

GSA Council Meeting AGENDA

Monday, March 17, 2014 at 6:00 pm

Telus 1-34

A light, vegetarian dinner will be served at 5:15 pm at Telus 1-34.

In accordance with the Standing Orders of Council, **substantive material** (the bulk of agenda materials) is sent to all Council members at least one week prior to the date of the meeting to give members abundant time to review. Any additional substantive material received after this mailing will be emailed as soon as possible.

Reports from committees, Directly-Elected Officers, and management are emailed the Friday before a Monday meeting so that the content is as current as possible.

OPEN SESSION

1. Roll Call
2. Approval of the 17 March 2014 Agenda
3. Approval of the Minutes from the 24 February 2014 GSA Council meeting
Attachments:
 - Minutes from the 24 February 2014 GSA Council meeting
4. 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*)

Attached Numbered Pages

3.0 - 3.11

Presentations and Councillor Announcements

5. 2014-2015 Provincial Budget and University of Alberta Priorities
Brent Epperson (GSA President) will present the guest and the item.
Guest: Carl Amrhein (University of Alberta Provost and Vice-President (Academic))
Presentation will begin at 6:15 pm.
6. Councillor Announcements

Open Session: Action Items, Elections, Appointments, Special Business

7. 2014 General Election Results: To Receive For Information for Purposes of Transferring Banking Signing Authority

Brent Epperson (GSA President) will present the item.

Attachments:

- Outline of Issue: 2014 General Election Results

7.0

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

Reports

9. President

- i. President's Report
- ii. GSA Board
- iii. Budget and Finance Committee
- iv. Governance Committee

To Be Distributed
To Be Distributed
To Be Distributed
To Be Distributed

- a) Nominating Committee

- i. Nominating Committee Report (**presented by Lacey Fleming**)

To Be Distributed

10. Vice-President Academic

- i. Vice-President Academic's Report

To Be Distributed

11. Vice-President Student Services

- i. Vice-President Student Services' Report
- ii. Student Affairs Advisory Committee (joint chair: Vice-President External) (**no meetings this reporting period**)

To Be Distributed

12. Vice-President External

- i. Vice-President External's Report
- ii. Awards Selection Committee (**no meetings this reporting period**)

To Be Distributed

13. Vice-President Labour

- i. Vice-President Labour's Report
- ii. Negotiating Committee (**no meetings this reporting period, meeting expected to be scheduled soon**)
- iii. Labour Relations Committee (**no meetings this reporting period**)

To Be Distributed

14. Senator

- i. Senator's Report

To Be Distributed

15. Speaker

- i. Speaker's Report

To Be Distributed

16. Chief Returning Officer

- i. Chief Returning Officer's Report
- ii. Elections and Referenda Committee

To Be Distributed
To Be Distributed

17. GSA Management

- i. Executive Director's Report

To Be Distributed

Question Period

18. Written Questions

19. Oral Questions

Adjournment

GSA Council Meeting CONSOLIDATED AGENDA

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Telus 1-34

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Presentations and Councilor Announcements

5. 2014-2015 Provincial Budget and University of Alberta Priorities
Brent Epperson (GSA President) will present the guest and the item.
Guest: Carl Amrhein (University of Alberta Provost and Vice-President (Academic)) and Mazi Shirvani (Vice-Provost and Dean of the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research)
Presentation will begin at 6:15 pm.
6. Councilor Announcements

Attached Numbered
Pages

3.0 - 3.11*
**previously distributed*

Open Session: Action Items, Elections, Appointments, Special Business

7. 2014 General Election Results: To Receive For Information for Purposes of Transferring Banking Signing Authority

Brent Epperson (GSA President) will present the item.

Attachments:

- Outline of Issue: 2014 General Election Results

7.0*

**previously distributed*

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

Reports

9. President

- i. President's Report **9.0**
- ii. GSA Board **9.1**
- iii. Budget and Finance Committee **(no meetings this reporting period)**
- iv. Governance Committee **9.2**

- a) Nominating Committee

- i. Nominating Committee Report **(presented by Lacey Fleming)** **9.3 - 9.4**

10. Vice-President Academic

- i. Vice-President Academic's Report **10.0**

11. Vice-President Student Services

- i. Vice-President Student Services' Report **11.0 - 11.1**
- ii. Student Affairs Advisory Committee (joint chair: Vice-President External) **(no meetings this reporting period)**

12. Vice-President External

- i. Vice-President External's Report **12.0**
- ii. Awards Selection Committee **(no meetings this reporting period)**

13. Vice-President Labour

- i. Vice-President Labour's Report **13.0 - 13.1**
- ii. Negotiating Committee **(no meetings this reporting period, meeting expected to be scheduled soon)**
- iii. Labour Relations Committee **(no meetings this reporting period)**

14. Senator

- i. Senator's Report **(no written report, will report orally)**

15. Speaker

- i. Speaker's Report **(none at this time)**

16. Chief Returning Officer

- i. Chief Returning Officer's Report (**no written report, will report orally**)
- ii. Elections and Referenda Committee (**no meetings this reporting period**)

17. GSA Management

- i. Executive Director's Report

17.0 - 17.5

Question Period

18. Written Questions

19. Oral Questions

Adjournment

Meeting MINUTES
24 February 2014
GSA Council Meeting

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

IN ATTENDANCE:

Brent Epperson (President)	Virginia Pimmett (Cell Biology)	Sarah Vela (Humanities Computing)	Jennifer Crawford (Phys Ed and Rec)
Colin More (VP Academic)	Tinu Abraham (Chem & Materials Eng)	Luciana D S Cavalcante (Lab Medicine & Pathology)	Ruijia Wang (Physics)
Monty Bal (VP Labour)	Zhendong Li (Chemistry)	Solomon Aomateng (Law)	Mike Chiu (Physiology)
Hasin Haroon (VP Student Life)	Chad Iverson (Chemistry)	Gooneshwaree Beesoon (SLIS)	Emrah Keskin (Poli Sci)
Megha Bajaj (VP Student Services)	Jeremy Wohland (Civil and Enviro Eng)	Michael Akinwumi (Math & Stats Sciences)	Jiyun Chung (Psychiatry)
Daniel Prins (Speaker)	Yulia Riabko (Comm & Tech)	Vanessa Carias (Medical Genetics)	Allison Hahn (Psychology)
Roy Coulthard (Senator/Deputy Speaker)	Pengfei Wang (Comp Lit)	Ninad Mehta (Med. Microbiology & Immunology)	Ruojng Zhou (Psychology)
Nathan Andrews (Councillor-at-Large)	Leanne Labossière (Earth & Atmos Sci)	Axel P Trujillo (MLCS)	Tharsini Sivananthajothy (Public Health)
Shiv Vembadi (Councillor-at-Large)	Laura Brin (Earth & Atmos Sci)	Micaela Santiago (Nursing)	Alison Murata (Renewable Resources)
Richard Zhao (Councillor-at-Large/Interim Deputy RO)	Hasriadi Masalam (Ed Policy Studies)	Oksana Zimka (Nursing)	Curtis Rollins (Res Econ and Enviro Sociology)
Qiang Li (Councillor-at-Large)	Amanda Radil (Ed Psych)	Chelsea Gordon (Occupational Therapy)	Sarah Prescott (Res Econ and Enviro Sociology)
Lacey Fleming (Anthro & Vice-Chair Nominating Cmte)	Sulya Fenichel (Elementary Ed)	Dylan Breitreutz (Oncology)	Kerry Rose (Secondary Ed)
Jennifer Wang (Biochem)	Amanda Daignault (English & Film Studies)	Antoinette Nguyen (Pediatrics)	Susan Cake (Sociology)
Michele DuVal (Bio Sci)	Eve Robidoux-Descary (Fac Saint-Jean)	Luis Morales (Pharmacology)	Kelsi Barkway (Sociology)
Patricia Leighton (Bio Sci)	Sumit Mandal (Human Ecology)	Emily Douglas (Philosophy)	Myriam Bernier (Speech Path and Audiology)
Claire Deng (Business PhD)			

GUESTS: Rebecca Ponting (Registered Psychologist, Mental Health Centre - Triffo Hall Satellite Office)

The meeting was called to order at 6:05 pm.

Roll Call

1. Roll Call of Council Members in Attendance

Approval of Agenda**2. Approval of the 24 February, 2014 Consolidated Agenda**

Members had before them the 24 February, 2014 Consolidated Agenda, which had been previously distributed on 21 February, 2014.

R Coulthard MOVED to approve the Agenda. SECONDED by Q Li.

Motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Approval of Minutes**3. Minutes****i. Minutes from the 20 January, 2014 GSA Council meeting**

Members had before them the 20 January, 2014 GSA Council Minutes, which had been previously distributed on 14 February, 2014.

- Councilors noted errors in the attendance table of the minutes to be amended.

R Coulthard MOVED to approve the amended Minutes. SECONDED by A Daignault.

Motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Changes in Council Membership**4. Changes in Council Membership****i. Introduction of New Councilors**

This was the first meeting for a number of Councilors: D Beitzkreutz (Oncology), M Chiu (Physiology), and E Keskin (Political Science).

ii. Farewell to Departing Councilors

This was the last meeting for one Councilor: S Vela (Humanities Computing).

Presentations and Councilor Announcements**5. Mental Health Center: Satellite Office in Triffo Hall, Introduction to Registered Psychologist Becky Ponting**

C More introduced the item and the guest, Becky Ponting (Registered Psychologist, Mental Health Centre - Triffo Hall Satellite Office). C More noted the the U of A has a Mental Health Centre based in SUB, and the GSA has been advocating for a long time to have a satellite office for graduate students in Triffo Hall. That office opened in the fall.

B Ponting spoke about the Mental Health Center Satellite Office in Triffo Hall and raised the following points:

- The Mental Health Centre is part of University Wellness Services, and has psychiatrists, psychologists, students, and interns on staff. Altogether they provide between 8,000 and 10,000 hours of direct client services each year;
- Services include individual consultations, group counseling and support sessions, a graduate support group, and other sessions on personal and academic issues;
- Services are confidential and are provided at no cost to students, expect a one-time \$20 materials fee for group sessions;
- The top presenting concerns seen by the Mental Health Centre are depression, anxiety, and relationships issues. Suicidal and self-harm thoughts are reported by 16% of users;
- Graduate students have difficulties with perfectionism; they may feel like they are failing despite measurable successes. They also suffer from procrastination, and the missed deadlines and other issues that go along with it;
- Graduate students also face difficulties from a lack of structure, firm deadlines or firm expectations; rumours about department policies that may or may not be accurate can also affect graduate students; and, career pressures and anxiety about time/money investments in education as they relate to future job security;

- There is often a stigma related to mental conditions. The competitive nature of graduate programs may also make students afraid to self-identify if they are suffering;
- In order to gain access to individual or group services, or referral to off-campus services, students need to attend an initial consultation. These consultations are conducted at the main Mental Health Centre in SUB (2-600). Intake happens twice per day on a walk-in basis; students can call the office in the morning to find out what time intake is happening that day (780-492-5205);
- Students are always welcome to contact B Ponting directly (780-492-5637, or email ponting@ualberta.ca). She is available for consultation if you or anyone in your department has concerns about a student; *and*
- B Ponting is happy to come to departments to provide a presentation on identifying and referring students in distress; B Ponting can be contact directly for more information.

Following the presentation there were a number of questions:

- M Santiago asked whom students should contact if they want further types of counseling groups beyond what is already available? B Ponting replied that you can contact her directly with suggestions or questions about any mental health topic;
- C Iverson asked if there were any plans to have initial consultations in Triffo Hall? B Ponting replied that the Mental Health Centre is looking into offering that service, but currently cannot because the software they use during initial consultations is not available away from the main Mental Health Centre. C Iverson stated that it makes it difficult if you want to be private as a graduate student, to have to go to SUB for the initial consultation. B Ponting replied that the Mental Health Centre is also looking into offering consultations by phone;
- H Haroon stated that R Overall had informed GSA Council that consultations were already available over the phone. B Ponting replied that it is being worked on but it is not currently offered; *and*
- N Mehta stated that students in his department have had long waiting times for services through the Mental Health Clinic, and asked what is being done about the length of waiting times. B Ponting replied that students are normally referred out when the facility is at capacity, but otherwise generally get an appointment within two weeks. N Mehta elaborated that the student in question initially had to cancel an appointment off-campus, and after that was given a three-month waiting period to get back in. B Ponting replied that the Mental Health Centre does have finite services and are looking to expand. Now that her office is open, normally graduate students are referred to her instead of being referred off-campus.

6. Councilor Announcements

Q Li **MOVED** to add discussion of the number of candidates in the general election and the issue of term limits to the Agenda. M Akinwumi **SECOND**. No other Councilors had points to raise regarding this issue and D Prins suggested that it might be better for Q Li to submit his suggestions in writing to the CRO and that they could be included in the CRO report and raised at ERC.

Motion WITHDRAWN.

Action Items, Elections, Appointments, Special Business

7. Elections

i. **Nominees for GSA Standing Committees: LRC**

Members had before them the Nominees for GSA Standing Committees: LRC which had been previously distributed on 21 February, 2014. L Fleming presented the item.

MOTION BEFORE COUNCIL: 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 Labour Relations Committee. L Fleming **MOVED**. R Coulthard **Second**.

Motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

ii. **Nominees for the Advisory Search Committee for the President**

Members had before them the Nominees for the Advisory Search Committee for the President and the Advisory Search Committee for the President Terms of Reference. L Fleming presented the item, and raised the following points:

- The GSA NoC advertised the item to graduate students and to GSA Council. The deadline to receive nominations was noon on 21 February 2014. The NoC decided to refer the vote to council because there were three individuals nominated;
and
- GSA Council is asked to vote anonymously by paper ballot for the graduate student who will serve on the Advisory Search Committee for the President. As neutral parties, B Ponting and E Schoeck will count the votes.

Members of GSA Council proceeded to vote by paper ballot; B Ponting and E Schoeck retired from Council Chambers to tally the votes.

8. Grant Application Policy and Information: Proposed Revisions to GSA Policy

Members had before them an outline of issue, a cover letter from the GSA President, Grant Application Policy and Information: Triple Column of Proposed Changes (Current, Proposed, Rationale), and Grant Application Policy and Information: Revised Policy if Proposed Changes Approved which had been previously distributed on 14 February 2014, and appeared on the Agenda as Item 11.

MOTION BEFORE COUNCIL: That the GSA Council **APPROVE**, on the unanimous recommendation of the GSA Board, the proposed revisions to GSA Policy on **Grant Application and Information**, as outlined in the attached triple-column document, effective April 1, 2014.

M Bajaj presented the item and raised the following points:

- An ongoing project of the GSA is to implement better funding infrastructure and to streamline the application process so that it is a better experience for graduate students;
- Editorial changes were made to fix punctuation and clarify wording in the current policy, and those changes were approved by the GSA Governance Committee in January via email vote; *and*
- More substantive changes are before GSA Council today including the following;
- Changing the wording for the Professional Development Award to make it more clear that these are to be used to fund research trips directly related to a student's academic program - to attend conferences, research trips, or travel related to collaborative work;
 - Creation of an additional funding period; currently there are three four-month periods. With the change there will be four three-month periods, which will allow more students to apply and receive awards during each period;
 - Elimination of the provision to submit PDA and ASGA applications up to 6 weeks after travel or the date of their event. Now students will have to apply 6 weeks before (this change is meant to eliminate the "dead zone" problem of people applying for awards after their travel near the end of funding periods, when applications had been closed due to lack of funds; by the time the next application period is open, they fall outside the 6 week limit);
 - Reducing the contingency fund from 10% to 5%, to make more money available for graduate students; *and*
 - Increasing the amount of available emergency bursaries, from \$1,500 to \$2,000 maximum because students in emergency situations usually need more than \$1,500.

Following the presentation there were a number of questions:

- K Rose asked what the contingency fund is used for? M Bajaj replied that it is an amount held back each funding period as a reserve that sees the GSA through the period between fiscal years when money has not yet been received from the university through collective bargaining to give to students. The contingency allows the GSA to continue keep applications open during that period;

3.4

- R Coulthard asked M Bajaj to confirm that the changes to the PDA wording will in no way be detrimental to students in course-based program going to conferences that are not research-based? M Bajaj replied that as long as the conference or research opportunity is related to their program it is eligible;
- C Iverson asked what guidance is available for what is and is not “directly related” to a program since it sounds subjective? M Bajaj replied that as long as the intent of travel is related to your field of study or research it is applicable. The change in wording is because in the past the GSA has received applications from students wanting to take courses that are not related to their program;
- C Iverson asked how often students apply to attend conferences that are unrelated to what they study? M Bajaj replied that the GSA does not receive a lot of those. C Thomas elaborated that the GSA also asks a student’s supervisor or program advisor to confirm that the travel is related to their research/study;
- N Andrews asked what the mechanism was for requesting confirmation from supervisors? C Thomas replied that the GSA emails the supervisor directly informing them that the student has applied for the award and requesting a return email confirmation that the trip is related to their program;
- M Bal stated that the GSA learnt at some departmental orientations that students apply for the awards to go to courses that are unrelated to their program and that the changes are meant to stave off use of these funds in that manner;
- L Brin asked if the yearly budget for the awards changes with the addition of a fourth granting period? M Bajaj replied that the change is intended to fund more students in each period, and that the amount of money available depends on what the GSA receives through collective bargaining;
- C Iverson proposed amending the clause in PDA policy regarding relatedness to an academic program to be more specific, arguing that some supervisors may sign off on conferences and academic events that are not directly related;
- D Prins asked if C Iverson had specific wording to propose and asked if it was being proposed that the policy be referred back to rework the wording of the clause for supervisor confirmation;
- H Haroon asked why the amendment was requested, stating that the systems works the way it is worded currently and C Iverson replied that the current determination is based on supervisor approval, and wondered how many applications will be denied if the policy is changed;
- H Hogg stated that the GSA relies on the integrity of the supervisor to attest that the trip is directly related to the student’s research. No one at the GSA is in a position to judge the travel, and that it is a tradeoff between being efficient and determining the truth of the application;
- J Chung stated that supervisors probably do not want students wasting time on trips not related to their field and L Labossière stated her opinion that a supervisor is the best person to confirm if a trip is related to a student’s field;
- M Bajaj stated that the proposed changes will be observed over the next year to see how they work, and if there are problem areas they can be brought back to GSA Council for further revision;
- R Coulthard stated that he is against the policy going back for further revision now because the system where it relies on the supervisor has been in place for almost four years now, and there are not many problems with the system. The supervisor confirmation does not need to be changed as it is not being newly introduced here and C Iverson withdrew his suggestion; *and*
- S Vela asked how the change to not allow retroactive applications will fix the “dead zone” and noted that it seems like it might make it worse. M Bajaj replied that students will be able to apply before their event rather than waiting to apply after and not being able to because funding has run out, and then they are past the six week period when the next funding period opens. S Vela stated that she sees potential issues with removing the ability to apply retroactively but that the GSA should try it and see what happens.

