cut-off (LICO) and will not be able to maintain a decent standard of living if fees are raised.
- **Some students responded that an immediate increase in fees will force them to consider abandoning their studies at the U of A.** Many of these were international students, but not all. These students emphasized that they have no income beyond awards, TA/RAs, and family support. Some said they might take on part-time work, transfer to another university, or go into debt. Others indicated that their only option would be to downgrade their PhD to a Master's or discontinue their program altogether.
- **The cost of program delivery should be taken into consideration.** This consideration should discourage across-the-board tuition increases.
- **For universities, there is no correlation between increased tuition and a better reputation.** The consensus among students was that they came to the University of Alberta primarily because of the quality of its professoriate and the excellent opportunities for research. However, for many students, the U of A's affordability was the deciding factor in choosing to study here. Many respondents saw the idea that raising fees would improve the university's reputation as flawed and even offensive. Graduate students evaluate universities based on the quality of education offered with respect to the price paid. Raising fees without a corresponding increase in quality was seen as rendering the U of A much less competitive in the market for talented students.
- **The quality of existing programs will suffer as an indirect result of graduate fee increases.** Many students highlighted the key role of graduate students in undertaking cutting-edge research, which is one area where the U of A strives for excellence. An additional financial burden would extend their completion times and lead to lower completion rates. Cuts in departmental TA funding would be to the detriment of undergraduate programs.
- **There were a number of suggestions for the implementation of the cuts,** including (1) grandfathering them in, so that students with no leeway in their budget will be able to complete their studies, (2) taking into account departmental finances when levying fees, rather than increasing them the same amount across the board, (3) in the event of a new MNIF, providing students with a detailed breakdown of what services the fee will support, and (4) exempting students from the fee increases below a certain income cut-off.

Please find below a list of meetings I attended between August 20, 2013 and September 20, 2013:

August 21	Student Aid Alberta Meeting
August 21	Meeting with Student Group
August 23	Meeting with Vice-Provost Academic

August 26	Board of Governors Meeting
August 26	Associations Coalition
August 26	Meeting with Dean of Science
August 26	Dinner with Chancellor
August 27	Meeting with VP F and O
August 28	GSA Board
August 28	Meeting with Acting Provost
August 29	Meeting with MP Duncan
August 29	Fall Orientation
August 29	M-BAC/T-BAC
September 3	Five Departmental Orientations
September 4	GSA Board
September 5	Meeting with Dean FGSR
September 5	Meeting with Centre for Public Involvement
September 11	Meeting with Provost Amrhein
September 11	GSA Board
September 17	Meeting with Dean of Students
September 18	Meeting with Vice-Provost Programs
September 18	GSA Board
September 18	FGSR Council
September 18	Wildrose/NDP Debate
September 19	Meeting with CAFA Rep
September 19	State of the University Address
September 19	Meeting with the Dean of Arts
September 19	Celebrate Teaching Learning and Research
September 20	Meeting with Public Interest Alberta Rep
September 20	Meeting with Student Group

GSA Board
REPORT TO COUNCIL for September 23, 2013 Council Meeting

To: GSA Council

From: Ellen Schoeck, Executive Director and Coordinator of the GSA Board; Heather Hogg, Director of Operations; and Courtney Thomas, Associate Director

Date: September 18, 2013

The Board reports regularly to Council by listing its agenda items, motions/agreements, and main items of discussion. Motions of Agenda approval and approval of the Minutes are not included unless there were amendments made. Closed session items are not minuted. The President, Vice-Presidents, Director of Operations, Associate Director, Financial Manager, and I will be happy to answer any questions or provide more information at the Council meeting.

28 August, 2013 GSA Board Meeting

Main Agenda Items:

Travel Expenses Related to External Relations: Proposed Addition to the GSA Board Policy Manual; AGC Fees; Student Aid Alberta; Prayer Space needs; *and* Ombudservice.

Motions and Agreements:

BE **MOVED** that the GSA Board **approve** the proposed addition to the GSA Board Policy Manual, as outlined in the attached draft policy, effective immediately. Seconded CM. Carried unanimously.

ALL Board Members **AGREED UNANIMOUSLY** to move forward with Option One with respect to AGC Fees, and re-examine if necessary.

4 September, 2013 GSA Board Meeting

Main Agenda Items:

Travel Expenses Associated with Attendance at CAGS; Fall Orientation and Departmental Orientations; HUB Mall Safety; *and* Meeting with Acting Provost.

Motions and Agreements:

No motions of agreements were made at this meeting.

11 September, 2013 GSA Board Meeting

Main Agenda Items:

Conference Board of Canada and Post-Secondary Education; Letter of Expectation; Financial Aid Task Force; Part-time Students meeting; Campus Forum; Professional Development; *and* Labour Cases.

