

**Meeting MINUTES**  
**14 July 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:**

Nathan Andrews (President)	Michele DuVal (Bio Sci)	Solomon Aomaoteng (Law)	Emrah Keskin (Political Science)
Colin More (VP Academic)	Dasha Smirnow (Business PhD)	Andrea Johnston (Library & Information Sci)	Dimitar Oudey (Psychiatry)
Monty Bal (VP Labour)	Jeremy Wohland (Civ & Env Engineering)	Amir Nosrati (Math & Stats Sciences)	Allison Hahn (Psychology)
Susan Cake (VP External)	Myriam Bernier (Comm Sci & Disorders)	Ninad Mehta (Med Microbio & Immunology)	Ruojng Zhou (Psychology)
Megha Bajaj (VP Student Services)	Candy Pang (Computing Sci)	Grant Norman (Neurosci)	Tharsini Sivananthajothy (Public Health)
Roy Coulthard (Deputy Speaker)	Connie Yuen (Ed Psych)	Jennifer Bell (Nursing)	Arnold Wong (Rehab Med)
Hamman Samuel (CRO)	Amanda Radil (Ed Psych)	Rebecca Ellis (Nursing)	Rick VanManen (Religious Studies)
Qendresa Beka (Councillor-at-Large)	Sulya Fenichel (Elementary Ed)	Dylan Breitreutz (Oncology)	Alison Murata (Renewable Resources)
Sandra Gawad Gad (Councillor-at-Large)	Amanda Daignault (English & Film Studies)	Antoinette Nguyen (Paediatrics)	Angela Bentley (Res Econ & Enviro Sociology)
Jude Kong (Councillor-at-Large)	Sandra Sawchuk (Humanities Computing)	Manoj Parmar (Pharm & Pharmaceutical Sci)	Kelsi Barkway (Sociology)
Kangyi Lou (Councillor-at-Large)	Qingqing Liu (Lab Medicine & Pathology)	Jennifer Crawford (Phys Ed & Recreation)	Rotem Lavy (Surgery)
Harsh Thaker (Councillor-at-Large)	Luciana D S Cavalcante (Lab Medicine & Pathology)	Ruijia Wang (Physics)	

**GUESTS:** Kumarie Achaibar-Morrison (Associate Director, International Student Services), Anica Dang (Programs Coordinator, International Student Services), Tom Gee (Auditor (MBA, FCA), Peterson Walker LLP Chartered Accountants), Zhendong Li (Member, GSA President's Task Force on GSA Elections Bylaw and Policy), and Micaela Santiago (Member, GSA President's Task Force on GSA Elections Bylaw and Policy).

Speaker Sarah Prescott in the Chair.

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

**Roll Call**

**1. Roll Call of Council Members in Attendance**

**Approval of Agenda**

**2. Approval of the 14 July 2014 Consolidated Agenda**

Members had before them the 14 July 2014 Consolidated Agenda, which had been previously distributed on 11 July 2014.

**C More MOVED to approve the Agenda. SECONDED by N Andrews.**

**Motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**Approval of Minutes**

**3. Minutes**

**i. Minutes from the 16 June 2014 GSA Council Meeting**

Members had before them the 16 June 2014 GSA Council Minutes, which had been previously distributed on 04 July 2014.

**N Andrews MOVED to approve the Minutes. SECONDED by J Bell.**

**Motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Prepared by M. Caldwell and C. Thomas for the Council Meeting of 14 July 2014

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### Changes in Council Membership

#### 4. Changes in Council Membership

##### i. Introduction of New Councillors

This was the first meeting for a number of Councillors: Q Liu (Lab Medicine & Pathology); D Smirnov (Business PhD); A Johnston (Library & Information Sci); Candy Pang (Computing Sci); and R VanManen (Religious Studies).

##### ii. Farewell to Departing Councillors

This was the last meeting for two Councillors: S Aomaoteng (Law) and A Hahn (Psychology).

### Action Items, Elections, Appointments, Special Business

#### 5. 2013-2014 GSA Audited Financial Statements

Members had before them an outline of issue, the Auditor's cover letter, the Report to the Board with Respect to Matters Arising from the Audit, and the 2013-2014 GSA Audited Financial Statements, which had been previously distributed on 04 July 2014. N Andrews presented the item and introduced the guest, Tom Gee (Auditor (MBA, FCA), Peterson Walker LLP Chartered Accountants). N Andrews stated that the audit had been received for information by the GSA Budget and Finance Committee on 25 June, 2014 and, on the same day, the GSA Board approved and forwarded the audit to GSA Council. He further noted that organizations are typically required to do an audit at the end of the year, and the GSA is required to do so by the *Post Secondary Learning Act*. This year's audit was quick and clean, which showed the strength of the organization. The GSA has been rebuilt since 2010, and is in strong financial shape.

**MOTION BEFORE COUNCIL:** That the GSA Council, acting on the unanimous recommendation of the GSA Board, **RECEIVE FOR INFORMATION** the 2013-2014 GSA Audited Financial Statements.

T Gee stated that the audit started on page 5.6 of the material before Council. The first few pages were the independent auditor's report and T Gee noted he was happy with the audit. With respect to overall financial position, the GSA looked good. Current financial assets were a bit over \$1.6M, and current liabilities a little over \$440K, giving a ratio of about 3.6:1. This ratio showed that the organization was in good shape. Additionally, the ratio had improved since last year. The statement of operations showed that it had been a good year. Last year the surplus was a little under \$168K, and this year the surplus was \$290K. There had been improvement to cash on hand of almost \$316K. Operationally there was a nice surplus, and the cash position and cash flow had improved.

T Gee noted that this did not mean that there was not room for improvement. In 2010, the financial position of the GSA was not good, and it was a bad year for operations. The Executive Director pledged then that there was a plan to work through the problems and improve and T Gee noted that it was nice to see that things had worked out the way they were projected and the GSA should be commended for the work done improving financial systems, policies, and controls.

T Gee stated that the management letter included recommendations for further improvement and that he was pleased to see that there had been follow up on recommendations from previous years, and progress had been made. This year there were two recommendations. The first was to look at bank reconciliation procedures, and the second was to look at reserve funds and make sure they were adequate. T Gee noted that, even though there was money set aside, particularly a contingency for legal expenses, more money should be set aside.

Speaker Prescott noted that any questions from Councillors should be in regards to the audit; questions about the budget could be addressed during Item 6.

Following the presentation, C Iverson asked what T Gee's recommendations were to correct bank reconciliation procedures and T Gee responded that bank reconciliations were being reviewed monthly, but whoever was doing the review should be initialing and dating the reconciliation.

There were no further questions.

**MOTION:** That the GSA Council, acting on the unanimous recommendation of the GSA Board, **RECEIVE FOR INFORMATION** the 2013-2014 GSA Audited Financial Statements. N Andrews **MOVED**. S Cake **Second**.

**Motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

#### 6. GSA 2014-2015 Budget and Expenditure (Quarterly) Report

Members had before them an outline of issue, the GSA 2014-2015 Budget Expenditure (Quarterly) Report, the GSA 2014-2015 Quarterly Operating Budget Narrative, and the GSA 2014-2015 Quarterly Restricted and Other Funding Narrative, which had been previously distributed on 04 July 2014. N Andrews presented the item stated that the report before GSA Council covered two months of the financial year. The budget was balanced so far, but it was difficult to tell what to expect moving forward. The opinion of the GSA's financial team was that the GSA was in good financial health. N Andrews thanked Councillors who had attended Budget 101 sessions and noted that, as GSA Council will be approving the budget for next year in the future, it was good to be knowledgeable on the subject.

**MOTION BEFORE COUNCIL:** That the GSA Council **RECEIVE FOR INFORMATION** the GSA 2014-2015 Budget and Expenditure (Quarterly) Report.

There were no questions.

**MOTION:** That the GSA Council **RECEIVE FOR INFORMATION** the GSA 2014-2015 Budget and Expenditure (Quarterly) Report. N Andrews **MOVED**. M Bajaj **Second**.

**Motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The Executive Director stated that she was grateful for the praise from the Auditor, and that R Coulthard would remember what the situation was in 2010. There would be more Budget 101 sessions throughout the year as the GSA works towards building the next budget, which will come to GSA Council in February. The Executive Director also noted that the budget existed to drive the GSA Board Strategic Work Plan and to support the GSA's operations.

*At this time, Speaker Prescott moved to Item 8 on the agenda, as the guests for Item 7 were not yet in attendance.*

#### 8. Councillor Announcements

There were no Councillor Announcements.

*As there were no Councillor Announcements, Speaker Prescott invited Vice-President Student Services M Bajaj to present Agenda Item 9.*

#### 9. GSA Health and Dental Plan: Proposed Increase to Vision Coverage

Members had before them an outline of issue, which had been previously distributed on 04 July 2014. M Bajaj introduced the item and thanked Councillors who attended the Health and Dental 101. M Bajaj stated that GSA Council approved the health and dental plan fee when it approved the most recent GSA budget, it was then forwarded to the Board of Governors, who approved the collection of the fee. She also noted that the health and dental plan fee for a particular year was decided based on data analysis of claims to date done by Studentcare in February. Fee proposals were considered by the GSA Budget and Finance Committee and the GSA Board before coming to GSA Council. M Bajaj further stated that at the 14 April 2014 meeting of GSA Council, Councillors approved the use of the Health and Dental Plan Reserve Fund (HDPRF) to offset an increase in fees in 2014-2015. In June, Studentcare's analysis of claims showed that actual claims were lower than projected. This presented an opportunity to increase coverage without increasing the plan fee. M Bajaj brought GSA Council's attention to the table on page 9.0 of the material before members which recorded that the total cost of the coverage increase was \$7.33 per student, while there was currently \$8.13 per student available in the amount approved for use from the HDPRF. M Bajaj noted that, if GSA Council approved the increase in vision coverage, approximately \$88K would be used from the HDPRF and a healthy balance of approximately \$230K would remain. She also noted that the GSA Financial Manager and GSA Accountant had reviewed the proposal and were confident of the healthy balance. M Bajaj added that the increase to vision coverage was proposed based on the results of the 2013 member survey done by Studentcare.

**MOTION BEFORE COUNCIL:** That the GSA Council **APPROVE** the proposed increase in vision coverage, as outlined below ("Recommendation").

Following the presentation, A Daignault asked for clarification about what would happen if GSA Council did not approve the increase in coverage, would the fee to graduate students stay the same, and more money stay in the HDPRF? M Bajaj responded that there would be no increase in coverage but the HDPRF would still be used to cover the fee increase. A Daignault asked if usage of the HDPRF would be less if GSA Council did not increase coverage. R Coulthard replied that it would be \$7.33 less per student.