MOTION: That the GSA Council **APPROVE**, on the unanimous recommendation of the GSA Board, the proposed revisions to GSA Policy on **Grant Application and Information**, as outlined in the attached triple-column document, effective April 1, 2014. M Bajaj **MOVED**. L Fleming **Second**.

Motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Following the presentation of 'Grant Application Policy and Information: Proposed Revisions to GSA Policy' Speaker D Prins announce the result of the paper ballot election for the graduate student who will serve on the Advisory Search Committee for the President; B Epperson was elected to the position.

9. Athletics and Recreation Fee: Proposed Increase

Members had before them confidential documents relating to the item which had been previously distributed confidentially on 21 February, 2014, and appeared on the Agenda as Item 8.

J Crawford MOVED to go into Closed Session. SECONDED by R Zhao.

Motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

B Epperson MOVED to go out of Closed Session. SECONDED by C More.

Motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

After moving into Open Session, the following points were raised in discussion:

- S Cake stated that binding the GSA Board to a vote outside of the consultation that has been done already is not respectful to the consultation process;
and
- N Mehta expressed concerns regarding the democratic process of consultation and any potential vote on the issue.

R Coulthard MOVED that the GSA Council VOTE, using the same question recently used by the GSA Board in its non-binding, consultative referendum, to either support or oppose the proposed Increase to the Athletics and Recreation Fee. SECONDED by N Andrews.

Motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

- S Vela enquired about the status of a Motion previously put before Council in Closed Session and C More replied that the reality is, whether or not the motion is binding, the GSA Board will likely use the result as their position, because GSA Council represents the graduate student voice.

MOTION: That the GSA Council **VOTE** on the following question regarding the proposed increase to the Athletics and Recreation Fee.

Background to the Proposed Non-Binding Consultative Referendum Question:

The Athletics and Recreation Fee (ARF) is a Mandatory Non-Instructional Fee (MNIF) levied by the University of Alberta and paid by every on-campus undergraduate and graduate student. In addition to funding from the university, donors, sponsors and program revenues, the ARF supplies revenue that enables the university to provide recreational and interuniversity athletic programs as well as facility access to students. The ARF revenues will be used to cover the costs of professional staff who manage the aforementioned programs.

Any increase to the ARF would be accompanied by the following recommendations:

- No increases to student user fees for existing intramural programs for a three-year period, and no increases to student user fees for existing fitness programs or services for a one-year period.
- Given that students will be paying a fee for the Physical Activity and Wellness Centre, assurance will be given that students will not be paying two fees for the same services/access.

In addition, the Faculty of Physical Education and Recreation has offered to provide the following benefits to accompany the proposed increase to the ARF:

- "Free admission to all regularly scheduled Golden Bears and Pandas events excluding Canada West and CIS playoffs and special events.
- 10% student discounts on merchandise from the Golden Bears and Pandas store.

- Facility access at no charge for two special events per semester sponsored by the SU and/or GSA (subject to SU and GSA participation in the required facility scheduling timeline and process).
- Two (2) presentations in the Spring/Summer and Fall semesters, respectively, by the Faculty of Physical Education and Recreation to the GSA Council and the Students' Union Council to present and explain the budget for the ARF, and differentiate use of the ARF from use of the Physical Activity and Wellness Centre fee."

The ARF is currently \$64.92 per semester for full-time students and \$32.46 per semester for part-time students.

Question:

Given the explanation, stipulations, and benefits described above, do you support an increase in the Athletics and Recreation Fee of \$16.38 per semester for full-time students and \$8.19 per semester for part-time students?
S Vela **MOVED.** L Labossière **Second.**

Motion CARRIED. 33 In Favour. 8 Opposed. 10 Abstentions.

10. Annual Operating and Capital Budgets AND Five-Year Budget/Business Plan

Members had before them an outline of issue, cover letter from the GSA President, the Annual Operating and Capital Five-Year Budget Business Plan (2014-2015 to 2018-2019), the Operating Budget Narrative 2014-2015, the Restricted and Other Funding Five-Year Budget Business Plan (2014-2015 to 2018-2019), and the GSA 2014-2015 Restricted and Other Funding Budget and Expenditure Report (Narrative), which had been previously distributed on 14 February, 2014, and appeared on the Agenda as Item 9.

MOTION 1 BEFORE COUNCIL: That the GSA Council **APPROVE**, having been unanimously recommended by the GSA BFC and the GSA Board, the Annual Operating and Capital Budget (2014-2015) (found on pages 9.4 to 9.12 in the attached material in the "2014-2015 Budget for Approval" *column bordered in red on each page*) and the Restricted and Other Funding Budget (2014-2015) (found on page 9.29 in the attached material in the "2014-2015 Budget for Approval" *column bordered in red*).

MOTION 2 BEFORE COUNCIL: That the GSA Council **RECEIVE FOR INFORMATION** (having been reviewed and advised upon by the GSA BFC and unanimously recommended by the GSA Board) the Operating and Capital Five-Year Budget/Business Plan (2014-2015 to 2018-2019) and Restricted and Other Funding Five-Year Budget/Business Plan (2014-2015 to 2018-2019) (pages 9.4 to 9.12 and 9.29 in the attached material).

B Epperson, E Schoeck, S Ball, and D Sheikh presented the item and raised the following points:

- B Epperson stated that the GSA Board as a team are happy with the budget;
- E Schoeck stated that the GSA feels they have a very good system of checks and balances in the budget process. The composition of BFC includes three graduate students who do not hold political office and only two of the Directly-Elected Officers, so if the three graduate students looked at the budget and thought something was off they could out-vote the Directly-Elected Officers;
- What GSA Council has in front of them is both BFC and the GSA Board putting forward unanimous recommendations that GSA Council approve the budget. This allows for two different recommendations, if necessary;
- The people that work on the budget have the experience and qualifications to do what they're doing; there was period of time where the GSA did not have that. It is a very rigorous system now so GSA Council can feel confident in the budget. E Schoeck then highlighted some key points in the budget;
- When AGC dissolved the GSA got its contribution back and that is why there is extra revenue for this year;
- The salaries for staff and management are benchmarked to the market and our benefits are low compared to the U of A;
- There is a photocopier that is leased for \$5,000/year, and the GSA only makes \$500/year from the graduate students who use it. That lease is up in 2015, and the \$5,000 will be put to other priorities;
- Graduate student fees pay to run the GSA because the *PSLA* says that the GSA is a corporation and has to collect fees;

- If the university decided at BoG to reduce graduate student enrollment by 30%, the GSA would be in trouble so we watch enrollment carefully;
- What is before GSA Council is the proposed budget for next year with 0% growth in enrolment, a 1% CPI increase to the fee, and a 1% inflation to costs;
- Also presented is the five-year business plan for the GSA;
- The GSA has a good governance structure, with qualified people looking after the finances, and you receive quarterly reports on how the money is being spent;
- The GSA has a stringent policy on travel, and our travel expenses are posted on our website;
- There is money in the bank, a modest capital budget, we have collapsed a few budget lines, and the biggest increase is for advocacy; *and*
- Overall the GSA is in very good shape.

There were no questions.

MOTION 1: That the GSA Council **APPROVE**, having been unanimously recommended by the GSA BFC and the GSA Board, the Annual Operating and Capital Budget (2014-2015) (found on pages 9.4 to 9.12 in the attached material in the “2014-2015 Budget for Approval” **column bordered in red on each page**) and the Restricted and Other Funding Budget (2014-2015) (found on page 9.29 in the attached material in the “2014-2015 Budget for Approval” **column bordered in red**). B Epperson **MOVED**. M Bal **Second**.

Motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

MOTION 2: That the GSA Council **RECEIVE FOR INFORMATION** (having been reviewed and advised upon by the GSA BFC and unanimously recommended by the GSA Board) the Operating and Capital Five-Year Budget/Business Plan (2014-2015 to 2018-2019) and Restricted and Other Funding Five-Year Budget/Business Plan (2014-2015 to 2018-2019) (pages 9.4 to 9.12 and 9.29 in the attached material). B Epperson **MOVED**. M Bal **Second**.

Motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

11. GSA 2012-2013 Budget and Expenditure (Quarterly) Financial Report

Members had before them the outline of issue and the GSA 2013-2014 Budget and Expenditure (Quarterly) Report High Level Summary, which had been previously distributed on 14 February, 2014, and appeared on the Agenda as Item 10.

MOTION BEFORE COUNCIL: That the GSA Council **RECEIVE FOR INFORMATION** the GSA 2013-2014 Budget and Expenditure (Quarterly) Report (pages 10.1 – 10.2 in the attached material).

B Epperson, E Schoeck, S Ball, and D Sheikh presented the item and B Epperson noted that GSA Council had just heard that the GSA is in great financial shape, and that the Quarterly Financials reflect that.

There were no questions.

MOTION: That the GSA Council **RECEIVE FOR INFORMATION** the GSA 2013-2014 Budget and Expenditure (Quarterly) Report (pages 10.1 - 10.2 in the attached material). B Epperson **MOVED**. M Bal **Second**.

Motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

12. Special Business (none at this time)

Reports

13. President

i. President’s Report:

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 21 February, 2014. The report stood as submitted.

B Epperson MOVED to go into Closed Session. L Fleming Seconded.

Motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

B Epperson MOVED to go out of Closed Session. C More Seconded.

Motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

ii. GSA Board

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 21 February, 2014. The report stood as submitted.

iii. Budget and Finance Committee

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 21 February, 2014. The report stood as submitted.

iv. Governance Committee

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 21 February, 2014. The report stood as submitted.

a) Nominating Committee

i. Nominating Committee Report

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 21 February, 2014. The report stood as submitted.

14. Vice-President Academic

i. Vice-President Academic's Report

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 21 February, 2014. The report stood as submitted.

15. Vice-President Student Services

i. Vice-President Student Services' Report

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 21 February, 2014. The report stood as submitted.

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

No meetings this reporting period.

16. Vice-President External

i. Vice-President External's Report

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 21 February, 2014. The report stood as submitted and, in addition, H Haroon made the following comments:

- The GSA's work on both prayer space and flexible leases is moving along, and should be finalized by the end of our terms;
- The GSA has been observing CASA for the past couple of years. It seems to be the best option for federal advocacy, but we want to make sure it is worthwhile before we join; *and*

- H Haroon noted two successful policies advocated for during CASA's advocacy week - vehicle exemptions for assets under Canadian student loans, and permitting all international students can apply for multiple entry visas regardless of home country.

Following the presentation there were two questions:

- R Zhao asked if flexible leases will be applied to new residents only or will current residents be grandfathered in? H Haroon replied that residents who have lived in residence for at least a year will be eligible. The one-year period is to give the U of A some security against people moving in and out too fast. The leases will be implemented from May 2014 onwards, but we are not positive on how it incorporates into existing leases;
and
- A Radil asked if there will be changes made to current leases, or if it will come into effect only when students renew? H Haroon replied that his understanding is that it will apply to current leases, but that the GSA will confirm and advocate for that to be the case if it isn't already.

There were no further questions.

ii. Awards Selection Committee

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 21 February, 2014. The report stood as submitted and, in addition, H Haroon thanked all the GSA ASC members for their excellent work in determining who gets the GSA awards, GSA management and staff for all their work on the GSA Awards, and congratulated GSA councilors who had received awards.

There were no questions.

17. Vice-President Labour

i. Vice-President Labour's Report

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 21 February, 2014. The report stood as submitted and, in addition, M Bal made the following comments:

- M Bal and B Epperson will be presenting to BHRCC 26 February, 2014 and making the case for increased compensation and more funding for graduate students;
- It might be a tough bargaining year because of the budget cuts;
- The Negotiating Committee has made some revisions to the current collective agreement, and will pass those suggestions on to our bargaining counterparts; *and*
- Negotiations should begin in the upcoming weeks.

Following the presentation there was a question:

- C Iverson asked what the revisions are to the collective agreement. M Bal replied that the changes highlight ambiguities in the document, exemptions from vacation or leave, introduce caregiver leave, and remove the requirement of having to have worked for a certain period of time before taking paternity or maternity leave. H Hogg stated that S Cake recommended that the CA include statistics on graduate assistantships and added jury duty leave. M Bal stated that the GSA is asking that they be provided with information on certain things before bargaining to remove some of the information asymmetries that exist.

There were no further questions.

ii. Negotiating Committee

No meetings this reporting period, meeting expected to be scheduled soon.

iii. Labour Relations Committee

No meetings this reporting period, meeting expected to be scheduled soon.

18. Senator

i. Senator's Report

No report was required at this time. In addition, R Coulthard noted that the Senate Executive will be meeting on 25 February, 2014.

19. Speaker

i. Speaker's Report

No report was required at this time.

20. Chief Returning Officer

i. Chief Returning Officer's Report

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 21 February, 2014. The report stood as submitted.

ii. Elections and Referenda Committee

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 21 February, 2014. The report stood as submitted and, in addition, R Zhao made the following comments:

- The GSA General Election will happen from 10:00 am 4 March 2014 to 10:00 am 6 March 2014;
- Councilors are asked to encourage students in your department to vote; *and*
- The CRO would like to thank Speaker and GSA staff and management for helping with the elections process.

There were no questions.

21. GSA Management

iii. Executive Director's Report

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 21 February, 2014. The report stood as submitted and, in addition, E Schoeck made the following comments:

- Councilors will shortly be receiving a survey asking about how Councilors communicate with other students in their departments, the GSA Agenda/Handbook, departmental and Faculty orientation opportunities, Council remuneration, and student group registration; *and*
- E Schoeck asked if there were any other topics Councilors think the GSA should be asking GSA Council about.

Following the presentation there were two questions:

- S Vela asked how long Councilors will have to fill out the survey. E Schoeck replied that there is no rush on the survey and that Councilors will be given time to talk to their department colleagues and then respond; *and*

- L Brin suggested that the survey include an opportunity for Councilors to provide any other feedback on the survey.

There were no further questions.

Question Period

22. Written Questions

No written questions were received prior to the meeting.

23. Oral Questions

No questions were asked.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:41 pm.

Outline of Issue (GSA Council)

2014 General Election Results: To Receive For Information For Purposes of Transferring Banking Signing Authority

Suggested Motion for GSA Council:

That the GSA Council **RECEIVE FOR INFORMATION** the results of the 2014 General Election wherein the following graduate students were duly elected as President, Vice-President Academic, Vice-President External, Vice-President Labour, and Vice-President Student Services:

President	Nathan Andrews
Vice-President Academic	Colin More
Vice-President External	Manjeet Chowdhry
Vice-President Labour	Simarjit 'Monty' Bal
Vice-President Student Services	Megha Bajaj

NOTE 1: The 2014 General Elections results were announced by the CRO on 6 March, 2014.

NOTE 2: GSA Council is now asked to *receive for information* the results for the Minutes, because the bank requires that the names of the newly Directly-Elected Officers appear in the Minutes to transfer signing authority effective 1 May, 2014.

Jurisdiction:

GSA Policy, Budget Principles, Practices and Procedures, Section 3.1:

"Signing Authority

- a. *Financial documents related to the Unrestricted Operating Budget requiring signature, including but not limited to cheques and investment instructions, require two (2) signatures: either any two (2) Directly-Elected Officers, or any one (1) Directly-Elected Officer and one Director.*
- b. *The President, at least two (2) Vice-Presidents, and at least two (2) Directors shall each as individuals have authority as signing officers for the GSA.*
- c. *Wherever possible, it is preferable for one of the signatories to be the President."*

GSA Policy, Elections, Section 11.1:

"Upon completion of the ballot count, the CRO shall announce the official results as soon as possible."

**GSA President
Report to Council for March 17, 2014 GSA Council Meeting**

To: GSA Council
From: Brent Epperson
Date: March 14, 2014

Dear Council Colleagues,

With the change in portfolio title from Vice-President Student Life to Vice-President External (approved by GSA Council on January 17, 2014), **several components of the Departmental Liaison Initiative, which were led by the Vice-President Student Services this past year** (although in GSA Policy they fall under the portfolio of the VP External), **will now pass officially into the VP Student Services portfolio. These components include “student groups”, “governance engagement”, “departmental orientations”, and “liaison with departmental graduate student associations”** (as quoted in GSA Policy, Officer Portfolios, 5.1.ii.-v.). **Formal changes to this GSA Policy will come before Council at a future meeting.**

This report reaches you while I am in Charlottetown, PEI, attending the CASA Annual General Meeting from March 14-16, 2014. I will report orally on the meeting at Council.