Motions and Agreements:

No motions or agreements were made at this meeting.

**Vice-President Academic
Report to Council**

To: GSA Council
From: Colin More, VPA
Date: September 18, 2013

Dear Colleagues,

I certainly hope you all had a great summer, including at least some sort of vacation! I managed to spend some time back home on the west coast myself, and found it to be most invigorating.

As your VP Academic, **I remain concerned about how the budget cuts announced last spring will trickle down and affect students in all faculties.** In the broadest sense, the cuts will have to be dealt with primarily through salary reduction (whether by modifying collective agreements, laying off individuals, or a mix of the two) and a reduction in size of the student population. The latter has no direct effect on those of us already in programs but will affect the University greatly in the future. The former, however, will inevitably lead to larger workloads for everyone along with fewer services.

It appears that central administration, while taking a sizeable reduction themselves, is pushing the decision-making on how to cut down to the faculty level. This has both positive and negative implications. On the positive side, individual faculties understand their individual situations best, so they are presumably in the best position to decide how to implement cuts. On the negative side, it makes it much harder to advocate for students when the decision-makers are so diffuse and disparate. **Mid- to late-October is the best guess we have as to when the situation will begin to crystallize.**

In other news, **a report on graduate supervision is due out in the next several months, while discussion of how best to use technology in a variety of academic situations continues.** Ideas range from the well-developed (replacing paper-based course evaluations with an electronic version) to the more nebulous (e-textbooks, "open learning resources"). Teaching and technology are themes which have emerged in the past year or two not just here, but across Canada and around the world. It is certainly something to keep an eye on.

As always, if you have any questions, please do get in touch!

Colin
GSA VP Academic 2013-2014

Please find below a list of meetings I attended between August 20, 2013 and September 19, 2013:

August 26	Associations Coalition
August 26	GSA Exec
August 26	Dinner with Chancellor
August 28	GSA Board
August 29	Meeting with MP Duncan
September 3	Five Departmental Orientations
September 4	GSA Board
September 4	GSA CLE

September 5	Meeting with Student
September 5	Meeting with Dean FGSR
September 5	Meeting with Centre for Public Involvement
September 6	Campus Forum
September 6	Departmental Orientation
September 7	Departmental Orientation
September 7	Friends of U of A Football
September 10	Professional Development Meeting
September 11	GFC Caucus
September 11	GSA Board
September 11	GSA APC
September 12	MBAC/TBAC
September 13	Departmental Orientation
September 13	AUGSA Graduate Conference
September 16	Meeting with SU VPAC
September 16	FGSR Caucus
September 16	Meeting with Student
September 16	GFC
September 16	Government Forum on PSE
September 17	Meeting with Alumni Rep
September 17	Meeting with Dean of Students
September 17	Lecture on Future of Teaching in Research Universities
September 18	GSA Board
September 19	Meeting with Student
September 19	State of the University Address
September 19	Meeting with Student

Vice-President Student Services**Report to Council**

To: GSA Council
From: Megha Bajaj, VPSS
Date: September 19, 2013

Dear Colleagues,

Hope you are all doing well.

Last month has been really busy and interesting for me. I did a number of departmental orientations, which was a good experience and also chatted with incoming graduate students at the GSA Orientation on August 29.

Below are the key points from some of the meetings I attended since the last Council:

- **North Campus LRDP focus group Long Range Development Plan:** The members of the focus group met to review materials to be presented at the North Campus LRDP Town Hall to be held on September 25 2013. Members of the focus group gave verbal and written feedback during the meeting to the University Architect on how to make the material clear and easy to understand for the general public. **The general public and community around North Campus attended the Town Hall along with representatives from the University.** The public was given an opportunity to ask questions or raise concerns on the material presented pertaining to construction planning in and around North Campus during the Town Hall.
- **Campus Open Space Master Plan Workshop:** The main aim of this space meeting was to give the members a draft progress review of construction projects and forward planning for new projects on various open spaces on North Campus. **Members were asked to give their feedback on issues and opportunities about various open spaces on campus. A student focused committee (GSA+SU) will be struck by the University Architect where we will discuss the need of improving the existing open spaces,** give our ideas on developing new open space and green spaces to improve student experience on campus. This ties into the broader Health and Wellness program, which seems to be a priority, especially for the Office of Dean of Students for this year.
- **Meeting with Renée Polziehn to discuss Professional Development program:** Colin and I met with Renée this month to discuss the professional development program further. **Renée has made a lot of progress on this since our last meeting with her. She has prepared a report, which describes the need of such a program and why it is important for graduate students.** She will be forwarding this report to a number of

experienced people working in industry, government, non-profit organizations and academia, to invite them to sit on a committee and have further discussions on developing programs for graduate students. **Renée has also included our suggestions in the report that the program should be measurable with an end result (eg a notation on a transcript or a certificate) and should be a multi-tiered program with components like attending a number of sessions/workshops, preparing a CV, and creating a PD dossier, including a mentorship component etc.** However, this is a draft report and the structure of the PD program will be discussed further once the committee is struck. I cannot wait to get started on this. Looks exciting!