J Kong asked if there would be any hidden costs if the increase went through – vision coverage was being increased because the funds were available, but what would happen in the long run? M Bajaj replied that the GSA was working on a three-year rolling plan regarding the fee but that any fee increase would be covered this year while, next year and the year after, students would likely see small increases and, in the final year, students would be paying the full increase. Graduate students would see a gradual, rather than a drastic increase. J Kong asked M Bajaj to clarify if whether, at the end of the three-year plan, students would have to pay for the increase. M Bajaj replied that the intention of the HDPRF was to cover of fee increases. Right now the HDPRF would cover it, and in the long run, the HDPRF would need to be replenished. This was the first increase to the fee in four years. J Kong asked if that was the reason behind increasing coverage and M Bajaj replied that it was not the reason to increase the coverage. The HDPRF was being used this year to cover the increase for graduate students this year so that they did not see a huge increase to the fee in any one year, and that was the same reason why it would be gradually increased. The fee cannot be increased by more than 15% in any particular year according to GSA Bylaw and Policy. J Kong stated that graduate students had not been informed that they might pay more in the end for the coverage increase. They might say they want more but might not want to pay more. M Bajaj stated that the Studentcare survey showed that graduate students wanted increased coverage and were willing to pay more for it. The survey was done last year, and would be done again next year.

R Lavy asked what the total increase would be at the end of the gradual increases over the next three years. M Bajaj replied that it was hard to predict what the fee would be in three years. R Coulthard stated that the usual yearly inflation on a health and dental plan was 4%; if it was higher than that, then rates might increase more. He noted that, at this point, the amount that was being bridged by the HDPRF was less than 5% and, even with this, inflation would be between 4-6% in the next few years. This had been par for the course since 2003. The highest increase GSA had ever seen was 7% and it was reduced for students using the HDPRF. That increase was eventually reconciled two years later by switching insurers. R Coulthard did not think there was any particular untoward risk to the GSA that there would be a huge increase in the cost of the plan. The biggest risk to the cost of the plan might be in relation to the new dental clinic that will open in the Physical Activity and Wellness Centre, but there were already clinics open close to campus, so there was good reason to think that the GSA would not see quite the same spike in claims as had been observed at other campuses.

**MOTION:** That the GSA Council **APPROVE** the proposed increase in vision coverage, as outlined below (“Recommendation”). M Bajaj **MOVED**. H Thaker **Second**.

**Motion PASSED. J Kong Opposed.**

*As the guests for Item 7 were not yet in attendance, Speaker Prescott invited N Andrews to present Item 10.*

#### **10. Final Report of the GSA President’s Task Force on GSA Elections Bylaw and Policy**

Members had before them an outline of issue and the Final Report of the GSA President’s Task Force on GSA Elections Bylaw and Policy, which had been previously distributed on 04 July 2014. N Andrews presented the item and asked the Task Force members (J Bell, M DuVal, R Kanyo, Z Li, and M Santiago) to join him at the front of the room. N Andrews stated that at the beginning of his term, he presented GSA Council with a timeline for the Task Force, a mandate for the Task Force, and a list of Task Force members. The report before Councillors had three sections. The first section provided the background to election issues and what resulted in the need for the Task Force. The second part contained a summary of the feedback from people who came to speak to the Task Force. The third part consisted of a table of specific suggestions made by participants.

N Andrews proceeded to review the suggestions to the GSA ERC contained in the report. He first noted that the Task Force was suggesting to the GSA ERC that it reconsider the position of the Chief Returning Officer (CRO), and potentially establish the CRO as a hired position for the duration of an election (this was something to be perhaps considered as a longer term change, rather than for next year’s elections). As part of this suggestion, N Andrews noted that the duties and role of the CRO would need to be determined. Three models for hiring a CRO were outlined in the report. J Bell added that hiring a CRO was one of the things talked about most by participants in the Task Force sessions.

N Andrews stated that the Early Call for Talent program was also discussed by participants. Some felt it was helpful to get people interested in running for office to think about their platforms in advance, while others thought that it had the potential to make people feel excluded or like outsiders. The suggestion from the Task Force was that the Early Call for Talent program be a requirement to run for office so that candidates have a basic understanding of the GSA before running for office. N Andrews noted that, as the GSA grows and becomes more professional, it will be important to invest in that, and a good way is through the Early Call for Talent.

N Andrews then stated that the Task Force heard from participants that the GSA should cover campaign expenses. This was a budget issue, and the pros and cons would have to be considered before the GSA ERC made its recommendation to GSA

Council. N Andrews noted that currently there was \$2,200 in the elections budget line, and campaign expenses up to \$150 are allowed. Reimbursing expenses could be a way of encouraging more people to run.

N Andrews noted that the Task Force also heard about the elections appeal process and was suggesting to the GSA ERC that the entire process be reviewed. The Task Force was also suggesting that the GSA Judicial Committee be made the body to hear appeals, which should be heard publicly. This would require a lot of work and thinking as to function. The report also suggested that the timeline and process around appeals should be reviewed by the GSA ERC. Currently, if anyone had a complaint against an elected officer or a Council member, it would be reported to the President or the Speaker. The Task Force was suggesting that, instead, the GSA Judicial Committee should receive those complaints to allow for transparency. N Andrews noted this could be a simple fix, but would require a lot of restructuring.

N Andrews then stated that the Task Force report also suggested a review of the guidelines, guiding principles, and definitions related to elections in GSA Bylaw and Policy. Currently there were no specific definitions of some key terms, for example, 'discretion', 'slate', or 'unanimous'.

N Andrews also stated that the report suggested that the GSA ERC review how election campaign violations were dealt with. There is no clear system for dealing with some types of infractions, so even if they are reported, they are not easy to resolve. The Task Force was suggesting the introduction of a demerit system, where points would be taken off for violations and there would be a set number of points which could be accumulated, after which a person would be disqualified.

The Task Force was also suggesting that the GSA ERC consider recommending that it be made a requirement that the CRO consult with the GSA ERC in making decisions related to allegations of infractions. The Task Force received feedback to the effect that one person should never be in charge of making a decision independently. If the CRO were required to consult with the GSA ERC, then decisions would be made by the CRO collaboratively. Additionally, since GSA ERC members tend to serve beyond one year, there would be some continuation of knowledge and experience with respect to election issues. Returning to his previous point, N Andrews noted that the SU required candidates to report any violations done in their name; if a candidate knew a violation was committed and did not report it, the infraction can be held against them regardless of whether or not they were involved. The GSA could follow this model.

N Andrews next stated that the report suggested that the GSA ERC consider removing restrictions about how and when people campaign. The Task Force heard feedback that campaigning should continue through the voting period (instead of ending before voting begins). N Andrews noted there was no good way to monitor campaigning during the voting period, and removing the restriction would ease the work of trying to monitor it. There might still be restrictions in place for campaigning in areas that required safety clearance (ie, labs), however it would still be difficult to monitor that type of activity. Candidates need to use discretion and not campaign in those places.

N Andrews noted that the Task Force also heard feedback on the issues of endorsements. He stated that elections were not just about fairness, but also about the perception of fairness. The Task Force was suggesting that the GSA ERC remove allowances for current Directly-Elected Officers and Council-Elected Officers to endorse candidates and make it clear that there can be no endorsements, thereby removing any perception of endorsement or privilege.

N Andrews reported that the Task Force received a lot of divergent feedback on the issue of slates. Some graduate students thought that the ability to form slates encouraged elitism, and that the same slate could keep running and form a group that seemed impenetrable and made others feel like outsiders. Other feedback received expressed the belief that slates helped to professionalize elections and made candidates consolidate their platforms and move their agendas forward. Currently there was nothing to guide the formation of slates in GSA Bylaw or Policy, or to inform candidates about why and when slates might be formed. There are a lot of issues in Canada around elections and slates. The Task Force was suggesting that the GSA ERC look into the issues across Canada regarding slates and make a recommendation to GSA Council on whether or not they should be allowed.

N Andrews then stated that the Task Force also heard from graduate students regarding 'None of the Above' campaigns and how to moderate them. He noted that 'None of the Above' existed for the purpose of a ballot and violations could be committed in the name of 'None of the Above' if a campaign were run, but there was not an actual person running who can be penalized. This was an issue that needed to be looked at in the longer term by the GSA ERC.

Lastly, N Andrews stated that, as its last suggestion, the Task Force suggested that the GSA ERC keep filming campaign videos, but that they figure out a way to help candidates present their positions and inform voters regarding their platforms.

*Questions for the Task Force were postponed at this time due to the arrival of the guests for Item 7. Item 10 continues below, following Item 7.*

### **Presentations and Councillor Announcements**

#### **7. International Student Services Provided by University of Alberta International**

M Bajaj introduced the item and the guests, Anica Dang (Programs Coordinator, International Student Services) and Kumarie Achaibar-Morrison (Associate Director, International Student Services).

During their presentation, A Dang and K Achaibar-Morrison raised the following points regarding International Student Services:

K Achaibar-Morrison stated that the University of Alberta International (UAI) was situated under Vice-President International Britta Baron, who reported to the Provost. International Student Services (ISS) is one of many units under UAI. ISS serves approximately 7,000 students, half of whom are graduate students. ISS also runs the Education Abroad Program, which runs exchange programs, work internships and work placements with 250 partnerships worldwide, and the Global Education Program, which organizes International Week, visiting lectures, and the Certificate in International Learning. ISS also runs sponsored student programs to bring students from other countries to the U of A.

K Achaibar-Morrison stated that services for international graduate students were primarily delivered through ISS. They have orientation programming and a number of financial programs. The ISS emergency bursary program was entirely maintained through the International Differential Fee (IDF), mostly from undergraduate fees. ISS also offers immigration advising services, including assistance with study and work permit issues (but not Permanent Residency advising) and a number of support programs such as cultural outreach, community research outreach, and a peer-program for new students. It was further noted that ISS was currently forming the International Student Advisory Council to provide students with an opportunity to offer feedback on ISS services (ISS is working with the GSA to place graduate representatives on the Council).

A Dang outlined the various orientation services offered by ISS, including pre-arrival services such as their 'On Your Way' e-newsletter, pre-departure bulletin that students receive before they leave for Edmonton, and online advising in August. At the arrival stage ISS hosts the Transitions Orientation for international students, has a welcome booth at the airport to help students find their way to U of A, and a welcome centre in HUB for one-on-one orientations for recently arrived students. Transitions is a three-day long orientation with a lot of programming, information fairs, tours of Edmonton and shopping trips. Finally, ISS offers ongoing assistance through their peer-program and advising services and is always looking for more graduate students to volunteer for the peer-program.

Following the presentation there were a number of questions.

N Andrews asked why emergency bursaries were funded through the IDF and K Achaibar-Morrison replied that ISS receives about \$40K in funding from the IDF for their emergency bursaries and loans each year. From April 2012 to March 2013, \$24,510 in emergency loans and \$18,000 in emergency bursaries was provided to graduate students. From 2009 to 2013, \$163K in emergency loans and \$96K in emergency bursaries has been distributed to graduate students, while undergraduates over that seem period of time received \$39K in emergency loans and \$6800 in emergency bursaries. The loans and bursaries are meant to cover one month's living expense as cost of living emergency funds; what qualifies as an emergency is very limited.