A list of the meetings I have attended since last Council is attached below, and I welcome any questions you might have on those meetings.

Best,

Brent Epperson, GSA President

Please find below a list of meetings I attended between February 22, 2014 and March 17, 2014:

February 25	BFPC
February 26	BHRCC
February 25	FGSR Council
February 26	Meeting with SU on MNIFs
February 27	Defensive Driving Course
February 28	Campus Food Bank Fundraiser
March 3	Meeting with Dean of FGSR
March 5	GFC Exec
March 6	Meeting with Dean of Students
March 6	GMSA
March 6	Provincial Budget Teleconference
March 7	Meeting with Dan Rizzoli (IAE) Regarding Professional Development
March 7	Launch of Entrepreneurship@UALberta
March 11	Meeting with the Dean of FPER and Director of Athletics
March 14	Board of Governors (via teleconference from Charlottetown, PEI)
March 14-16	CASA

**GSA Governance Committee
Report to Council for March 17, 2014 GSA Council Meeting**

To: GSA Council
From: Brent Epperson
Date: March 14, 2014

Dear Council Colleagues,

As stated in GSA Policy, “the Governance Committee will...make any routine or editorial changes to the governance documents as deemed necessary by the Committee” (GSA Policy Manual, Standing Committees, Section 3, Governance Committee, 3.2.ii). In August 2013 the Governance Committee passed a motion approving **the delegation to the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governance Committee of future approval of “purely editorial” changes.** “Purely editorial” was deemed to include punctuation, italicization of Latin terms, capitalization, spelling, factual errors, font adjustment, and re-numbering.

In consultation with the GSA VP Labour, as Vice-Chair of the Governance Committee (and on the authority delegated by the Governance Committee, as noted above), we approved a purely editorial change to GSA Bylaws to correct a factual error on March 13, 2014. **The editorial change resulted in the removal of a reference indicating that the Board of Governors approving alterations to the GSA membership fee, as this is in conflict with the *Post-Secondary Learning Act* (Section 95(2)(f)), which states “the council of a student organization may make bylaws governing ... in the case of a graduate students association, the maintenance of the association by the levy of membership fees on its members.” **The Board of Governors approves the collection of the fee, rather than the fee itself.****

I would be happy to report further orally.

Sincerely,

Brent Epperson, GSA President and Chair of the GSA Governance Committee

**GSA Board
Report to Council for March 17, 2014 GSA Council Meeting**

To: GSA Council

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

Date: March 17, 2014

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, Director of Services and Governance, Financial Manager, and I will be happy to answer any questions or provide more information at the Council meeting.

26 February, 2014 GSA Board Meeting

Main Agenda Items:

Introduction of Deputy Provost, Dr. Olive Yonge; Enrolment Management Policy and Procedure Changes Update; *and* Survey to GSA Council.

Motions and Agreements:

None at this time.

05 March, 2014 GSA Board Meeting

Presentation from Jonathan Champagne, National Director of CASA; Estimated Expenses Associated with Attendance at the GU15, Canadian GSA Conference, in Waterloo, ON, April 2-4, 2014; *and* External Relations Travel Expenses: Actual Expenses Incurred Through Attendance at the "We Love Laurie" Event (Opportunity for Advocacy with the Liberals) on February 9, 2014.

Motions and Agreements:

That the GSA Board **APPROVE** the estimated expenses for two representatives of the GSA to attend the GU 15 Canadian GSA Conference April 2-4, 2014 in Waterloo, ON, as shown in the attached proposed budget. BE **MOVED**. MeB Seconded. **MOTION CARRIED** unanimously.

BE **MOVED** that the GSA Board **APPROVE** the awarding of a GSA President's Citation to an individual(s) from the attached list of proposed recipients. Seconded by HaH. **MOTION CARRIED** unanimously.

Board Members **AGREED** to post the summary of actual expenses incurred through attendance at the "We Love Laurie" event on the GSA website.

Board Members **AGREED** to allow the graduate student representative on the Festival of Teaching Steering Committee to use one of the GSA's retractable banners for an FOI event.

12 March, 2014 GSA Board Meeting

Main Agenda Items:

TD Insurance Meloche Monnex: Semi-Annual Report.

Motions and Agreements:

BE **MOVED** that the GSA Board **RECEIVE FOR INFORMATION** the attached semi-annual participation report for the period ending December 31, 2013, as provided by TD Meloche Monnex Insurance. Seconded by MeB. **MOTION CARRIED** unanimously.

**GSA Nominating Committee (NoC)
Report to Council for March 17, 2014 GSA Council Meeting**

To: GSA Council
From: Lacey Fleming
Date: March 14, 2014

Dear Council Colleagues,

The report from the GSA Nominating Committee is a summary of discussion/decisions the NoC has made since its last report together with a list of all vacancies filled.

The Bylaw governing the NoC is located in Part V (Standing Committees). Policy governing NoC is found in the GSA Policy Manual, in the sections titled "Nominating" and "Standing Committees." As provided for in its terms of reference, the GSA Nominating Committee (NoC) has been conducting business via e-mail.

Sincerely,

Lacey Fleming, Vice-Chair of the GSA Nominating Committee

Bodies External to the GSA

As noted above, Council has delegated to the NoC the responsibility of filling positions on all committees external to the GSA. Normally, all vacancies are advertised. According to the Policy Manual, "advertising may be waived in instances where, in the NoC's view, it is urgent to fill a vacancy" (GSA Policy Manual, Nominating, 5.2).

1) General Faculties Council Standing Committees

On February 14, 2014 the GSA NoC advertised for graduate student-at-large positions on various GFC Standing Committee for 2014-2015. The GSA NoC reviewed the bios and resumes received, and made the following **recommendations** to the General Faculties Council (GFC) Nominating Committee. **IMPORTANT NOTE:** though the GSA Nominating Committee has recommended these students to the GFC Nominating Committee, **all students must still go through the GFC Nominating Committee Elections Process, since it is the GFC NoC that elects all representatives to these standing committee.**

ACADEMIC PLANNING COMMITTEE (APC): (one graduate student-at-large position). The GSA NoC supports the re-election of the current representative on GFC APC (**Alexander Schlacht** (PhD Program, Cell Biology)), who has expressed interest in a second term.

CAMPUS LAW REVIEW COMMITTEE (CLRC): (two students, either undergraduate or graduate – normally GFC selects one graduate student and one undergraduate student). The GSA NoC supports the re-election of the current representative on GFC CLRC (**Kathy Tang** (PhD Program, Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences)), who has expressed interest in a second term.

COMMITTEE ON THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT (CLE): (one graduate student-at-large position). The GSA NoC supported the re-election of the current representative on GFC CLE (**Kangyi Lou** (MSc Program, Renewable Resources)), who expressed interest in a second term.

UNIVERSITY TEACHING AWARDS COMMITTEE (UTAC): (one graduate student-at-large position). The GSA NoC supports the re-election of the current representative on UTAC (**Jasmin Hirschberg** (PhD Program, Modern Languages and Cultural Studies)), who has expressed interest in a second term.

COUNCIL ON STUDENT AFFAIRS (COSA): (one graduate student-at-large that must be an active member of GFC at the time of their election).

The GSA NoC has recommended **Sukhpreet Tamana** (PhD Program, Educational Psychology) for service on COSA.

2) First Campus Alberta Radio Association (FACRA) Board (one graduate student position)

On February 21, 2014 the GSA NoC advertised for the one non-voting GSA position on the FACRA Board. **One** bio and resume was received before the deadline. **Brea Chouinard (PhD program, Rehabilitation Medicine)** was elected to serve as the GSA's representative on this Board.

3) International Activity Fund for Student Groups Selection Committee (one GSA position)

In consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the GSA Nominating Committee, the 2013-2014 GSA Councillors-at-Large were invited to participate in this committee. **No bios and resumes were received.** Following the CRO's release of results from the 2014 General Election, the NoC emailed newly elected GSA Councillors-at-Large for 2014-2015 to invite nominations. **Three** bios and resumes were received before the deadline. **Saeed Nusri (MSc Program, Chemical and Materials Engineering)** was elected to serve on this committee as the GSA's representative.

**GSA Vice-President Academic
Report to Council for March 17, 2014 GSA Council Meeting**

To: GSA Council
From: Colin More
Date: March 14, 2014

Dear Council Colleagues,

Greetings everyone!

I'm afraid I haven't much to report this time -- not only is university administration continuing to be rather quiet, but I was distracted by my own academic commitments for much of the month. However, there are two items of note.

First, as you are aware, **Carl Amrhein has returned to the position of Provost and Vice-President (Academic)**. He brings a wealth of knowledge on the state of higher education, both nationally and internationally, to the job, and I greatly look forward to working with him in the coming year.