Student Financial Aid Task Force meeting with Lindsey Rose (FGSR) and report submission: As I have mentioned before in my reports, the FGSR and GSA has several concerns with the idea of having a central financial aid office which would be under the portfolio of the Registrar's office. This model of a single financial aid office serves the purpose of undergraduate financial aid. However, for graduate students, more than 90% of graduate scholarships are based on our research program, which is currently administered by FGSR in co-ordination with various Faculties and departments. Also the GSA administers professional development grants, bursaries, childcare grants and various awards given at Awards night and the GSA controls the policy and administration of this money given to graduate students. **Both FGSR and the GSA strongly feel Triffo Hall should be made the central financial aid office for graduate students, which would be separate from the undergraduate financial aid office.** The GSA and FGSR have submitted a joint report to the Acting Provost with these recommendations which stresses the importance of keeping financial aid separate for graduate and undergraduate students.

- **Meeting with Office of Safe Disclosure and Human Rights:** The office of Safe Disclosure and Human Rights is hosting a number of events this year, including Human Right Education Recognition Awards, Human Rights week (it will run from the end of November to the first week of December) and a Student Photo Contest. **I met with them to discuss the possibility of advertising their events through appropriate GSA channels.** We will be advertising their events in the GSA newsletter and through social media. I just wanted to remind you to check their website in case you were interested in any of the programs mentioned above.

Sincerely,

Megha Bajaj

Please find below a list of meetings I attended between August 20, 2013 and September 19 , 2013:

August 26	Dinner with the Chancellor
August 27	Meeting with Student Group
August 27	Student Financial Aid Task Force
August 28	GSA Board
August 28	Meeting with MP Duncan
August 29	GSA Fall Orientation
August 29	GFC FDC
August 30	Departmental Orientation
September 4	GSA Board
September 4	RBAC
September 4	Meeting with Lindsey Rose
September 5	PSAC
September 6	Departmental Orientation
September 6	Campus Forum
September 6	Departmental Orientation
September 6	Departmental Orientation
September 10	Professional Development Meeting
September 10	North Campus LRDP
September 11	GSA Board
September 12	Campus Open Space Master Plan Meeting
September 13	Departmental Orientation
September 14	U of A Ambassador Dinner
September 16	Meeting with Lindsey Rose
September 17	PAW Steering
September 17	Meeting with Alumni rep
September 18	GSA Board
September 19	State of the University Address

**GSA Vice President Student Life
Report to Council**

To: GSA Council
From: Hasin Haroon
Date: September 18, 2013

Dear Colleagues,

I hope you are keeping warm, with fall really starting to kick in this week. The past month has kept us all busy at the GSA, with the new term and all the committees scheduling their first meetings for the new academic year.

Some of the highlights of the past month that I would like to bring to your attention are:

- Changes to GSA– the changes in full will be presented to you all at the October Council meeting, but they are positive.
- **GSA Fall Orientation and Departmental Orientations** – the Fall Orientation was a great success, with graduate students turning up in great numbers. The GSA was asked to several Departmental Orientations, which also went very well.
- Working towards **adequate and accessible prayer space on campus** – at the start of our term, we identified adequate and accessible prayer space as a priority for the GSA in our strategic work plan. I am pleased to inform you that the process towards realising this goal is well underway. Brent and I had a meeting with Don Hickey (University VP F&O) and Ben Louie (University architect) to get the process going, and the GSA has held meetings with stakeholders since.
- Another one of our platform priorities is **professional development opportunities** for graduate students. I had a meeting with Sean Price, Executive Director of the Alumni Association, along with Colin and Megha (who is working on PD opportunities with the FGSR) to discuss mentorship and networking opportunities that would allow graduate students to learn directly from our distinguished alumni.
- I am currently working on a **part-time student loan focus group initiative** with the three other GSAs in Alberta. An improved part-time student loan program was advocated for by the four GSAs last year, and the government has now asked us to help set up focus groups to better understand the needs of the part-time student community. Please keep an eye out for focus groups that will be held sometime this term, and that would greatly benefit from the attendance of graduate students pursuing a part-time education. I will keep you updated on this initiative as it proceeds.

Please find a list of the meetings I have attended since the last Council meeting (August 19th, cancelled) attached. I look forward to seeing you all at Council and hope you have a very productive term!