H Samuel asked if ISS or UAI offer mental health services to international students and K Achaibar-Morrison replied that ISS works with the Office of the Dean of Students' Clinical and Counselling Services. There used to be a psychologist in the International Centre, but there was minimal usage of the service. Now, there is a clear referral process to Clinical and Counselling Services.

There were no further questions.

### **Action Items, Elections, Appointments, Special Business**

*Following the presentation of Item 7, Speaker Prescott invited N Andrews and members of the Task Force to resume presentation of Item 10.*

#### **10. Final Report of the GSA President's Task Force on GSA Elections Bylaw and Policy**

In conclusion to the point he had raised earlier, N Andrews stated that the most significant suggestion in the report of the Task Force were changes to the position of CRO. However the Task Force did not spend a lot of time considering what it would look

like or how much it would cost and it would be the responsibility of the GSA ERC and GSA Council to determine the feasibility of any suggestions in this regard. N Andrews also noted that the Task Force was looking for comments and questions and members could answer questions regarding procedure, but could not give specific examples of things that had happened in elections because that was beyond the scope of the Task Force.

Following the presentation there were a number of questions.

Q Beka asked, regarding the Early Call for Talent, if Task Force members thought people would want to spend time in training without knowing if they have a job at the end, and, regarding hiring a CRO, if students who had graduated would be considered. N Andrews replied that, in the past, the CRO had been part of Council elections, and typically one person ran uncontested. The GSA might be better served if it was a paid rather than a voluntary one. There would be a greater likelihood of getting someone qualified for the position. N Andrews further noted that people who had graduated would qualify for the position if it were a hired one, but it may be that the GSA ERC decides it only wants graduate students in the role. Not being a graduate student would put a CRO at arms' length from any election.

C Iverson suggested that, for campaigning in areas where it is unsafe to do so (ie, labs), there could be a mechanism for departments to request making areas off limits, and departments could complain if there were violations. N Andrews stated that the report suggested that the GSA ERC consider removing exceptions except where safety was an issue, and that enabling departments to set restricted areas for candidates ahead of time was a good idea.

J Kong stated that, even if a CRO were hired, there still might be a conflict of interest. He suggested that before ERC made any concrete decision, GSA Council should vote on the matter, because he did not think hiring would work. J Kong also asked if members of the GSA Judicial Committee were elected by Council, and if so, would this solve the problem of conflict of interest. R Kanyo replied that hiring the CRO was just a suggestion. The Task Force tried to bridge many concerns, and the report was just a beginning to the work that will be done by the GSA ERC. There needs to be a strategy regarding implementation and enforcement. Using the GSA Judicial Committee may solve the problem; the idea is that it could act as an independent body so that people come to appeals with a neutral perspective. R Kanyo noted it was impossible to know if any given suggestion would work until it was tried. J Kong asked if the report would be brought back to GSA Council and R Kanyo replied that the GSA ERC will come to Council with any proposed changes to Bylaw and Policy.

K Lou asked what the motivation for hiring a CRO was and if the Task Force believed that if the CRO were elected they would not do the job well. N Andrews replied that there was a track record of the CRO position not being contested, and that it might be because people do not want to volunteer for it. The incentive of pay might bring more people forward. As well, if the CRO were a hired position, there could be more control over roles and responsibilities, and if the CRO was not performing, they could be fired. K Lou asked if there was documentation on the responsibilities for the CRO, and if the CRO were hired, would there be any potential promotions or HR policies associated with the position. Z Li replied that the idea underlying the suggestions from the Task Force was that, if there were an incentive to holding the position, it could remove the perception or actuality of bias and that there would be control over the position. As well, a hired person with actual elections experience would be able to deal with many situations that might arise during elections. M DuVal added that the role of the CRO was not clear in GSA Bylaw and Policy. Some of the wording regarding the responsibilities was not concrete, and that might put the CRO in a difficult position.

A Councillor asked what the current policies regarding candidate endorsements by Directly-Elected Officers were, and N Andrews replied that the Task Force did not look at all of the current policies and bylaws. Instead, they looked at things from an outsider's perspective. The issue emerged at one of the sessions that GSA Policy states that the Speaker cannot endorse but there is discretion around whether the Deputy Speaker can. It needs to be made specific who can and who cannot endorse, and the Task Force's suggestion to the GSA ERC was to not allow endorsements.

N Mehta stated that, if a candidate was from a department with security barriers, they were at an advantage because they could access a secure environment without anyone complaining. If departments are large enough, this could sway results. M DuVal stated that this point was raised, and it was an issue of fairness. Further, the CRO does not have access to patrol those areas for infractions. R Kanyo stated that reinforcement of rules is important, but if rules are too strictly set, it could cause more damage than good.

S Cake - Point of Information: Is the Task Force looking for feedback on the report, or looking for reactions? N Andrews stated that he appreciated the current discussion, and that this is the first time Council was seeing the report before the GSA ERC's recommendations came forward in October. S Cake stated that she noticed the issue of confidentiality was not raised in the report and that a great deal of bylaws exist concerning reporting, but nothing about confidentiality. She noted there was lots of

whistleblower legislation that the GSA ERC could draw on to consider confidentiality. N Andrews responded that the GSA ERC would receive the transcript of the present discussion so that they could consider all suggestions along with the report as part of their review process.

K Barkway stated that, while she understands the reasoning around not having rules that cannot be enforced, if the restriction on campaigning during the voting period were removed, it seems that candidates would be given more opportunity to be coercive while people vote (ie, sit next to them at a computer and watch who they vote for). N Andrews stated that this can already happen, but the ultimate decision to vote for a person was still up to the voter.

R Coulthard stated that many of the issues that occurred in past elections (ie, campaigning behind locked doors) were systemic to all student organizations. The bigger issue was trying to address low voter turnout. If everyone voted, there would not be nearly as many concerns about the “twisting” caused by illegal campaigning. He encouraged GSA Council to think about what could be done to increase voting and noted that, if Councillors could get through to students in their departments, then it was likely to increase voter turnout, which would in turn affect a number of elections codes. C Coulthard then noted that GSA Bylaw and Policy on elections was brief. In contrast, the SU had very long elections documentation; and with more complicated elections codes comes more time, money and effort to deal with elections and reported infractions.

S Fenichel stated that she had heard the term ‘reinforcement’ over and over again in the current discussion, and wanted to bring discussion back to the demerit system. She noted that she understood the logic behind the system of demerits, but also wondered about the staggering amount of enforcement and reinforcement that might require. It would be difficult to manage with a group of overtired volunteers. N Andrews stated that it had come up because there was no mechanism for tracking when a person has reached a maximum number of allowable violations and should be removed. It was not clear when that would happen, or who would be in charge of the decision. The Task Force thought the CRO’s ‘discretion’ should be removed from GSA Bylaw and Policy and, instead, that there should be some sort of process, but a non-tedious one.

A Daignault stated that ethics should come first. There should be an expectation on candidates to always behave properly, instead of a focus on whether or not the GSA can enforce improper behaviour. N Andrews stated that he did not report on it, but there was a suggestion in the report of introducing a code of conduct for all candidates. Z Li added that the Task Force was trying to strike a balance between ethical and practical.

M Bal asked if the Task Force considered how changes to processes and rules might affect voter participation, and N Andrews stated that voter participation was covered in the background section of the report. Voter apathy was a serious concern and the Task Force hopes its suggestions might increase participation and make elections more competitive, which would in turn mean more voters.

K Lou stated that engaging more students is important, and asked if there was a plan for getting more students involved and getting more candidates to run. N Andrews stated that the Early Call for Talent was open to anyone. The Task Force did not discuss if it should become mandatory for Councillors-At-Large, but he notes his opinion that it should not be mandatory for CALs but should be for Directly-Elected Officers. N Andrews also noted that the GSA planned to ramp up its Departmental Liaison Initiative to get graduate students to understand and connect with the GSA and to increase graduate student engagement.

A Wong stated that graduate students have a lot of electronic tools available to promote elections and this could result in more direct campaigning, but also in potentially too many emails. R Kanyo stated that voter turnout was definitely an issue and the challenge was that there were multiple ways to try to increase turnout. Part of that involves individual Councillors, who can advocate to graduate students to vote. Other potential proposed changes to GSA Bylaw and Policy might make elections more professional, and hence more competitive, which could lead to improved voter turnout.

N Andrews stated that all of this work was aimed at increasing the professional image of the GSA. Elections and finances were two things that the organization was judged on, and reviewing elections policies and processes was part of doing due diligence and ensuring the health of the organization. In closing, N Andrews noted that any further thoughts on the Task Force’s report could be emailed to [gsa.president@ualberta.ca](mailto:gsa.president@ualberta.ca).

There were no further questions.

#### **11. Elections**

Members had before them the Nominees for the Advisory Review Committee for the Vice-President (University Relations), which had been previously distributed on 11 July 2014. M Duval presented the item.

Prepared by M. Caldwell and C. Thomas for the Council Meeting of 14 July 2014

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**MOTION BEFORE COUNCIL:** That the GSA Council **RECEIVE FOR INFORMATION** the newly-appointed member of the Graduate Students' Association on the Advisory Review Committee for the Vice-President (University Relations).

There were no questions.

**MOTION:** That the GSA Council **RECEIVE FOR INFORMATION** the newly-appointed member of the Graduate Students' Association on the Advisory Review Committee for the Vice-President (University Relations). M DuVal **MOVED**. S Gawad Gad **Seconded**.

**Motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY. One abstention (M Bal).**

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

**Reports**

**13. President**

**i. President's Report:**

Members had before them a written report from the GSA President, which had been previously distributed on 11 July, 2014. The report stood as submitted. In addition, N Andrews stated that, at the last meeting of Council, there was discussion about the idea of guaranteed funding for graduate students. The GSA still has not received a report/proposal but President Samarasekera has promised that it will come in the fall (it was last promised in May). N Andrews expressed confidence that the report/proposal would come in the fall. The GSA has learnt that guaranteed funding is intended only for thesis-based students, which answered some the questions raised at the last meeting of GSA Council. Additionally, it will not apply to professional faculties or programs. The GSA Board will present the report/proposal (when it is shared) to GSA Council for feedback before coming to a position on it.

N Andrews then stated that he had been in an all-day meeting with the Ministry of Innovation and Advanced Education regarding support for post-secondary learners. It was very undergraduate focused, with only a few graduate representatives there. There was discussion about financial support, student aid, loans, and debt. Most graduate students in Canada probably have loans to pay from their undergraduate studies. Suggestions from the discussion included having a debt ceiling and that loans should be interest free for five years after graduation so that graduates have time to find a job. They are also trying to make loans more accessible by reconsidering eligibility requirements, such as spousal income. The key words of the day were access, removing barriers, and more funding. In closing, N Andrews added that there was potentially some money available from the Access to the Future Fund, about \$50M, but it was not clear where it will go other than to post-secondary education in general. There would be a three-year strategic plan around financial aid that is expected to be developed at the end of August, and will be presented to GSA Council when it is received.