Second, **the provincial budget was released last week**. The bad news is that there have been no notable increases to the Campus Alberta grant, the main pool of funding for the institution. The good news is that there have not been any cuts, either. There are also several smaller pots of targeted funding being injected into the Alberta post-secondary system. While this isn't much in the grand scheme of things, it is a welcome change after the previous budget!

Until next month, happy research!

Sincerely,

Colin More, GSA Vice-President Academic

Please find below a list of meetings I attended between February 25, 2014 and March 17, 2014. I was on Academic Leave from March 3, 2014 to March 10, 2014:

February 25	Enrolment Policy Meeting with the Registrar and the SU VP Academic
February 26	FGSR Council
February 27	Defensive Driving Course
February 28	Campus Food Bank Fundraiser
March 11	Policy Review Committee Meeting
March 13	GFC Exec
March 14	Meeting with Dean of Students
March 17	Meeting with the SU VP Academic
March 17	Meeting with the Dean of FGSR

**Vice-President Student Services
Report to Council for March 17, 2014 GSA Council Meeting**

To: GSA Council
From: Megha Bajaj
Date: March 14, 2014

Dear Council Colleagues,

Hope you are well. I will not be able to attend Council this month, as I will be in Montreal, attending an academic conference.

Below is an update from some of the meetings I attended since last council.

Joint U-Pass Advisory Group Meeting

This is a follow up from my January Council report on the **U-Pass replacement sticker** issue. I, along with student leaders from the SU, NAIT and MacEwan, have had discussions with transit authorities to reduce the replacement cost of U-Pass stickers. We started this discussion a few months back and our initial proposal was to have the first U-Pass replacement sticker free for all students. As you can imagine, all the transit authorities shot down the idea of free replacements. Transit representatives are worried that having a \$0 replacement cost will significantly increase the number of people who currently abuse the system. (Students sell U-Pass stickers on Kijiji! If you don't believe me, try looking for U-Pass stickers on Kijiji. However, please don't buy/sell your U-Pass stickers on Kijiji or elsewhere!!!).

Members of this committee are now **discussing what a lower replacement cost for U-Pass stickers could look like**. ETS is currently gathering information on replacement costs from other municipalities/universities in Canada, which will be shared with the group next month. A **consensus has been reached in the committee that a lower replacement cost should be offered to students**, however, I am not yet sure what the actual 'lower' cost would be. I will update you as we make progress on this issue.

SACIE Workshop on Receiving and Retaining Undergraduate and Graduate International Students

Hasin Haroon (Vice-President External) and I attended the Standing Advisory Council on International Engagement (SACIE) this month. The Registrar's Office and FGSR presented an **overview of U of A international student enrolment trends, including retention data**. The **rate of retention for graduate students was high and overall, the numbers looked good**. As a group we discussed various measures that can be taken to increase retention rates for students at the university and also for improving the international student experience. We particularly discussed having more **professional development opportunities for graduate students, improve programming to help international students integrate into the Canadian culture, and ways to improve the orientation sessions offered by various offices on campus at the beginning of the year**. In addition, we also stressed the importance of providing **services to help students applying for their Canadian Permanent Residency, accessible prayer space on campus, and also the importance of consistent messaging from various units across campus**.

Please feel free to drop me an email if you have any questions on my report or otherwise.

Sincerely,

Megha Bajaj, Vice-President Student Services

Please find below a list of meetings I attended between February 25, 2014 and March 17, 2014. I am on Academic Leave from March 14, 2014 to March 20, 2014:

February 26	North Campus Open Space Workshop
February 28	Campus Food Bank Fundraiser
March 4	PAW Steering
March 4	International Student Fees Forum
March 5	Joint U-Pass Advisory Group Meeting
March 6	PSAC
March 10	ONEcard Student Advisory
March 12	SACIE Workshop
March 13	Programming Workshop on Varsity Field

**GSA Vice-President External
Report to Council for March 17, 2014 GSA Council Meeting**

To: GSA Council
From: Hasin Haroon
Date: March 14, 2014

Dear Council Colleagues,

I hope you are all outdoors enjoying the wonderful (shocking, really) weather. The highlights of my last few weeks:

I have been continuing my work on **prayer space**. We currently have a location and a list of criteria in mind, and the next steps will be to bring the project together in a form that can be presented for approval and to account for budgets.

We also now have an almost final draft of the **flexible leases policy**. The changes to the policy are a result of feedback that I have gotten from students, and also to close any loopholes that may cause students trouble in the future.

I attended a meeting with the Ministry of Innovation and Advanced Education, where a **breakdown of the post-secondary education budget for 2014-2015 was presented**. The Vice-President Academic, Colin More, also reports to you on this matter.

Megha Bajaj (Vice-President Student Services) and I also attended a workshop on **international student services and retention**, where we both spoke regarding the GSA's position on international student services and support at the university.

If you have any questions regarding anything in my report, feel free to drop me an email or ask me at Monday's meeting.

Sincerely,

Hasin Haroon, GSA Vice-President External

Please find below a list of meetings I attended between February 22, 2014 and March 17, 2014:

February 28	Campus Food Bank Fundraiser
March 5	Student Connect Advisory Committee
March 6	RAC
March 7	Flexible Leases
March 7	Launch of Entrepreneurship@UAlberta
March 11	Monthly Meeting with IAE Staff
March 12	SACIE Workshop
March 13	Prayer Space

**Vice-President Labour
Report to Council for March 17, 2014 GSA Council Meeting**

To: GSA Council
From: Monty Bal
Date: March 14, 2014

Dear Council Colleagues,

Below are some of the highlights of what I've been up to since we last met.

BHRCC

President Epperson and I presented to the Board of Governors Human Resources and Compensation Committee. **This Committee is responsible for giving the University's collective bargaining team its mandate.** We were able to make a strong presentation to the committee which **highlighted the importance of investing in graduate education through higher pay and increases to the pool of grants and professional development funding.** Committee members took notice of the **inequity** which exists around campus whereby though some students are strongly supported by their supervisors, others are not. Furthermore, they also took note of the **difficulties international students have in meeting basic needs due to legal restrictions.** We were strongly supported by President Indira Samarasekera, who noted **the inconsistencies on campus and the important role graduate students play in advancing research at the UofA.**

Meeting with G. Loppnow (Undergraduate Dean for the Faculty of Science)

This was a follow up from the Science Town Hall I attended in late January regarding **the Undergraduate Lab Experience Committee.** In my contact with Faculty of Science graduate students, there was a **strong concern about the lack of graduate student voice,** due to graduate students having no representation on the committee. Heather Hogg (Director of Operations and Labour Professional) and I were able to argue that many of the proposals, which seek to deal with the Faculty of Science budget shortfall and undergraduate lab experience, would have a detrimental impact on graduate students. Dr. Loppnow agreed that a better effort should have been made to reach out to graduate students. In an effort to remedy this problem, **Dr. Loppnow has agreed to meet with representatives from graduate student associations in the Faculty of Science and incorporate their feedback into the report.** He also agreed that moving forward, in any implementation phase, graduate students would be represented.

GFC Academic Planning Committee

Members from the GFC Committee on the Learning Environment presented **the Attributes and Competencies Final Report.** This report seeks to address how students and the University might benefit from having a system which would **allow students and programs to highlight the non-academic aspects of University learning.** This might **especially be important for graduate students, since 70% of them do not go into academia, and their research might not be as critical to getting hired** as their ability to demonstrate wider competencies like ethical responsibility, critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creativity. Though APC was concerned with the implementation, finding that it may not be very practicable, there is no doubt that the University will push this proposal in an effort to come in line with developments across Canada and the world. **I believe that something like this would definitely help students recognize what attributes they graduate with, allowing them to better demonstrate competencies in areas which employers are looking for.**

We have finally sent out the new CA information sheets which we have been working on over the past couple of months! Moving forward, I will be in contact with FGSR to **send these sheets to incoming students so they know their rights before reaching campus.** Heather and I will also be meeting our counterparts in administration this week to discuss the CA revisions. In addition to this, after some unexpected delays, **we will finally be meeting with the University negotiating team in the first week of April to discuss the financial aspects of the Collective Agreement.** Finally, as always, if there are any issues you have related to your RA/TAship, please contact us directly so we can work to help you out.

Thanks,

Simarjit S. Bal (Monty), Vice-President Labour

Please find below a list of meetings I attended between February 25, 2014 and March 17, 2014:

February 26	BHRCC
February 26	FGSR Council
February 27	GFC FDC
February 28	Campus Food Bank Fundraiser
March 6	Meeting with the Faculty of Science Associate Dean of Student Services
March 6	Provincial Budget Teleconference
March 10	Meeting with Student
March 12	GFC APC

**GSA Executive Director
Report to Council for March 17, 2014 GSA Council Meeting**

To: GSA Council
From: Ellen Schoeck, GSA Executive Director
Date: March 14, 2014

Dear Council,

I report to you at least once a year on staff and management responsibilities (the last report on this issue was at the October meeting of Council). Below you will find descriptions of what the GSA managers and unionized staff do in support of our organization.