Sincerely,
Hasin Haroon

Please find below a list of meetings I attended between August 20, 2013 and September 19, 2013:

August 26	Dinner with Chancellor
August 27	Meeting with Student Group
August 27	Meeting with VP Facilities and Operations
August 28	GSA Board
August 29	Meeting with MP Duncan
August 29	GSA Fall Orientation
September 4	GSA Board
September 5	Part Time Students Meeting
September 5	Two Departmental Orientations
September 6	Campus Forum
September 6	Departmental Orientation
September 9	Departmental Orientation
September 9	Mental Health Awareness Meeting
September 11	GSA Board
September 12	Meeting with Muslim Student Association
September 13	Alumni Association Centenary Meeting
September 13	Meeting with Student
September 13	Leadership Initiative Announcement
September 13	Departmental Orientation
September 13	AUGSA Graduate Conference
September 16	Government Forum on PSE
September 17	GSA LRC
September 17	Professional Development Meeting
September 18	RBAC
September 18	GSA Board
September 18	Part Time Students Meeting
September 19	State of the University Address

**VP Labour
GSA Council September 23th, 2013**

To: GSA Council
From: Monty Bal, VP Labour
Date: September 19, 2013

Dear Colleagues,

I attended a number of meetings since the last GSA Council. Below are highlights from some of these meetings in chronological order.

Departmental Orientations

Over the past few weeks, I participated in a number of departmental orientations. I believe that these efforts are helpful in providing the incoming graduate students some guidance on the types of services and benefits the GSA helps provide. Additionally, we were able to **inform new students about important issues, including the impact of the budget cuts, the departmental liaison initiative, and about their rights under the AEGS Collective Agreement**. I look forward to continued cooperation between the GSA and departments to keep students aware of the processes in play in order to better represent their interests.

Human Rights Award Selection Committee

The University Office of Safe Disclosure and Human Rights is creating an **award to recognize achievement of students, staff, and faculty who “champion” an inclusive environment at the UofA**. There will be 4 awards, one for staff, one for students, one for faculty, and one for teaching. There will be public recognition for award winners on International Human Rights Day on December 10. The GSA and the OSDHR will provide more info once nominations are open on how to nominate individuals.

UAI Immigration Standing

GSA Director of Operations Heather Hogg and I met with a representative from UAI to discuss the **visa status implications for international students who go on medical leave**. We learned that students can in fact be on medical leave and not have registration at the UofA. However, if they apply for an extension of their permit, they might be required to explain their lack of registration. This might also be problematic if students plan on gaining PR as a medical leave may create some issues. However, to maintain a work permit, students must be registered and therefore they would lose their work permit on while on medical leave. We may need to work with FGSR and departments to provide more consistent information about students on medical leave for the CIC. Further, we spoke about **the potential for providing PR legal advice for students**. We were informed that this would be a cost recovery program and student would need to pay close to market rates for the service. We will need to further investigate how much students might be willing to pay for this program and work with UAI on further investigating this issue.

LRC

The Labour Relations Committee had its first meeting of the year. The **committee serves as a think tank to provide advice and consultation to the Collective Agreement Negotiation Committee**. With the help

of the LRC the Negotiating Committee will work towards building our bargaining open position to take to the University. More news will follow over the next two months.

Labour Cases

We have experienced an **uptick in the number of labour cases since the beginning of the semester**. Heather and I are working towards resolving many of these issues. In our meeting with Jay Spark and Susan Buchsdruecker from the Provost's Office, we discussed multiple ways in which we can deal with some issues of non-compliance of the CA. This includes **providing better information to students on their offer letters and contracts, including more information on the CA and the role of the GSA as the labour representative and stronger enforcement mechanisms**. We are also working to get information about practices at other institutions which may enhance the clarity of contracts at the UofA.

As I have highlighted repeatedly to the GSA Council over the summer, with the collective bargaining process being in play over the next year, **it is absolutely essential that we at the GSA be made aware of any concerns, problems, or ambiguities in the current CA**. With your help, we hope that we can find and resolve any hiccups which may have appeared as unintended consequences from the previous agreement. Once again, if you have any concerns regarding your TA/RA contracts, please contact Heather or I and we will work to resolve these concerns.

Thanks,

Simarjit S. Bal (Monty)

Please find below a list of meetings I attended between August 20, 2013 and September 19, 2013:

August 20	CASA Grad Council Teleconference
August 20	Human Rights Award Selection Committee
August 26	Dinner with Chancellor
August 27	GSA Board
August 28	Departmental Orientation
August 28	Meeting with MP Duncan
August 29	GSA Fall Orientation
August 29	Labour Meeting
September 3	Five Departmental Orientations
September 4	GSA Board
September 4	Departmental Orientation
September 4	Labour Case
September 5	PSAC
September 5	Labour Case
September 5	Labour Case
September 6	Campus Forum
September 11	GSA Board
September 12	Meeting with UAI
September 12	Labour Meeting

September 13	Departmental Orientation
September 13	AUGSA Graduate Conference
September 14	U of A Ambassador Dinner
September 17	GSA LRC
September 18	GSA Board
September 18	FGSR Council
September 18	Wildrose/NDP Debate
September 19	State of the University Address

**GSA Labour Relations Committee
Report to Council**

To: GSA Council
From: Monty Bal, Vice-President Labour and Chair of LRC
Date: September 20, 2013

Dear Colleagues,

The GSA LRC met on September 17, 2013 to discuss the **collective bargaining 2013-2014 process and provide advice to the GSA Negotiating Committee** concerning negotiations with the University.