There were no questions.

**ii. GSA Board**

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 11 July 2014. The report stood as submitted.

**iii. Budget and Finance Committee**

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 11 July 2014. The report stood as submitted.

**iv. Governance Committee**

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 11 July 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 11 July 2014. The report stood as submitted and, in addition, M DuVal stated that she was presenting the report on behalf of L Fleming. Since the last meeting of GSA Council, the GSA Nominating Committee has placed graduate students on six external bodies.

There were no questions.

#### 14. Vice-President Academic

##### i. Vice-President Academic's Report

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 11 July 2014. The report stood as submitted and, in addition, C More stated that he did not have much to report on since university administration was currently relatively quiet. He noted he was working on research arising of N Krogman's supervision report, and was drafting an action plan that should come to GSA Council in September. C More noted he had also been working on professional development initiatives and that Vice-President External S Cake would speak to that further in her report.

Following the presentation H Thaker asked what professional development initiatives were being developed and C More replied that FGSR had put together a committee of people from the broader community to define what a professional development program should look like, what employers want from graduates, and so forth. Hopefully that work would be done by the end of summer, but that was not certain. The GSA was also looking into working with other student organizations and into companies that offer contract training modules.

K Lou asked if C More's slide was the same as last month and C More replied that it was similar.

J Kong asked if C More could explain why university administration was quiet, and if C More had plans to make noise if they keep being quiet. C More responded that university administration was working on things, but nothing has been shared with the GSA yet. Things were happening, and would likely come forward in the fall.

There were no further questions.

#### 15. Vice-President Student Services

##### i. Vice-President Student Services' Report

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 11 July 2014. The report stood as submitted and, in addition, M Bajaj stated that the Falling Walls Lab conference, which happened every year in Berlin and was funded by the German Ministry of Education and Research, had invited the U of A to participate. The conference showcases research in science, business, politics, and arts, through three-minute presentations and the U of A event was being coordinated by the Office of the Vice-President Research. The deadline to apply is August 25, 2014 and more information can be found at <http://www.research.ualberta.ca/FWLab.aspx>.

M Bajaj also asked Councillors to send her any feedback they had about Student Group Services' student group training. She noted she would be meeting with them soon and would share the feedback. Councillors were asked to send any feedback by July 25, 2014.

There were no questions.

##### 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 from the Vice-President External, which had been previously distributed on 11 July 2014. The report stood as submitted and, in addition, S Cake stated that she was serving on the Government of Alberta's Tuition Working Group which was looking at fee consultation practices. The outcomes of the working group will apply to any group that collects a fee, including the GSA. They are currently collecting narratives of good fee consultation, and the GSA has put together a document of what it considers best practices. They have also just announced that there will be a definition group for MNIFs, which will have at least one graduate student representative on it. S Cake noted that getting a definition of what a MNIF is would be beneficial because students pay these fees, but it is hard to track where they money goes.

S Cake also stated that she and C More were on different professional development working groups and the GSA was also looking into what it could do for graduate student professional development activities. The GSA wants to get something together quickly, but still wants it to be well thought out and useful to graduate students. S Cake hopes to come back to GSA Council with more soon. She noted in closing that the working group was also looking at collaborative PhDs and was looking to Europe as a model for PhDs who want to work outside of academia.

Following the presentation N Andrews asked S Cake to define what a MNIF was. S Cake replied that MNIFs were mandatory non-instructional fees. There are five different types of fees levied on students, including tuition, market modifiers, and

differential fees. None of these have clear definitions. For example, transcript fees are often user fees, but at the U of A, you pay that fee regardless of whether or not you use it. Concrete definitions should help clarify fees and how they are applied. MNIFs are often pointed to as egregiously applied fees, so they need a concrete definition.

There were no questions.

- ii. **Awards Selection Committee**  
No meetings this reporting period.

#### 17. Vice-President Labour

- i. **Vice-President Labour's Report**

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 11 July 2014. The report stood as submitted and, in addition, M Bal noted that the Directly-Elected Officers had met with President Samarasekera, and that she had stated that international graduate students would not have to worry about increases to the International Differential Fee beyond CPI this year. It is a big win.

M Bal also stated that the Government of Alberta was looking at how to incentivize students from underrepresented groups to participate in higher education. They were considering increasing the size of available scholarships and looking at outcomes in terms of student debt, and how it might be able to be linked to how much a student makes after graduation. It is all very preliminary, and hopefully there will be action. M Bal also stated that the Government of Alberta was looking at increasing student representation with the Access to the Future Fund – both in terms of including students on the bodies that decide where the money goes, and in opening up applications to students and student groups to apply for project grants.

M Bal also reported that the GSA was working with the Office of the Dean of Students to develop a province-wide advocacy plan for mental health. There are 26 campuses in Alberta, and there are common concerns between them, but they all speak separately to the Government of Alberta. It is more powerful to approach the government as a single voice. There is also a very large project, TRAM (Transformational Research in Adolescent Mental Health Services) out of Montreal has \$24M for projects at six sites over five years. The U of A is one of the sites in the project. The project is directly focused on undergraduates, especially first year students, but since graduate students, as TAs, participate in undergraduate learning, the Office of the Dean of Students has asked for GSA representatives to serve on the Executive Committee and sub-committees.

**M Bal MOVED to go into Closed Session. S Cake Seconded.**

**Motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**M Bal MOVED to go out of Closed Session. S Cake Seconded.**

**Motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Following the presentation S Fenichel asked if the reason students do not yet know details about second year funding is because collective bargaining has not yet concluded and M Bal responded that yes, until the settlement is final nothing can be divulged.

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.

#### 18. Senator

- i. **Senator's Report**  
No report was required at this time.

#### 19. Speaker

- i. **Speaker's Report**  
No report was required at this time.

## 20. Chief Returning Officer

### i. Chief Returning Officer's Report

No written report was required at this time. H Samuel stated that the GSA ERC would be meeting very soon to deliberate on the Final Report of the GSA President's Task Force on GSA Elections Bylaw and Policy, as well as the present discussion at GSA Council, and a few other areas. H Samuel noted that he had also been conducting research into election reports from other institutions across Canada, such as the University of Toronto and McGill.

There were no questions.

### ii. Elections and Referenda Committee

No report was required at this time.

## 21. GSA Management

### i. Executive Director's Report

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 11 July 2014. The report stood as submitted and, in addition, E Schoeck stated that a lot of work was being done in the office to get prepared for GAS ERC meeting to discuss the Final Report of the GSA President's Task Force on GSA Elections Bylaw and Policy. The GSA could probably hire someone full time for two months to deal with research coming out of the Task Force report, but the work will be accommodated within the office. Ellen also stated that she is bringing in two people to look at how the GSA is dealing with human resources. All the staff quit in 2010; want to make sure human resources are in good shape. E Schoeck also reported that the GSA staff collective agreement opened up in 2015 and an external consultant would also be coming in to look at the GSA's governance. She reported that she wanted to be able to provide lots of information and ensure things were transparent and that the system was good through these external reviews. Former President B Epperson was asked questions about human resources by the Board of Governors audit committee. The U of A is used to having externals come in to audit their resources; the GSA is doing that within its own budget.

E Schoeck also stated that the GSA would be hosting a chili social for networking in the fall. The Alumni Association will be the sole sponsor of the event, which will be held in September. The GSA is also looking for a sponsor for a similar event in the winter or spring. She then noted that the GSA, headed up by Vice-President Student Services M Bajaj, has been developing a list of departments for the GSA to get out to, to introduce itself, and to hear about what is going on and areas of concern. Additionally, the three Councillors who attended the last Budget 101 session gave eight or nine specific things they would like to see happen, such as a Collective Agreement 101 session. The GSA will be looking into getting those suggestions going. E Schoeck invited Councillors to provide the GSA with any suggestions or feedback at any time and noted that the GSA wanted to respond to the need of graduate students.

E Schoeck reported that the GSA was about to go into business with the Students' Union as part of the Physical Activity and Wellness (PAW) Centre. Part of the signed agreement includes having a food vendor in the building. Former President R Coulthard has been providing assistance to Vice-President Student Services M Bajaj on sorting out this zero-risk business. The GSA went bankrupt in 1997 running Dewey's and does not want that to happen again. E Schoeck then noted that GSA Council has just had a report on the GSA's financial health. The GSA is in good health, as Council heard from the auditor. The GSA has been improving each year. The auditor has carefully examined our statements and cash balance. E Schoeck noted that she asked the auditor if the GSA had too much cash, and he said no. The GSA has had cash flow problems in the past, but cash flow is good now. The GSA will soon be negotiating with Financial Services for a new payment schedule for the fees collected by the U of A for the GSA. The GSA used to get the fees in arrears, and now they are provided in advance. Looking at it from a business perspective, the GSA would like to get three staged payments to match when major bills are due. E Schoeck noted she will personally feel that the GSA is more on its feet when that is set up.

E Schoeck then stated that part of the communications piece when talking about the GSA with anyone, such as new Board of Governors members coming to the GSA Board, is that the GSA has the same corporate structures and the same advocacy as the Students' Union, but that it does it on fees from only 7,600 graduate students, while the Students' Union has fees from 36,000 undergraduate students. That's why many graduate student organizations are part of their undergraduate student organizations, so that they do not have to have their own corporate structures. Ellen feels really good about the GSA and how it is managed. She and C Thomas will be going to Calgary to meet with the Executive Director of the U of Calgary GSA.

Following the presentation N Andrews stated that the GSA has gotten money for the chili social event mentioned by E Schoeck and that it would be happening at the end of September, and there will likely not be a Council meeting in August, so N Andrews asked Councillors to start letting graduate students in their departments know about the social. The GSA is also thinking about an event for winter term, perhaps a Tea at Triffo event. A component of both events will be networking, bringing in alumni to engage with graduate students to make useful connections.

There were no questions.

**Question Period**

**22. Written Questions**

No written questions were received prior to the meeting.

**23. Oral Questions**

C Iverson asked R Coulthard if he could provide Council with an update regarding Studentcare's response to concerns about lag time in response to questions posed to Studentcare by C Iverson and R Coulthard responded that he had been focused on the proposal for vision increase that had come before Council at this meeting, but that now he will focus on discussing these concerns with Studentcare.

**Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:43 pm.

**GSA President  
Report to Council for August 18, 2014 GSA Council Meeting**

To: GSA Council  
From: Nathan Andrews  
Date: August 15, 2014

Dear Council Colleagues,

Although it's been quite warm for the past week or so, it also seems summer is almost over. But I hope you make use of the last few weeks and all the festivals and activities that are happening across the city. For those of you out of town, make the best out of your travels and adventures.