As context, most Council members know that since its inception, the GSA's functionality has been marked by many dramatic ups-and-downs. For at least a decade prior to 2010, the GSA did not have one staff member stay with us for longer than a year. Executive Directors/General Managers have left because of operational concerns with the GSA. Our Auditor has pointed out that there has been (prior to 2011) no continuity or institutional memory amongst management, which represents a significant risk in the GSA's long-term ability to carry out the basic functions of advocacy, representation, and provision of services. A part-time student groups coordinator will start with us soon on a term basis.

Our Accountant Shirley Ball, Auditor Tom Gee and lead lawyer Colin Fetter are all very pleased with how the GSA has evolved and with how the GSA is now operating. From what we know of other Canadian GSAs, we are arguably the most functional and effective, and offer the broadest range of services. I believe the GSA is well-positioned to deal with the critical challenges that lay ahead.

GSA UNIONIZED STAFF

The GSA has 4.5 staff positions that are represented by the Non-Academic Staff Association in a special Collective Agreement. Each has a 4-5 page job description. Here are brief snapshots and key stats. (FT=full time; PT=part time). Salaries were benchmarked in 2010-2012 for all staff and management and approved by Council as part of the budget.

EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT (EA); Laura Hanon (FT; BFA, U of A, and Bachelor of Applied Communication and Professional Writing, MacEwan)

Laura has just started with the GSA, replacing Dyan Semple who was with us for three years. Reporting to management, Laura **schedules** elected officials and occasionally management (*eg* committees, one-on-ones with senior administrators); is part of the **transition team**; assists with **Agenda preparation** for Board; **drafts Minutes**; **receives and skims committee materials** from Administration, which are then read and highlighted for officials by Ellen and Courtney; back up support for the GSA Nominating Committee (NoC).

KET STATS: 1,300 meetings scheduled on 83 committees and numerous one-on-ones; skims and routes meeting materials for c. 170 committees, councils, etc.

MANAGER OF INFRASTRUCTURE AND IT: Casey Germain (FT; BA Anthropology, UBC)

Casey started at the GSA in 2011. His IT expertise has transformed multiple aspects of the GSA. He assists with all aspects of the GSA's corporate and physical infrastructure. As the grants position was managed down to part-time, Casey volunteered to have grants added to his job description.

KEY IT PROJECTS: Migration to G-Mail & Google Drive; new GSA Website; new elections software; migration to Central Firewall; Evergreening plan; hardware & software inventory; Online AEGS forms and Direct Deposit, designed

the new newsletter format, created Facebook and Twitter pages, designed the GSA Handbook / agenda, updated the GSA Visual identity.

KEY GSSF Fund Stats: 1,172 grants processed; 4,652 communications to supervisors and students; approximately \$450,000 in AEGS funds disbursed, prepared 692 T4A's for students and the CRA.

Other Key Stats: 10 Elections run, 47 web-related projects, 28 research projects, 49 IT related projects, 12 event related projects, approximately 2000 documents filed.

NOMINATING AND STUDENT GROUPS SPECIALIST: Lisa Hareuther (FT; BA Anthropology, U of A, and MA Anthropology, SFU)

Lisa joined the GSA in 2010 as EA, returning in 2012 to take on support for the new Nominating Committee (NoC) and to kick start student groups work. Reporting to the Exec Director and with a close working relationship with the NoC Vice-Chair, Councillor Lacey Fleming, Lisa helps support NoC, Early Call for Talent, transition, supports the ERC, drafts all materials related to election of Senator/CRO/Speaker, and manages weekly requests from administration for grad reps on committees, task forces, etc. She also assists with the Department Liaison Initiative and student groups.

KEY STATS: Early Call for Talent: 18 students responded, up from 7; **grad student representation on some 170+ committees since 2010; 215 graduate student bios and résumés** in Bank of Names; **since May 2012, 309 graduate students elected** to a broad range of committees (GSA and University); 47 **departmental student groups**; 2013 Departmental Liaison Initiative efforts yielded **26 new GSA Councillors**; **1500 NoC emails between September 2012 and September 2013**.

COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST: Katie Bittner (PT, PhD Anthropology, U of A)

This position handles communications, plans universal orientations, drafts the GSA Handbook, arranges the adjudications of the Alberta Graduate Citizenship Award and GSA Awards, and organizes GSA Awards Night and other events. This position is our point of contact for GSA Council communications, Minute taking, and coordinates with the Director of Services and Governance in preparing Council material.

Key Stats: Organized the adjudication of **188 GSA Award** applications and **157 Graduate Citizenship Award** applications, **135 Newsletters and Bulletins**, **raised \$7995** in Handbook advertisements.

In addition, these staff members all assist with an array of research projects and provide assistance to graduate students at the front desk.

Key Front Desk Stats: 2156 e-mail, phone, and in-person interactions with students between September 2012 and September 2013.

Key Research Stats: Since September 2012: compiled over 160 research reports on issues related to GSA strategic initiatives (including Graduate Student cost of living across Canada, academic bullying, prayer space, CFS and CASA history and policy, status of Departmental GSAs).

GSA MANAGEMENT

Your management team comprises:

ACCOUNTANT Shirley Ball (PT, 1 day a week), was recommended to us by our Auditor and has extensive experience with not-for-profits. Shirley reports to the GSA President and to the Exec Director, and has access to the Board or Council directly if she sees anything amiss with our finances. That is one of our financial controls.

FINANCIAL MANAGER Dorte Sheikh (PT, 2 days a week; BA Anthropology, U of A), has 33 years' experience in the Registrar's Office, including the role of Assistant Registrar, and a long-standing relationship with Financial Services. Dorte handles all banking and reconciliations, deals with the CRA, is our expert on Smart Forms, leads our dealings with Financial Services, is our link with Ceridian for payroll, and works with Shirley on monthly financial statements, the quarterly reports to Council, and our annual audit.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR Megan Caldwell (FT; BA Archaeology, SFU, MA Anthropology U of M, and PhD Candidate, U of A). This is a new position, and part of our succession plan. Megan is training on all aspects of management responsibilities.

DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS AND LABOUR PROFESSIONAL Heather Hogg (PT, three days a week; BA Political Science and History, Mount Allison), has 31 years' experience at the U of A, including serving as Assistant Dean of the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, and as a member for the Administration on the GSA/University bargaining team. Heather is now on *our* side of the table. She also deals with labour cases in concert with the VPL, was the lead on re-writing the CA, and serves as our Privacy Officer (required by law). She provides support for the grants and awards adjudication processes as well as U-Pass issues, which have begun to transfer to Courtney Thomas as Heather begins to reduce her time with the GSA – part of the succession plan Council has already heard about. Heather also manages internal HR processes.

DIRECTOR OF SERVICES AND GOVERNANCE Courtney Thomas (FT; BA Honours History and MA History, U of A, and PhD History, Yale), has three years' experience working in the U of A University Secretariat and in University Governance. Courtney has worked with many GFC committees and is trained in the delivery of good governance and regulatory frameworks. Courtney has been with us for one year and has trained into support for the GSA Board and Council, privacy, bargaining, awards, and U-Pass. She now sits on the Health Centre Advisory Group, the Student Connect Advisory Group, two U-Pass committees, MBAC/TBAC (which deals with tuition and mandatory non-instructional fees), and (with myself) the PAW Steering Committee. She has also worked with the Student Financial Aid Task Force over the past year. Courtney has recently taken on several of Heather's current responsibilities (such as grants, awards, and U-Pass), is Coordinator of Council and finalizes meeting materials for both Board and Council.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR Ellen Schoeck (FT, BA Honours and MA History, U of A). Ellen has 27 years' experience as Director of the U of A University Secretariat and Secretary to GFC. She reported to five university presidents and was Executive Assistant to the President during the 21% cuts in the 1990s. She also served as Information Officer on Appeals and Grievances, ombudsman, sexual harassment advisor, and discipline officer. She served on the AASUA Council and helped form the Administrative Professional Officer Council on campus. During "retirement", she had an active consulting practice, edited a magazine and ran for the federal Liberal nomination (2005). She has written two histories of the U of A and served on two not-for-profit boards. Ellen was hired by the GSA in 2010 as a change-agent and is contractually obligated to transform the GSA into a robust organization that will flourish over time. As Executive Director, Ellen leads staff and management support for *all aspects* of the GSA operation, reporting to the GSA President. The detail describing what Ellen does is set out in monthly written reports to Council.

As usual, the detailed weekly Management reports to the GSA Board are attached for your review.

I am happy to answer any questions.