I will report further orally.

Respectfully,
Monty Bal, GSA VP Labour

**GSA Elections and Referenda Committee
Report to Council**

To: GSA Council
From: Isaac Odoom, CRO
Date: September 20, 2013

Dear Colleagues,

The Elections and Referenda Committee met on August 30, 2013, and again on September 20, 2013, to continue the work that has been done to date on Elections and Referenda Bylaw and Policy Review. The Elections and Referenda Bylaws and Policies have not been reviewed for some time, and following the 2013 General Election, By-Election and Referendum, the former CRO, Daniel Prins, drafted a 47 point procedural report with numerous recommendations.

Over the summer the Executive Director and Nominating Committee Specialist met with the former CRO 4 times to review this procedural report, and to conduct research. We are now on Draft 11 of Elections Bylaw and Policy proposed changes and Draft 5 of Referenda Bylaw and Policy proposed changes. I have met a number of times with the Executive Director and the Deputy Returning Officer, Esther Ekpe Adequyi, to work through these proposed changes.

ERC is aiming to bring the whole package of Elections and Referenda Bylaw and Policies changes to October Council. The second reading of Elections and Referenda Bylaw will take place during November Council.

Here are some examples of the proposed Bylaw and Policy changes:

1. GSA Policy currently states "If the CRO feels a candidate is not qualified or will not be able to attend preset University meetings, the CRO must consult with the Elections and Referenda Committee; that Committee may direct the CRO to refuse to accept a nomination from such a candidate. The decision of the Elections and Referenda Committee is final and binding." ERC agreed that the CRO should not be able to disqualify a candidate from running in the General Election on these grounds.
2. The CRO can no longer disqualify a candidate from running in the General Election if in the CRO's view the candidate does not meet the qualifications outlined in GSA Policy, Officer Portfolios
3. Changes to language and procedure have been made to reflect shift from paper balloting to electronic balloting.
4. Appeal process for elections has been completely revamped. It was previously part of the Judicial Policy, which also needs also to be reviewed and re-written. The election appeals process is now fast and simple as we need rapid decisions during the tight time frame of an election.
5. Nomination forms will be made available in hard copy at the GSA Office. CRO can decide whether any exceptions to this will be made.

6. Previously, signatures on nomination forms were required but this was never part of GSA Bylaw/Policy. We are proposing Directly-Elected Officers include 5 signatures with their nomination forms. CALs would no longer require signatures (trying to remove barriers for graduate students to get involved with the CAL positions, which historically have not been filled during a General Election).
7. We are proposing that GSA Council will elect any Councillor-at-Large vacancies following the GSA General Election and that Council would aim to elect graduate students for the remaining CAL positions from as broad a range of disciplines as possible.
8. We have included language to outline that candidates should take into account the GSA's multiple roles under the *Post-Secondary Learning Act (PSLA)* when drafting any election platforms.
9. We drafted guiding principles and rules of conduct for elections.
10. We reviewed the composition of ERC. Language is proposed which outlines eligibility for membership on ERC, since it would present a conflict of interest for ERC members to serve on this committee if they are planning to run in the General Election).
11. We are working through Draft 4 of a complete re-write of Referenda policy. The previous CRO indicated the current Referenda Bylaw and Policies are extremely unclear.
12. Proposing a change to the Referenda policy so that Referenda will normally be held once a year, at the same time as the General Election (with the Board to have the ability to decide that it is necessary to hold a Referendum at a different time of the year).
13. We are removing from the Referenda policy an incorrect reference to petitions from the *Post-Secondary Learning Act (PSLA)*.

Feel free to contact me with any questions.

Best,

Isaac Odoom, Chief Returning Officer

**GSA Executive Director
Report to Council**

To: GSA Council

From: Ellen Schoeck, Executive Director

Date: September 20, 2013

Dear Council,

As continuing members will know, and as new members will have learned in Governance/GSA 101 or in 2013 Departmental Orientations, the GSA is a legal corporation, separate from the U of A. Here is the latest on the documents that define the GSA as a corporate entity. See bolded sections in particular.