**I want to thank all the Councillors who came for the Special Council meeting on August 12**, although the meeting came with such short notice. **We made an important decision by ratifying the AEGS Collective Agreement.** Your Vice-President Labour, Monty Bal, the entire team of Directly-Elected Officers, and the GSA Management look forward to moving along with our plans to **ensure compliance and consistency across campus.** A great beginning for such a plan was the presentation Monty and I gave to the Vice-Provosts Committee (VPC) on August 11 - this being the first time the GSA has ever been invited to this committee (in fact, from what we know, the VPC hardly invite any guests!). We did get some buy-in on compliance issues from this group of important decision makers and problem solvers, so I believe we can capitalize on that momentum moving forward.

On another issue, I attended the **GU15 Conference** in Montreal last week with the Vice-President External, Susan Cake. This is a meeting of the GSAs from the top 15 universities in Canada, although a few schools did not show up. **The conference revealed how well we are doing here at the U of A compared to our counterparts, but it also showed how some of the issues/challenges we are dealing with regarding elections, outreach and participation, and supervision are quite universal.** Specifically around **best supervision practices**, the group is planning to develop an advocacy/white paper, which would be signed by all willing GSAs to emphasize the need for our respective universities to be more proactive. Several of the ideas that came forth are already reflected in Dr. Naomi Krogman's report, which was presented to Council a while ago. I will keep Council informed on how this advocacy piece of GU15 develops. The next meeting is scheduled for April 2015 at the University of Calgary.

I am happy to answer any questions about any of the meetings I attended since my last report to Council. Since we are not meeting on August 18 as previously scheduled, please feel free to email me if you have any outstanding comments/questions.

Cheers,  
Nathan Andrews, GSA President

*Please find below a list of meetings I attended between July 14, 2014 to August 15, 2014. I was on Academic Leave July 28 to August 1, 2014.*

July 14	Supports for Post-Secondary Learners (Minister Hancock)
July 15	CJSR
July 16	Collective Bargaining
July 17	Students' Union

July 17	Dean of Students
July 21	Wayne Renke
July 21	SU President
July 22	SU Croquet
July 24	Dean of FGSR
July 24	GSA CRO
July 28	ab-GPAC
August 6-8	GU15
August 11	Vice-Provosts' Council
August 12	SU, Vice-Provosts, Linda Duncan Croquet
August 15	Meeting with a Student re Health and Dental
August 15	Sean Price (Alumni Affairs)

**GSA Board**  
**Report to Council for August 18, 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: August 15, 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. Open session Minutes are available upon request. 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.

**9 July, 2014 GSA Board Meeting**

Main Agenda Items:

Introduction to James Heelan, Member of the Board of Governors; Office Safety

Motions and Agreements:

None were made.

**23 July, 2014 GSA Board Meeting**

Main Agenda Items:

Introduction to Michael Ross, Member of the Board of Governors; CAPS 2013-2014 Summary Report: GSA Subsidized Workshops Offered by CAPS, April 1, 2013 to March 31, 2014; TD Meloche Monnex Insurance: Semi-Annual Report; Invitation to Orientation and Agenda/Handbook Welcome Letter to Students

Motions and Agreements:

The GSA Board **AGREED** to **RECEIVE FOR INFORMATION** the attached summary report (page 5.1), as submitted by CAPS; The GSA Board **AGREED** to **RECEIVE FOR INFORMATION** the attached semi-annual participation report, as provided by TD Meloche Monnex Insurance.

**30 July, 2014 GSA Board Meeting**

Main Agenda Items:

No action or discussion items, reports offered by President, Vice-Presidents and Management.

Motions and Agreements:

None were made.

**6 August, 2014 GSA Board Meeting**

Main Agenda Items:

Health and Dental Renewal Update; Students at Risk

Motions and Agreements:

Board Members **AGREED** that cash collected by ab-GPAC should be handed over to the Treasurer or designate within 24 hours. Board Members **AGREED** that ab-GPAC funds should not be used to purchase alcohol under any circumstance. Board Members **AGREED** that ab-GPAC should adopt the strictest travel policy of the four GSAs. Board Members **AGREED** that there should be no pre-approval expenditure limit. Board Members **AGREED** to discuss removing sporting events from the *Societies Act* application with the other GSAs. Board Members **AGREED** to draft a statement regarding academic freedom and the detainment of A Sodiqov. Board Members **AGREED** to email departmental GSAs on behalf of ABCampus.



**13 August, 2014 GSA Board Meeting**

**Main Agenda Items:**

Discussion with the Vice-Provost (Academic), Roger Epp; Exemption from Residential Property Taxes for Alberta University Residences: Request for GSA Support for Letter to Minister

**Motions and Agreements:**

None were made.

**In addition, the following motion was considered by the voting members of GSAB via email.**

**12 August 2014**

That the GSA Board **CONFIRM THE CALL** for a Special Meeting of Council for 5:00 PM, Tuesday, August 12, 2014. N Andrews **MOVED**. M Bal Seconded. **CARRIED**.

**GSA Nominating Committee (NoC)**  
**Report to Council for August 18, 2014 GSA Council Meeting**

To: GSA Council  
From: Lacey Fleming, Vice-Chair of the GSA Nominating Committee  
Date: August 13, 2014

Dear Council Colleagues,

The report from the GSA Nominating Committee (NoC) 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 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**

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 Policy, "advertising may be waived in instances where, in the NoC's view, it is urgent to fill a vacancy" (GSA Policy, Nominating, 5.2).

**1) Faculty of Arts Council (5 Positions)**

There are five positions on the Faculty of Arts Council for graduate students from the Faculty of Arts. These positions were advertised through the GSA Newsletter and the Nominating Committee also conducted a proactive search for representatives. In total, **5 applications** were received for these positions and the following graduate students were elected to the Arts Faculty Council (their term will end May 31, 2015)

1. Shona Allison (PhD program, History and Classics)
2. Alphonse Ndem (PhD program, Anthropology)
3. Sandra Sawchuk (MA program, Humanities Computing/MLIS program Library and Information Studies)
4. Silvia Sgaramella (PhD program, Modern Languages and Cultural Studies)
5. James White (PhD program, History and Classics)

**2) Athletic and Recreation Fee Advisory Committee (ARFAC) (2 positions)**

There are four positions in total on the Athletic and Recreation Fee Advisory Committee: two GSA Executives, one graduate student-at-large, and one graduate student GFC member. The at-large and GFC member positions were advertised through the GSA newsletter and to GFC members respectively. **Two applications were received for the graduate student at-large position and one application was received for the GFC position.** **Dana Moon** (MSc program, Chemical and Materials Engineering) was elected to serve as the graduate student at-large representative and **Ali Assi** (MSc program, School of Public Health) was elected to serve as the graduate student GFC member.

### **3) Academic Policy Process Review Task Force (1 position)**

The graduate student position available on the Academic Policy Process Review Task Force was advertised through the GSA Newsletter in July at **one** application was received. **Ahmad Al-Dabbagh** (PhD program, Electrical and Computer Engineering) was elected to serve on this Task Force.

### **4) Festival of Teaching Steering Committee (1 position)**

The GSA's delegate position on the Festival of Teaching Steering Committee was advertised through the GSA Newsletter in August and **two** strong applications were received. **Renate Kahlk** (PhD program, Educational Policy Studies) was elected to serve as the GSA's delegate on this committee.

### **5) Museums Policy and Planning Committee (1 position)**

The committee terms of reference state that the graduate student representative "may serve to a maximum of three consecutive terms." The Nominating Committee appointed **Maryna Chernyvaska** (MLIS program, Library and Information Studies) to serve for a **third term** on this committee.

### **6) Art Acquisitions Committee (1 position)**

The committee terms of reference state that the term for the graduate student representative is renewable for two consecutive terms. The Nominating Committee appointed **Svitlana Panenko** (PhD program, Modern Languages and Cultural Studies) to serve for a **second term** on this committee.

**GSA Vice-President Academic  
Report to Council for August 18, 2014 GSA Council Meeting**

To: GSA Council  
From: Colin More  
Date: August 15, 2014

Hello Council!

I'm afraid I haven't much to report this month, though September promises to be interesting on a number of levels. That's because the administration intends to push out several initiatives, the main one of interest to me being **graduate reform**. Even at this late date, it is unclear what areas it will encompass, though it could be as wide-reaching as pay, supervision, program design, and program control. We'll know much more when we actually see the report, but that won't be until sometime after the Dean's Retreat on August 28th.

The other item in my portfolio that's worth mentioning is our internal efforts on **graduate supervision**. **I have made an action plan, based on Dr. Naomi Krogman's report, that is currently being reviewed by the GSA Board.** This will hopefully be shared with you in September, along with research on the subject from an RA hired by FGSR. There are several high-impact items we should be able to implement without too much time or trouble, and several others worth pursuing for the rest of the year. Stay tuned!

So until the September Council meeting, best of luck with your research and enjoy what remains of this glorious, undergraduate-free summer!

Cheers,

Colin More, Vice-President Academic

*Please find below a list of meetings I attended between July 14, 2014 to August 15, 2014.*

July 14	SU VP Academic
July 17	Students' Union
July 17	Dean of Students
July 21	SU VP Academic
July 22	SU Croquet
July 24	Dean of FGSR
July 28	SU VP Academic
August 12	SU, Vice-Provosts, Linda Duncan Croquet
August 13	Professional Development Working Group #3
August 15	Graduate Student Ombudsperson

**GSA Vice-President Student Services  
Report to Council for August 18, 2014 GSA Council Meeting**

To: GSA Council  
From: Megha Bajaj  
Date: August 15, 2014

Dear Council Colleagues,

Hope the summer is going well for you so far. This month has been rather busy for me and I had lot of important GSA meetings this month.

Below is an update of some meetings I attended since last council:

**Leadership Conference Advisory Meeting:**

- The leadership conference has been scheduled for **January 31, 2015**, by **Student Group Services (SGS) from the Office of Dean of Students**.
- The conference will be **open to all U of A students** and we are also discussing the possibility of opening it up for students from other institutions in Edmonton.
- General theme for the conference: Reflection into action, tackling current issues and strategies for getting involved and making a difference in the community.
- The format will be to have keynote speakers and smaller breakout sessions which will be more of an interactive, workshop kind of format. The advisory group is finalizing the details at this point.
- There is a possibility of incorporating a poster session into the program. There will also be a networking session towards the end of the conference to give a chance to mingle with the speakers and other student attendees.
- A nominal fee will be charged to students who are interested in attending the conference, which will cover the cost of food and beverage for the day.

I will bring details to council as and when they get finalized, so stay tuned!