Best,

Ellen Schoeck, GSA Executive Director

Management Report to the GSA Board, February 26, 2014

Dear All,

The following have issues have dominated management's attention in the week since the last GSA Board meeting on February 19, 2014:

Strategic

- **Main Issues Dealt With in the Past Week:** Council follow-up (major Agenda items were the GSA 2014-2015 budget, the GSA's 5-year budget/business plan, proposed changes to grants policy, feedback on the proposed increase to the ARF, presidential search committee), enrolment management (draft email to the Registrar), pre-Council candidate forum, GSA presentation to BHRCC, transition retreat planning, transition planning, planning for GSA Awards Night, FGSR Council Caucus, Campus Food Bank's mac n' cheese fundraising dinner.
- **Student group issues** (renewing the MOU with the DoS and SGS, template constitution, alcohol liability waiver, ability for the GSA to intervene with groups experiencing governance issues, registration assistance) **and the next stage of the DLI** (getting back into departments, especially those with large January intakes).
- **Elections software.**
- **Bylaw and Policy Review (Editorial:** review of all bylaws and policies for inconsistencies and errors is ongoing (a focus on "bloopers" is planned next), as is long-term thought on combining bylaws and policy into one document, utilizing alternate formatting, and creating a "definitions" section and **Substantive:** forward thinking regarding a review of the Board Policy Manual is underway. A thorough review of the policies and processes surrounding councillor remuneration is also planned).
- **Planning for the last 9 GSABs** for current group of Directly-Elected Officers and **wrap up of Board SWP initiatives and lingering issues** (NPP, CJSR, etc).
- Continued work associated with building GSA wiki pages as a mechanism to **effectively track issues** (major issues and stakeholders will have dedicated pages that list all background and the Google Drive/hardcopy location of all relevant material).

Other

- Work on the **next stage of the DLI** – working on proposals discussed at a recent meeting with Student Group Services and the Office of the Dean of Students (including a new MOU with the Dean of Students, an alcohol liability waiver, and a template constitution), working with SGS and management on student group issues.
- **Review of the Collective Agreement** and the preparation of CA fact sheets.
- **GSA report to the BoG and a potential GSA report to GFC.**
- **Social Media:** Facebook = 325 likes (up 1 from February 19), Twitter = 181 followers (up 3 from February 19).
- **Grants review and processing** \$63,436 remaining for PDAs and 126 applications submitted this period, **CCGs closed (all funds expended)** and 33 applications submitted this period, **ASGAs closed (all funds expended)** and 3 applications submitted this period, \$22,028 remaining for EBS and 9 applications submitted this period.

Week in Review – Office Operations:

- **Updates to the GSA website** and assisting with the **filming of the pre-Council candidate forum**; compiling the **GSA Media Tracker** and assisting with building the wiki to track issues.
- Assisting with the planning of **Awards Night** and coordinating RSVPs for the Campus Food Bank's mac n' cheese fundraising dinner.
- Assisting with **preparations for the general election** and transition and with **Council**; assisting the NoC with **filling vacancies on several committees** and forward thinking on the GSA Senator election.

Management Report to the GSA Board, March 5, 2014

Dear All,

The following have issues have dominated management's attention in the week since the last GSA Board meeting on February 26, 2014:

Strategic

- **Main Issues Dealt With in the Past Week:** Enrolment management, MNIF discussions with the SU, transition retreat planning, transition planning, planning for GSA Awards Night, elections software, General Election, Campus Food Bank's Mac n' Cheese Affair debrief, forward thinking on the 2015 General Election timeline, Council preparation, GU15
- **Student group issues** (renewing the MOU with the DoS and SGS, template constitution, alcohol liability waiver, ability for the GSA to intervene with groups experiencing governance issues, registration assistance) **and the next stage of the DLI** (getting back into departments, especially those with large January intakes). Investigating hiring someone with solid student groups experience on a part-time basis to assist in tackling these various projects.
- **Bylaw and Policy Review (Editorial:** review of all bylaws and policies for inconsistencies and errors is ongoing (a focus on "bloopers" is planned next), as is long-term thought on combining bylaws and policy into one document, utilizing alternate formatting, and creating a "definitions" section and **Substantive:** forward thinking regarding a review of the Board Policy Manual is underway. A thorough review of the policies and processes surrounding councillor remuneration is also planned).
- **Planning for the last 8 GSABs** for current group of Directly-Elected Officers and **wrap up of Board SWP initiatives and lingering issues** (NPP, CJSR, etc).
- Continued work associated with building GSA wiki pages as a mechanism to **effectively track issues** (major issues and stakeholders will have dedicated pages that list all background and the Google Drive/hardcopy location of all relevant material).

Other

- **Review of the Collective Agreement** and the preparation of CA fact sheets.
- **Providing update contact information to the Access Control/Security Systems (ACS) Project Office** (which manages the GSA's intrusion alarms).
- **GSA report to GFC and drafting material to send to BFPC and the BoG regarding the collection of GSA fees** (follow-up from Council's approval of the 2014-2015 operating and capital budget).
- **Social Media:** Facebook = 328 likes (up 3 from February 26), Twitter = 187 followers (up 6 from February 26).
- **Grants review and processing** \$61,575 remaining for PDAs and 131 applications submitted this period, **CCGs closed (all funds expended)** and 33 applications submitted this period, **ASGAs closed (all funds expended)** and 3 applications submitted this period, \$22,028 remaining for EBs and 9 applications submitted this period.

Week in Review – Office Operations:

- **Updates to the GSA website** compiling the **GSA Media Tracker** and assisting with **building the wiki to track issues**.
- Assisting with the planning of **Awards Night**.
- Assisting with **preparations for the general election** and transition; assisting the NoC with **filling vacancies on several committees** and forward thinking on the GSA Senator election.
- Assistance with **Council preparations** and assisting with **forward thinking on the 2015 General Election timeline**.

Management Report to the GSA Board, March 12, 2014

Dear All,

The following have issues have dominated management's attention in the week since the last GSA Board meeting on March 5, 2014:

Strategic

- **Main Issues Dealt With in the Past Week:** Transition retreat planning, transition planning, planning for GSA Awards Night, elections software, General Election debrief, forward thinking on the 2015 General Election timeline, Council preparation, GU15, enrolment management, preparation and submission of a GSA report to GFC and a report to FGSR Council, conversations surrounding WCB. **MANY HAVE BEEN ON HOLD AS A RESULT OF SEVERAL ONE-OFFS**
- **Student group issues** (renewing the MOU with the DoS and SGS, template constitution, alcohol liability waiver, ability for the GSA to intervene with groups experiencing governance issues, registration assistance) **and the next stage of the DLI** (getting back into departments, especially those with large January intakes). **We have hired Katie Waterhouse, who has solid student groups experience and worked with the GSA on the DLI over the summer of 2013, on a part-time basis.** This work **was temporarily put on hold last week** and we are moving forward this week.
- **Bylaw and Policy Review (Editorial:** review of all bylaws and policies for inconsistencies and errors is ongoing, as is long-term thought on combining bylaws and policy into one document, utilizing alternate formatting, and creating a "definitions" section and **Substantive:** forward thinking regarding a review of the Board Policy Manual is underway. A thorough review of the policies and processes surrounding councillor remuneration is also planned). **HAS BEEN ON HOLD FOR SEVERAL MONTHS AS A RESULT OF ONE-OFFS**
- **Planning for the last 7 GSABs** for current group of Directly-Elected Officers and **wrap up of Board SWP initiatives and lingering issues** (NPP, CJSR, etc). **ELEMENTS OF THE WRAP UP HAVE BEEN ON HOLD FOR SEVERAL WEEKS AS A RESULT OF ONE-OFFS**
- Continued work associated with building GSA wiki pages as a mechanism to **effectively track issues** (major issues and stakeholders will have dedicated pages that list all background and the Google Drive/hardcopy location of all relevant material). **The issue page on NPP is now completed!**

CA, Grants, Operations

- **Review of the Collective Agreement** and the preparation of CA fact sheets.
- **Drafting material to send to BFPC and the BoG regarding the collection of GSA fees** (follow-up from Council's approval of the 2014-2015 operating and capital budget). **HAS BEEN ON HOLD THE PAST WEEK AS A RESULT OF ONE-OFFS**
- Thorough **review and updating of the GSA website** and **GSA office clean up**. **HAS BEEN ON HOLD FOR SEVERAL WEEKS AS A RESULT OF ONE-OFFS**
- **Social Media:** Facebook = 333 likes (up 5 from March 5), Twitter = 191 followers (up 4 from March 5).
- **Grants review and processing** \$51,900 remaining for PDAs and 152 applications submitted this period, **CCGs closed (all funds expended)** and 33 applications submitted this period, **ASGAs closed (all funds expended)** and 3 applications submitted this period, \$19,028 remaining for EBs and 12 applications submitted this period.

Week in Review – Office Operations:

- **Updates to the GSA website** compiling the **GSA Media Tracker**; assisting with **building the wiki to track issues**; and assisting with the planning of **Awards Night**.
- Assisting with **preparations** for transition and support for ERC assisting the NoC with **filling vacancies on several committees** and forward thinking on the GSA Senator election.
- Assistance with **Council preparations** and assisting with **forward thinking on the 2015 General Election timeline**.