NAME	SUMMARY	STATUS
Collective Agreement (AEGS)	Sets out terms of employment for certain graduate students and terms for use of AEGS funds.	Negotiations opened in October 2013.
Audit (based on Council-approved budget)	As a separate corporation from the university, we hire our own auditor.	Audit occurs annually in May-June.
Banking and signing authority agreements	Operating account, GICs, investments.	Actively reviewed with BMO in April 2012.
Campus Food Bank Agreement	Regulates GSA involvement with Food Bank.	GSA gives \$9000/annum to Campus Food Bank.
CAPS and Writing Resources Centre Agreement	Provides for subsidy of certain CAPS and WRC courses for grad students.	Annual subsidy of \$7575.
Ceridian (Payroll) Contract	GSA staff and elected officials are now paid by direct deposit.	We are very pleased with Ceridian. Outsourcing is cheaper than in-house production of cheques.
Council bylaws and policies	Regulated by the <i>Post-secondary Learning Act</i> .	Comprehensive review to occur 2013-2014.
Direct Deposit Arrangement	Provides for direct deposit of AEGS cheques and T4A production by U of A.	Signed 2012. Major infrastructure change.
U of A Financial Services	Stipulates when GSA receives fees collected by the U of A on our behalf.	Re-negotiated and signed in April 2012. Re-negotiated again in 2013 for two more years. Deals with cash flow issue.
Graduate Student Assistance Program (GSAP) passed by referendum; Appendix to U of A Agreement	Provides for a wide range of personal counseling.	Reviewed annually.
Health and Dental Agreement with Studentcare	Provides for Health and Dental Plan.	Re-signed to 2015. Provider changed in 2012.

Info Sharing Agreement with Studentcare and University	Allows Studentcare access to graduate students' personal information for strictly defined purposes regarding the GSA's Health and Dental Plan.	Reviewed with the U of A Privacy Officer and Studentcare in 2012.
Personal Information Sharing Agreement with the U of A	Allows the GSA access to graduate students' personal information for strictly defined purposes, e.g. emailing the newsletter.	Reviewed in 2012 and signed.
Liability Insurance	As a separate corporation from the university, we carry our own general liability insurance.	We doubled our liability insurance in 2012. We are not covered for alcohol use and yet have GSA students groups who have self-reported that they use alcohol.
Officers/Directors' Insurance	As a separate corporation from the university, we carry insurance that covers the elected officials, and management.	We doubled our coverage in 2013.
TDIMM Agreement	Provides for group auto and home insurance.	Re-signed to October 7, 2016.
Management contracts with ED/letters of appointment	Sets out terms of employment managers.	Standard appointment letter has been reviewed by our lawyers.
Collective Agreement with NASA covering office staff	Sets out terms of employment for GSA staff.	Signed in April 2012.
PAW Centre Agreement	Sets out terms of operation of PAW. SU also involved in the Agreement.	Signed in April 2012. Need to negotiate business terms with SU.
Photocopier Lease	Covers three photocopiers.	Expires in 2015.
Power Plant and Dewey's Agreements/MOU	The GSA has four agreements with the U of A and/or the SU.	Meetings are ongoing.
Referenda Master File	All referenda questions that actively impact graduate students (eg. UPASS, PAW Centre, GSAP, Health and Dental Plan, etc).	Compiled and filed.
Triffo Lease	Detailed lease covering our use of Triffo office space .	First-ever lease was signed in June 2011; 5-year term, four renewals. Expires in June 2016 (notification of desire to renew must be given 6-12 months before expiry).
Tuition Agreement Letters	Letters from the University stating the tuition increases for the upcoming academic year.	Received annually.
UBEF	UBEF administers the GSA's emergency bursary funds.	Oral agreement only.

Transit Agreement with the U of A	Governs U-PASS.	Referendum question before Council February 2013. Referendum March 2013. New U-Pass agreement signed September 2013. Next referendum in 2014-2015.
Agreement between the City of Edmonton, Strathcona County, and St. Albert and the U of A [negotiated by GSA and SU with Transit Agreement]	Governs U-PASS.	Reviewed in April 2012-13, re-signed.

Best,
Ellen

**Executive Director, Director of Operations, and Associate Director
Report to the GSA Board, August 28, 2013**

Dear All,

Week in Review – Strategic:

The following have issues have dominated management’s attention in the past two weeks:

Bylaw and Policy Review

- **Editorial** (several editorial changes are planned such as combining bylaws and policy into one document and forward thinking about alternate formatting).
- **Substantive** (Ellen has re-read bylaws and policy cover-to-cover for conflicts (eg Standing Orders) and work on fixing these is beginning. Ellen, Heather, and Courtney have developed a timeline for revisions to elections and referenda bylaws and policy and awards policy to move to ASC, ERC, GSAB, and Council. An overhaul of policy of Grants which involves a lot of deep thinking has begun).