**Entrepreneurship Week Steering Committee:**

- CAPS hosted their first Entrepreneurship Week last year in collaboration with eHUB and StartUp Edmonton and it was successful with lots of good feedback from students.
- The event this year is **free for all students** to attend and it will be tentatively held in **October 2014**. The format of the event will be keynote speaker sessions, lecture sessions, networking sessions with young entrepreneurs from Edmonton, and workshops to get hands-on-experience on business/entrepreneurship problems.
- There is also the possibility of including a session targeted specifically for **International students**. Something in the lines of: **'Tips for the Self-Employed and Entrepreneurs' – how international students can think about becoming a Canadian citizen through the entrepreneurship route.**

I am really excited about this event and I think this is a great opportunity for anyone interested in learning more about entrepreneurship. It also ties in with professional development. This was the first meeting to plan this year's event. I will bring more information to Council as the discussion takes shape.

**Multicultural event steering committee meeting:**

- University of Alberta International (UAI) is planning a **multicultural event to kick off the I-week**, which takes place every year in late January.
- Tentative schedule for this event is **January 26, 2015. The Alumni Association has offered to fund the major part of this event.**
- The vision for this event is to give students on campus an opportunity to **experience culture from various countries**. There will be booths hosted by various student-run cultural association on campus. **Food and performances** will be part of this event and it will be somewhat **similar to the city's Heritage Festival**.
- Call for proposals and participation will be sent out by UAI by September 2014, so watch out for details in the coming month.

**Meeting with Alumni Association for North Power Plant redevelopment:**

- This is a follow up to the work that I have been doing in the past year during my term as the VP-SS with the GSA. The GSA and the SU have been working together for some years in building a vision for **the repurposing and redevelopment of the North Power Plant (NPP)**.
- I, along with the SU, met with **Sean Price (Associate Vice-President Alumni Relations)** to discuss the possibility of partnering on the NPP project. Other than making the NPP a safe drinking space and a place for social engagement for everyone on campus, the **GSA's vision is also to make it a hub for career development and mentorship type of events**.
- I discussed the possibility of giving some space to Alumni in the NPP where they could initiate mentorship and professional development activities for students on campus. Alumni Association seemed on board with this idea as it is in line with their priorities too. We will be having further discussions with Sean in the coming months and I will continue to push this project forward.

That is all for now. As always please feel free to get in touch with me if you have any questions, concerns or suggestions. See you in September!

Sincerely,

Megha Bajaj, GSA Vice-President Student Services

*Please find below a list of meetings I attended between July 14, 2014 and August 15, 2014.*

July 16	Health and Dental
July 17	U-Pass Admin
July 17	U-Pass Advisory
July 17	Students' Union
July 21	ISS Cultural Event Steering Committee
July 22	PAW Steering Committee
July 22	SU Croquet
July 22	CAPS StartUP U
July 25	SU VP Finance
July 29	Sean Price (Alumni Affairs)
July 30	ISS Meet and Greet
July 31	NPP Tour
August 6	Forging a Nation Reception

August 14	Student Group Services
August 15	Graduate Student Ombudsperson
August 15	Meeting with a Student re Health and Dental

**GSA Vice-President External  
Report to Council for August 18, 2014 GSA Council Meeting**

To: GSA Council  
From: Susan Cake  
Date: August 15, 2014

Dear Council Colleagues,

I hope everyone is taking some time for themselves before embarking on the next semester in less than a month.

For the past month I have continued working on various tasks and goals. I have continued to attend **meetings with the provincial government on Tuition for the Post-Secondary Sector in Alberta**. Along with this group I have also attended, as the graduate student representative, the government's **Tuition and Fees Guidelines Subcommittee** which is working to define tuition and fees. Both of these groups are discussing some exciting things and I continue to push to ensure graduate students are taken into account.

This past month I also attended a meeting of **student leaders in Edmonton**. This was a great chance to **share information and goals for the year and ensure we are advocating locally as well as provincially**. In addition, on the advocacy front I had a chance to attend the **GU15** with GSA President Nathan Andrews. This group is modeled after the U15 research-intensive universities in Canada and held their last meeting in Montreal. Once again, this was a great chance to **share information and identify common federal-level advocacy goals** that each graduate student group would like to achieve. Some of the current topics identified include: **indirect research costs, international student assistance, mental health initiatives, and quality supervision**.

Some ongoing projects under my portfolio that I have attended to this past month include prayer space, the provincial advocacy group for graduate students, and flexible leases for graduate students. There should be more to report at September Council concerning these two initiatives.

If you have any questions or concerns please do not hesitate to contact me as needed.

Take care,

Susan Cake, GSA Vice-President External

*Please find below a list of meetings I attended between July 14, 2014 to August 15, 2014.*

July 9	President Samarasekera
July 10	B Epperson re Professional Development
July 17	Prayer Space
July 17	Students' Union
July 21	IAE Tuition Working Group
July 22	SU Croquet
July 25	Edmonton Student Conference
July 28	ab-GPAC



July 31	Bev Eastham (CAUS)
August 6-8	GU15
August 12	SU, Vice-Provosts, Linda Duncan Croquet
August 12	Bev Eastham (CAUS)
August 13	Tuition and Fees Guidelines Subcommittee

**GSA Vice-President Labour  
Report to Council for August 18, 2014 GSA Council Meeting**

To: GSA Council  
From: Monty Bal  
Date: August 15, 2014

Dear Council Colleagues,

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

**Collective Agreement**

As you know from our August 12, 2014 Special Meeting of GSA Council, after a long and complex round of negotiations, the **GSA finally came to agreement with administration regarding a new AEGS Collective Agreement for 2014-2016**. We feel there were a number of gains made for students regarding the rights afforded them in the new Agreement, as well as a fair settlement with regards to AEGS compensation and the Graduate Student Support Fund. **Concluding a two year agreement also provides benefit for the GSA as it allows the GSA and administration to turn their attention back to the issue of compliance**. I'd especially like to thank the councillors who were able to make it to the special meeting to ratify the new agreement and the GSA Management for helping move the process forward. Thanks to the GSA office staff for getting the materials out for the meeting in such a short period of time for the Special Meeting.

**Vice Provosts Council Meeting**

GSA President Nathan Andrews, GSA Executive Director Ellen Schoeck, and I were invited to present to the **Vice-Provosts' Council** recently. This meeting was requested after several Vice-Provosts who had visited the GSA Board previously were made aware of the issue of non-compliance for the Collective Agreement. **We were able to present about issues that students still face, including lack of contracts, funding cuts to their TA/RAs, changes made by departments to funding as a result of funding cuts in the last year, and HR payroll problems**. We felt that the Vice-Provosts Council members engaged with us in open dialogue about these problems and sent us a message that they are now focused on the issue and will work harder to target faculties and departments who are not in compliance with the agreement. **We look forward to working with leadership from the Provost's office and FGSR to make the campus compliant with the new CA**.

**Healthy Campus: World Cafe Planning**

I met with a number of representatives from the campus community to **develop a plan for the World Cafe** to be held sometime in the upcoming semester which would attempt to bring together the wider campus community to work on the **issues of mental healthiness and developing a comprehensive strategy for mental health on campus**. We will now work to reach out to important actors in administration and community leaders on campus to gain their support for the effort. It is hoped that after we have attained their support, we can move to the leaders on campus (ie, the various organizational unit presidents) and ensure that this initiative will have traction and provide real change for those interested in creating a healthier campus.

**LiveWell Student Wellness Initiative**

I met with representative from **Fitness and Recreation** to discuss many of the changes they have made for student services this year. We were notified about a number of **free classes and programs offered**

**through the LiveWell initiative, as well as a 10% cut in costs for other programs Fitness and Recreation offers.** They have also instituted a **no-cost model for sports games of U of A teams.** We also expressed interest in providing a mechanism to notify students about these events and were told that they would work harder to provide increased programming opportunities in the winter time for students.

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), GSA Vice-President Labour

*Please find below a list of meetings I attended between July 14, 2014 to August 15, 2014.*

July 16	Collective Bargaining
July 17	Students' Union
July 22	SU Croquet
July 25	Protective Services Commission GSA Rep
August 6	Forging a Nation Reception
August 7	Physical Therapy Departmental Orientation
August 7	World Café Planning
August 11	Vice-Provosts' Council
August 12	SU, Vice-Provosts, Linda Duncan Croquet
August 14	LiveWell Update
August 14	Transitions Orientation Meeting

**GSA Senator  
Report to Council for August 18, 2014**

To: GSA Council  
From: Gary Barron  
Date: August 15, 2014

Dear Council Colleagues,

First, I want to thank Council for electing me to Senate. I look forward to serving graduate students in this role, and to the coming year. Hopefully I will have a chance to get to know some of you through our Council meetings, GFC, and any other events that come up this year.

I have little to report at this time, given that I was only recently elected, and began my term in July. However, I will take this opportunity to provide a brief introduction to the Senate, my role there, and an update on the Senate Task Force on Community Engagement.

The purpose of Senate - according to Alberta's *Post-Secondary Learning Act* (Section 13(1))- is "to inquire into any matter that might benefit the University and enhance its position in the community." As such, my role is to engage with other Senators (made up of public, business, and government representatives) in order to: inquire into matters of importance in post-secondary education; promote the University of Alberta; and build relationships locally, nationally and internationally. The Senate has a number of committees and programs that are ongoing in order to fulfill its mandate. You can read more about the Senate at the following URL: <http://www.senate.ualberta.ca/>. The current project that is likely of greatest interest and concern to graduate students is the Senate Task Force on Community Engagement.

The Task Force is the product of a couple of years of planning and began its formal work this spring. The Senate has partnered with the Faculty of Extension in order to better understand what Albertans think of the University, but primarily to learn about how the University of Alberta can better engage with communities. In order to do this, a number of focus groups involving community members across Alberta have been held this summer and there will be more this fall. Focus groups are being formed by asking Senators to contact their personal and professional networks for individuals interested in taking part. Each focus group is then hosted by a Senator and conducted by a researcher from the Faculty of Extension. Senators are not allowed to take part in the focus group, only watch and listen. Moreover, once a focus group has been completed the hosting Senator is not allowed to share results with other Senators in order to prevent the discussion at future focus groups from being influenced. I plan to host two focus groups, one in Edmonton in partnership with the GSA (who will be inviting participants) and one in Calgary. The focus group in Calgary will be composed of the personal and business contacts I have there. A report on results should be available in spring of 2015.

Enjoy the rest of your Summer, don't forget to take a break and relax a little before the impending crush of Fall semester.

Best regards,

Gary Barron, GSA Senator

**GSA Elections and Referenda Committee and Chief Returning Officer  
Report to Council for August 18, 2014 GSA Council Meeting**

To: GSA Council  
From: Hamman Samuel, GSA CRO  
Date: August 15, 2014

Dear Council Colleagues,

The ERC has been active in reviewing the President's Task Force Report on Elections Bylaw and Policy Report which was presented at the July 14, 2014 meeting of GSA Council. We have also been reviewing the subsequent discussions from Council on the Task Force Report. The GSA office has also been doing research on key topics, including a review of election reports from other student associations (U of T and McGill) and a media scan of student association elections issues in 2014, which I am in the process of reviewing. Another focus has been voter turnout and candidate participation statistics from previous GSA elections. I have also been working to connect with previous Students' Union CROs to learn more about the position. I'm also reading an interesting book, 'Getting to Yes', a classic best-seller on negotiating personal and professional disputes and coming to mutually acceptable agreements.