Other

- **AGC fees.**
- **HCAG/GSAP background.**
- **Providing feedback on the NPP White Paper** circulated by the SU.
- **Provincial advocacy.**
- **Review of the 2014-2015 Academic Calendar** as it relates to GSA operations.
- **U-Pass communications.**
- Final planning for **Fall Orientation** and continuing thought on Departmental Orientations.

- Several **Board policies in draft** and **forward thinking about the Early Call for Talent**.
- **Social Media:** Facebook = 159 likes (up 22 from last week), Twitter = 83 followers (up 7 from last week).

Week in Review – Office Operations:

- Assisting with several research projects (**prayer space, provincial nominee program for permanent residency, academic bullying**).
- **New GSA banners** for use at Orientation and Awards Night are ready.
- Assisting with the **elections and referenda bylaws and policy review** and with the processing of **grants and awards applications** (new application period opened August 1).

GSA Media Tracker.

Executive Director, Director of Operations, and Associate Director Report to the GSA Board, September 4, 2013

Dear All,

Week in Review – Strategic:

The following have issues have dominated management's attention in the past two weeks:

- **Bylaw and Policy Review (Editorial):** several editorial changes are planned such as combining bylaws and policy into one document and forward thinking about alternate formatting and **Substantive:** Ellen has re-read bylaws and policy cover-to-cover for conflicts (eg Standing Orders) and work on fixing these is beginning. Ellen, Heather, and Courtney have developed a timeline for revisions to elections and referenda bylaws and policy and awards policy to move to ASC, ERC, GSAB, and Council. An overhaul of grants policy, which involves a lot of deep thinking, has begun).

Other

- **AGC fees.**
- **Orientation and departmental orientations.**
- **HCAG/GSAP background and thinking about GSAP services.**
- **Provincial advocacy.**
- **Committee replenishment.**
- Deep thought on **student financial aid structures** at the U of A.
- Preparing for the opening of the application period of the **Alberta Graduate Citizenship Award**.

- **Review of the 2014-2015 Academic Calendar** as it relates to GSA operations.
- Several **Board policies in draft** and **forward thinking about the Early Call for Talent**.
- **Social Media:** Facebook = 170 likes (up 11 from last week), Twitter = 87 followers (up 4 from last week).

Week in Review – Office Operations:

- Assisting with several research projects (ombudservice history, policies on duty to accommodate, etc).
- **Assistance with orientations** and the **GSA Media Tracker**.
- **Assisting the NoC with filling a number of vacancies** (FGSR Council, Award Selection Committee, etc).
- Assisting with the **elections and referenda bylaws and policy review** and with the processing of **grants and awards applications**.
- Assisting with preparations for the opening of the application period of the **Alberta Graduate Citizenship Award**.

Executive Director, Director of Operations, and Associate Director Report to the GSA Board, September 11, 2013

Dear All,

Week in Review – Strategic:

The following have issues have dominated management's attention in the past week:

- **Bylaw and Policy Review (Editorial:** several editorial changes are planned such as combining bylaws and policy into one document and forward thinking about alternate formatting and **Substantive:** Ellen is re-reading bylaws and policy cover-to-cover for conflicts (eg Standing Orders) and work on fixing these is beginning. Ellen, Heather, and Courtney have developed a timeline for revisions to elections and referenda bylaws and policy and awards policy to move to ASC, ERC, GSAB, and Council. An overhaul of grants policy, which involves a lot of deep thinking, has begun).

Other

- **AGC fees.**
- **Orientation** (nearly 300 students attended the info fair and about 235 attended the presentation) **and departmental orientations** (30 departments) – **the GSA got some great feedback from Civil and Environmental Engineering and Biological Sciences (and other departments).**
- **Provincial advocacy.**
- Forums on **financial aid for part-time students.**

- **Conversations with GSAP on services** and deep thought on **student financial aid structures** at the U of A.
- **Disbursement of funds for councillor remuneration** (report to follow).
- Preparing for the opening of the application period of the **Alberta Graduate Citizenship Award**.
- Several **Board policies in draft** and **forward thinking about the Early Call for Talent**.
- **Social Media**: Facebook = 183 likes (up 13 from last week), Twitter = 98 followers (up 11 from last week).

Week in Review – Office Operations:

- Assisting with several research projects (ombudservice history, policies on duty to accommodate, etc).
- **GSA Media Tracker**.
- Assistance with forums on **financial aid for part-time students** and preparations for the opening of the application period of the **Alberta Graduate Citizenship Award**.

Assisting the NoC with filling a number of vacancies (FGSR Council, Award Selection Committee, etc) and assisting with the **elections and referenda bylaws and policy review**.