The main agenda items and topics of discussion have included:

- Suggestion for a code of ethics
- Increasing voter turnout and number of candidates for General Elections
- Issue of campaigning in unsafe spaces (eg, chemistry labs)
- Hiring a CRO versus electing a CRO and importance of developing a clear job description and a list of competencies, qualifications, and training standards for this position (the GSA office is working to research job descriptions and competencies of CRO positions at other student associations in Canada)

I will be reporting on these discussions in some detail both orally and in writing at the September 22, 2014 meeting of GSA Council.

Feel free to contact me with any questions before the September meeting of GSA Council:  
[gsa.elections@ualberta.ca](mailto:gsa.elections@ualberta.ca)

Best regards,

Hamman Samuel  
Chief Returning Officer and Chair of the GSA Elections and Referenda Committee

**GSA Executive Director  
Report to Council for August 18, 2014 GSA Council Meeting**

To: GSA Council  
From: Ellen Schoeck, GSA Executive Director  
Date: August 18, 2014

Dear Council,

I want to take this opportunity to update you on some of the key issues that the GSA office has been working on over the summer. Although summer is sometimes thought of as a time of relaxation, at the GSA it is one of our busiest periods and we just go-go-go!

- We are busy at work **reviewing our Bylaw and Policy documents**. We have brought in former GSA President Roy Coulthard to oversee this review.
- We are moving forward with **external consultants on reviews of governance, internal operations, HR systems, and training in fair process**.
- Another key issue we are working on is **staff stability**. **This is an exciting time in the GSA office, as we are able to be forward-thinking about the evolving ways to support the GSA in what it wants to do.**
- We've also brought in a professional for two weeks to look at **ALL** of our communication pieces. **The goal is to ensure that the GSA is being consistently represented in any public presentation, so that people who are new to the University, or apart from the University, can learn and understand about the important role that the GSA plays for graduate student governance and advocacy at the U of A and beyond.**
- We have been hard at work getting the **2014-2015 Agenda/Handbook** prepared, and expect to receive our order any day now, just in time to hand out at Fall Orientation and during departmental orientations.
- **Fall Orientation is scheduled for Friday, August 29**. If you are interested in **volunteering** to greet new graduate students, just **contact the GSA office**.
- To date, we have received **29 requests for GSA presentations at departmental orientations** - and still expect to receive more. **Watch for a request for you to participate in those orientations to inform new graduate students about your role as their GSA Councillor!**
- Finally, we have been organizing a new, hopefully to become annual, fall event for all graduate students - a **Mix and Mingle event on September 24, co-hosted by the GSA and the Alumni Association (who are generously sponsoring the event)**. Watch for an invitation to Council to come shortly!

Feel free to contact me with any questions you might have!

Best,

Ellen Schoeck, GSA Executive Director

## Management Report to the GSA Board, July 16, 2014

Dear All,

The following issues have dominated management's attention in the week since the last GSA Board meeting on July 9, 2014:

### Strategic

- **Main Issues Dealt With in the Past Week:** Safety issues and review of safety procedures, meetings with Robin Everall and UAPS, meeting with CJSR, consistent messaging on key issues (preparing for a meeting with the SU and ongoing internal discussion of GSA consistent messaging), last week's meetings with the Provost and Vice-President (Academic) and the President, ab-GPAC, ongoing thought on a GSA communications strategy, Budget 101 and Health and Dental 101 training sessions, ramping up planning for Fall Orientation and DLI (eg, hiring a coordinator for the Chili Social, designing GSA posters, etc), PAW fee (sending a joint letter from the GSA and SU Presidents to the RO regarding the naming of the fee, resulting in a win for the GSA and SU), forward thinking on Health and Dental agreement renewal (current agreement expires August 31, 2015), Council follow up and action, drafting feedback sought by the Provincial government's Tuition Working Group, meeting with Russ Farmer (governance/infrastructure review) and preparing for meetings with Iva Spence (procedural fairness), and Melanie Goroniuk (HR).
- **Collective Agreement negotiations and GSSF funding.**
- **Bylaw and Policy Review** – extending R Coulthard's contract to focus on bylaw and policy review in August (**Editorial:** integrating bylaw and policy into one document (a draft has been prepared and is being reviewed), a review of all bylaws and policies for inconsistencies and errors, and creating a "definitions" section and **Substantive:** thinking regarding a review of the Board Policy Manual, and a targeted focus on some specific policies, is underway. Changes to simplify Bylaw on the Health and Dental Plan are being developed).
- **Graduate Student Groups:** renewing the MOU with the Dean of Student and Student Group Services, template constitution, alcohol liability waiver, ability for the GSA to assist groups experiencing governance issues, **the next stage of the Department Liaison Initiative and connecting effectively with constituents (getting into departments), assisting groups experiencing registration difficulties with SGS (feedback on the process received from graduate student groups was submitted to SGS and R Everall – a meeting to further discuss streamlining processes will be scheduled).** Planning for Fall Orientation and departmental orientations has begun and thinking on next steps related to the DLI is ongoing. Examining sources of funding for graduate student groups from across campus with an aim to providing a comprehensive list to graduate student groups.

### Grants and Operations

- **Social Media:** Facebook = 387 likes (up 0 from July 9), Twitter = 224 followers (down 1 from July 9) and a **review of the GSA website (suggested changes are being integrated into a shadow site for future review by DEOs, Speaker, and select Councillors).**
- **Grants review and processing:** (**NOTE:** THE CURRENT GRANTING PERIOD OPENED ON JULY 1 BUT, AS COLLECTIVE BARGAINING HAS NOT BEEN CONCLUDED, FUNDS HAVE NOT BEEN REPLENISHED FOR PDAs, CCGs, and EBs (ASGAs ARE FUNDED FROM THE GSA'S OPERATING BUDGET). APPLICATIONS ARE BEING ACCEPTED BUT INFORMATION IS PROVIDED, PROMINENTLY, ON THE WEBSITE NOTIFYING GRADUATE STUDENTS THAT THEY WILL NOT RECEIVE FUNDS UNTIL THE GSSF IS REPLENISHED. ALL APPLICANTS WILL BE ALSO BE INFORMED BY EMAIL WHEN THEY SUBMIT AN APPLICATION AND WILL BE NOTIFIED WHEN THEIR APPLICATION IS PROCESSED) **Professional Development Awards (no funds – period opened with \$0, should have been approx. \$95,126 available for the period of which \$68,966 remains)** and 54 applications submitted this period (36 pending processing), **Childcare Grants – APPLICATIONS CLOSED (no funds – period opened with \$0, should have been approx. \$39,741 available for the period, of which \$5,741 remains)** and 24 applications submitted this period, **Academically-Related Student Group Awards closed (period opened with \$3,886)** and 0 applications submitted this period, **Emergency Bursaries (no funds – no periods but there should have been approx. \$109,820 available for the fiscal year)** and 10 applications submitted since April 1, 2014, which were processed using funds carried over from 2013-2014 and the \$50,000 advance on the GSSF provided by the University on May 22, 2014.

### Week in Review – Office Operations:

- Compiling the **GSA Media Tracker** and assisting with **ongoing thought on GSA communications and connecting to constituents via events like the Chili Social (planning is underway).**
- **Research on elections bylaws and policies** at GU15 institutions and **EA vacation coverage.**
- Developing a **master list of all delegates** on various committees, working groups, etc and a **list of GSA committee members on the GSA website**, and assisting the Nominating Committee with **filling vacancies on several committees** (Festival of Teaching Steering Committee, TRAM Committee, Protective Services Commission, Athletics and Recreation Fee Advisory Committee).

## Management Report to the GSA Board, July 23, 2014

Dear All,

The following issues have dominated management's attention in the week since the last GSA Board meeting on July 16, 2014:

### Strategic

- **Main Issues Dealt With in the Past Week:** Thorough review of all internal safety procedures (and meetings with Natalie Sharpe, Becky Ponting, Chris Hackett, and FGSR), croquet with the SU, ramping up planning for Fall Orientation and DLI (eg, hiring a coordinator for the Chili Social, designing GSA posters, etc), forward thinking on Health and Dental agreement renewal (current agreement expires August 31, 2015) and a review of the current agreement with the lawyers, PAW Strategic Operating Committee, revisions to staff job descriptions and workloads, Departmental Groups Liaison, sending the GSA Audited Financial Statements to the BoG, finalizing the GSA Agenda/Handbook, moving forward with external consultants on reviews of governance, internal operations, HR systems, training in fair process, GSA communications strategy.
- **Wrapping up Collective Agreement negotiations and forward thinking on GSSF funding.**
- **Bylaw and Policy Review** – extending R Coulthard's contract to focus on bylaw and policy review in August (**Editorial:** integrating bylaw and policy into one document (a draft has been prepared and is being reviewed), a review of all bylaws and policies for inconsistencies and errors, and creating a "definitions" section and **Substantive:** thinking regarding a review of the Board Policy Manual, and a targeted focus on some specific policies, is underway. Changes to simplify Bylaw on the Health and Dental Plan are being developed).
- **Graduate Student Groups:** renewing the MOU with the Dean of Student and Student Group Services, template constitution, alcohol liability waiver, ability for the GSA to assist groups experiencing governance issues, **the next stage of the Department Liaison Initiative (getting into departments) and connecting effectively with constituents (getting into departments), assisting groups experiencing registration difficulties with SGS (feedback on the process received from graduate student groups was submitted to SGS and R Overall – a meeting to further discuss streamlining processes has been scheduled).** Planning for Fall Orientation and departmental orientations has begun and thinking on next steps related to the DLI is ongoing. Examining sources of funding for graduate student groups from across campus with an aim to providing a comprehensive list to graduate student groups. Forward thinking on ways to better acknowledge the contributions and activities of graduate student groups.