Executive Director, Director of Operations, and Associate Director Report to the GSA Board, September 18, 2013

Dear All,

The following have issues have dominated management's attention in the past week:

Strategic:

- **Bylaw and Policy Review (Editorial)**: several editorial changes are planned such as combining bylaws and policy into one document and forward thinking about alternate formatting and **Substantive**: Ellen is re-reading bylaws and policy cover-to-cover for conflicts (eg Standing Orders) and work on fixing these is beginning. Ellen, Heather, and Courtney have developed a timeline for revisions to elections and referenda bylaws and policy and awards policy to move to ERC, GSAB, and Council. An overhaul of grants policy, which involves a lot of deep thinking, has begun and drafts are in progress).
- Several **Board policies in draft** and **forward thinking about the Early Call for Talent**.
- Thinking on the **next stage of the DLI** and the **upcoming Take Back the Term**.
- **AGC fees and provincial advocacy**.

Other

- **IGNITE student forums with government.**
- **Orientation** (nearly 300 students attended the info fair and about 235 attended the presentation) **and departmental orientations** (30 departments) – **the GSA got some great feedback and debrief sessions to plan next year's rollout.**
- **Grants review and processing** (\$38,548 remaining for PDAs and 162 applications submitted, \$13,166 remaining for CCGs and 30 applications submitted, \$25,690 remaining for EBs and 8 applications submitted, \$1,841 remaining for ASGAs and 2 applications submitted).
- Forums on **financial aid for part-time students.**
- **Disbursement of funds for councillor remuneration** (report to follow).
- Preparing for the opening of the application period of the **Alberta Graduate Citizenship Award.**
- **Social Media:** Facebook = 194 likes (up 11 from last week), Twitter = 105 followers (up 7 from last week).

Week in Review – Office Operations:

- Assisting with several research projects (enrolment policy, academic bullying, etc) and compiling the **GSA Media Tracker.**
- Assistance with forums on **financial aid for part-time students** and preparations for the opening of the application period of the **Alberta Graduate Citizenship Award.**

Assisting the NoC with filling a number of vacancies (FGSR Council, ASC, BFC, etc) and assisting with the **elections and referenda bylaws and policy review.**

Question 1 – submitted by Councillor Kristian Jaegar (Pharmacology): Has the GSA taken a stand on the matter of international differential fees (other than having intense consultations with graduate students, referenced last meeting)? If so, what is this position?

Answer to Question 1 from GSA President Brent Epperson: Our stance on this issue is really dependent on what the University administration chooses to do going forward. We have made it clear to them, both in discussions and in the white paper that was authored following the tuition forums, that we are not in favour of across the board, beyond CPI, increases to fees, including international differential fees. The only way we would consider an increase to international fees is if the increase went to providing more services for international students. Our position regarding fee increases, recently submitted University senior administration is that:

Based upon input from graduate students and departmental GSAs from all faculties, the GSA opposes across-the-board graduate student tuition increases beyond CPI, any international tuition differential increases beyond CPI, any new market-modifiers, and any new mandatory non-instructional fees that do not result from a new regulatory framework negotiated between the University of Alberta administration and the GSA. This will remain the GSA's position until additional consultations with the graduate student community and discussions in the GSA Board and Council take place.

We know the University administration is considering increases to tuition and fees and is also waiting for confirmation from government on some budget issues, but this is all of the information that we have for now. This may seem like a reactive position instead of a proactive one but I can assure you the GSA has done its best to be proactive in our conversations with administration and government. To this end, we have invited the Acting Provost and Vice-President (Academic), Martin Ferguson-Pell to attend the September 23, 2013 meeting of the GSA Council to answer questions directly from graduate students. Councillors and all of the forum participants have also received the material which we submitted recently to the University and it is also included in my report.

Question 2 – submitted by Councillor Kristian Jaegar (Pharmacology): Will the GSA formally complain through the right channels about the communication process around the change in stipend payments that left graduate students with a pay cheque surprise last month right before tuition is due?

Answer to Question 2 from GSA President Brent Epperson: For some background on the changes referenced in the question: the timing of the payment schedule for student scholarships was not working on an administrative front, so Payroll Operations aligned those payments with salary payments. Payroll Operations had spoken to us about these changes, and they told us in August (in a meeting of the GSA Board) that they would be distributing the new information to all students through their HR email distribution list. A memo was circulated to this list (which included administrators in individual departments) in August. However, we received notification late last week indicating that the information had not been as widely disseminated as it should have been. We immediately ensured that the information was included in the GSA Newsletter that was circulated on Friday, September 13, 2013. In retrospect, we at the GSA should have been more proactive in communicating these changes as it affected our constituents, but we could not have foreseen that the information would fall through the cracks. This is definitely a learning opportunity for both the GSA and Payroll Operations in terms of how we manage and disseminate information, and we will continue to work closely with Payroll Operations managers to ensure that communication to students is consistent and timely. We apologize to any students who were affected. We would also like to note that we have invited Wayne Patterson from Payroll Operations will attend our September Council meeting to discuss these changes directly with Councillors.