### Grants and Operations

- **Social Media:** Facebook = 392 likes (up 5 from July 16), Twitter = 231 followers (down 7 from July 16) and a **review of the GSA website (suggested changes are being integrated into a shadow site for future review by DEOs, Speaker, and select Councillors).**
- **Grants review and processing:** (**NOTE:** THE CURRENT GRANTING PERIOD OPENED ON JULY 1 BUT, AS COLLECTIVE BARGAINING HAS NOT BEEN CONCLUDED, FUNDS HAVE NOT BEEN REPLENISHED FOR PDAs, CCGs, and EBs (ASGAs ARE FUNDED FROM THE GSA'S OPERATING BUDGET). APPLICATIONS ARE BEING ACCEPTED BUT INFORMATION IS PROVIDED, PROMINENTLY, ON THE WEBSITE NOTIFYING GRADUATE STUDENTS THAT THEY WILL NOT RECEIVE FUNDS UNTIL THE GSSF IS REPLENISHED. ALL APPLICANTS WILL BE ALSO BE INFORMED BY EMAIL WHEN THEY SUBMIT AN APPLICATION AND WILL BE NOTIFIED WHEN THEIR APPLICATION IS PROCESSED) **Professional Development Awards (no funds – period opened with \$0, should have been approx. \$95,126 available for the period of which \$59,628 remains)** and 73 applications submitted this period (19 pending processing), **Childcare Grants – APPLICATIONS CLOSED (no funds – period opened with \$0, should have been approx. \$39,741 available for the period, of which \$5,741 remains)** and 24 applications submitted this period, **Academically-Related Student Group Awards closed (period opened with \$3,886)** and 0 applications submitted this period, **Emergency Bursaries (no funds – no periods but there should have been approx. \$109,820 available for the fiscal year)** and 10 applications submitted since April 1, 2014, which were processed using funds carried over from 2013-2014 and the \$50,000 advance on the GSSF provided by the University on May 22, 2014.

### Week in Review – Office Operations:

- Compiling the **GSA Media Tracker** and assisting with **ongoing thought on GSA communications and connecting to constituents via events like the Chili Social (planning is underway).** Assisting with **planning for fall orientation and departmental orientations.**
- **Council follow up.**
- **Research on elections bylaws and policies** at GU15 institutions and **ERC support.**
- Developing a **list of GSA committee members on the GSA website**, and assisting the Nominating Committee with **filling vacancies on several committees** (Festival of Teaching Steering Committee, Athletics and Recreation Fee Advisory Committee, etc).



## Management Report to the GSA Board, July 30, 2014

Dear All,

The following issues have dominated management's attention in the week since the last GSA Board meeting on July 23, 2014:

### Strategic

- **Main Issues Dealt With in the Past Week:** Meeting with the Community Helpers program to discuss their services and potential training modules for staff and Directly-Elected Officers, Health and Dental Reserve Fund three-year plan and attendant proposed revisions to GSA Bylaw on the Health and Dental plan, consistent messaging with regards to GSA communications, background on CJSR and AGC referenda and examining GSA Bylaw and Policy on referenda, ramping up planning for Fall Orientation, DLI, and the Chili Social, Health and Dental agreement renewal (current agreement expires August 31, 2015) and unscheduled meetings with K Foster (Monday was devoted entirely to Health and Dental), PAW Strategic Operating Committee, Departmental Groups Liaison, post-Council questions regarding the approved increase to vision coverage, finalizing the GSA Agenda/Handbook, and moving forward with external consultants on reviews of governance, internal operations, HR systems, training in fair process, GSA communications strategy.
- **Wrapping up Collective Agreement negotiations and forward thinking on GSSF funding.**
- **Bylaw and Policy Review** – extending R Coulthard's contract to focus on bylaw and policy review in August (**Editorial:** integrating bylaw and policy into one document (a draft has been prepared and is being reviewed), a review of all bylaws and policies for inconsistencies and errors, and creating a "definitions" section and **Substantive:** thinking regarding a review of the Board Policy Manual, and a targeted focus on some specific policies, is underway.
- **Graduate Student Groups:** renewing the MOU with the Dean of Student and Student Group Services, template constitution, alcohol liability waiver, ability for the GSA to assist groups experiencing governance issues, **the next stage of the Department Liaison Initiative (getting into departments) and connecting effectively with constituents, assisting groups experiencing registration difficulties with SGS (feedback on the process received from graduate student groups was submitted to SGS and R Overall – a meeting to further discuss streamlining processes has been scheduled).** Planning for Fall Orientation and departmental orientations has begun and thinking on next steps related to the DLI is ongoing. Examining sources of funding for graduate student groups from across campus with an aim to providing a comprehensive list to graduate student groups. Forward thinking on ways to better acknowledge the contributions and activities of graduate student groups.

### Grants and Operations

- **Social Media:** Facebook = 398 likes (up 6 from July 23), Twitter = 232 followers (up 1 from July 23) and a **review of the GSA website (suggested changes are being integrated into a shadow site for a focus group style review by DEOs, Speaker, and select Councillors).**
- **Grants review and processing:** (**NOTE:** THE CURRENT GRANTING PERIOD OPENED ON JULY 1 BUT, AS COLLECTIVE BARGAINING HAS NOT BEEN CONCLUDED, FUNDS HAVE NOT BEEN REPLENISHED FOR PDAs, CCGs, and EBs (ASGAs ARE FUNDED FROM THE GSA'S OPERATING BUDGET). APPLICATIONS ARE BEING ACCEPTED BUT INFORMATION IS PROVIDED, PROMINENTLY, ON THE WEBSITE NOTIFYING GRADUATE STUDENTS THAT THEY WILL NOT RECEIVE FUNDS UNTIL THE GSSF IS REPLENISHED. ALL APPLICANTS WILL BE ALSO BE INFORMED BY EMAIL WHEN THEY SUBMIT AN APPLICATION AND WILL BE NOTIFIED WHEN THEIR APPLICATION IS PROCESSED) **Professional Development Awards (no funds – period opened with \$0, should have been approx. \$95,126 available for the period of which \$59,629 remains)** and 73 applications submitted this period (4 pending processing), **Childcare Grants – APPLICATIONS CLOSED (no funds – period opened with \$0, should have been approx. \$39,741 available for the period, of which \$4,741 remains)** and 25 applications submitted this period, **Academically-Related Student Group Awards closed (period opened with \$3,886, of which \$2,387 remains)** and 1 application submitted this period, **Emergency Bursaries (no funds – no periods but there should have been approx. \$109,820 available for the fiscal year)** and 10 applications totaling \$18,837 submitted since April 1, 2014, which were processed using funds carried over from 2013-2014 and the \$50,000 advance on the GSSF provided by the University on May 22, 2014.

### Week in Review – Office Operations:

- Compiling the **GSA Media Tracker** and assisting with **ongoing thought on GSA communications and connecting to constituents via events like the Chili Social (planning is underway).** Assisting with **planning for fall orientation and departmental orientations.**
- Building **wiki pages on key issues** (ie, MNIFs).
- **Research on elections bylaws and policies** at GU15 institutions and **ERC support.**
- Developing a **list of GSA committee members on the GSA website**, and assisting the Nominating Committee with **filling vacancies on several committees** (Festival of Teaching Steering Committee, working on FGSR Council positions, as well as the Sustainability Advisory Committee, and Information Technology Advisory Committee, and the GFC ASC, GFS ASC SOS delegate position).

## Management Report to the GSA Board, August 6, 2014

Dear All,

The following issues have dominated management's attention in the week since the last GSA Board meeting on July 30, 2014:

### Strategic

- **Main Issues Dealt With in the Past Week:** Health and Dental Reserve Fund (HDPRF) four-year plan and attendant proposed revisions to GSA Bylaw on the Health and Dental Plan and HDPRF, developing a GSA communications strategy (hiring a subject matter expert), looking for alternate spaces to hold GSA Council (Telus 1-34 will no longer be bookable beginning in September as UAI begins to move into the Telus Centre), background on CJSR and AGC referenda and examining GSA Bylaw and Policy on referenda, planning for Fall Orientation and departmental orientations, Chili Social planning (scouting locations, meeting with caterer, logistics, etc), Health and Dental agreement renewal (current agreement expires August 31, 2015), strategic thinking about a Departmental Groups Liaison and setting up DLI meetings with selected departmental GSAs, post-Council questions regarding the approved increase to vision coverage, researching PR services offered at U15 institutions, PAW communications plan to graduate students with respect to the opening of PAW and the collection of the PAW fee, and moving forward with external consultants on reviews of governance, internal operations, HR systems, and training in fair process.
- **Wrapping up Collective Agreement negotiations, forward thinking on GSSF funding, and developing a GSSF budget.**
- **Bylaw and Policy Review** – R Coulthard's contract has been extended to focus on bylaw and policy review in August (**Editorial:** integrating bylaw and policy into one document (a draft has been prepared and is being reviewed), a review of all bylaws and policies for inconsistencies and errors, and creating a "definitions" section and **Substantive:** thinking regarding a review of the Board Policy Manual, and a targeted focus on some specific policies, is underway.
- **Graduate Student Groups:** renewing the MOU with the Dean of Student and Student Group Services, template constitution, alcohol liability waiver, ability for the GSA to assist groups experiencing governance issues, **the next stage of the Department Liaison Initiative (getting into departments) and connecting effectively with constituents, assisting groups experiencing registration difficulties with SGS (feedback on the process received from graduate student groups was submitted to SGS and R Overall – a meeting to further discuss streamlining processes has been scheduled).** Examining sources of funding for graduate student groups from across campus with an aim to providing a comprehensive list to graduate student groups. Thinking on ways to better acknowledge the contributions and activities of graduate student groups.

### Grants and Operations

- **Social Media:** Facebook = 401 likes (up 3 from July 30), Twitter = 232 followers (up 0 from July 30) and a **review of the GSA website (suggested changes are being integrated into a shadow site for a focus group style review by DEOs, Speaker, and select Councillors).**
- **Grants review and processing:** (**NOTE:** THE CURRENT GRANTING PERIOD OPENED ON JULY 1 BUT, AS COLLECTIVE BARGAINING HAS NOT YET BEEN CONCLUDED (A SPECIAL MEETING OF GSA COUNCIL TO CONSIDER RATIFICATION WILL OCCUR SOON), FUNDS HAVE NOT BEEN REPLENISHED FOR PDAs, CCGs, and EBs (ASGAs ARE FUNDED FROM THE GSA'S OPERATING BUDGET). APPLICATIONS ARE BEING ACCEPTED BUT INFORMATION IS PROVIDED, PROMINENTLY, ON THE WEBSITE NOTIFYING GRADUATE STUDENTS THAT THEY WILL NOT RECEIVE FUNDS UNTIL THE GSSF IS REPLENISHED. ALL APPLICANTS WILL BE ALSO BE INFORMED BY EMAIL WHEN THEY SUBMIT AN APPLICATION AND WILL BE NOTIFIED WHEN THEIR APPLICATION IS PROCESSED) **Professional Development Awards (no funds – period opened with \$0, had we received the same amount as last year the balance would have been approx. \$95,126 available for the period of which \$53,825 remains)** and 85 applications submitted this period (13 pending processing), **Childcare Grants – APPLICATIONS CLOSED (no funds – period opened with \$0, had we received the same amount as last year the balance would have been approx. \$39,741 available for the period, of which \$3,741 remains)** and 26 applications submitted this period, **Academically-Related Student Group Awards closed (period opened with \$3,886, of which \$2,387 remains)** and 1 application submitted this period, **Emergency Bursaries (no funds – no periods but had we received the same amount as last year there would have been approx. \$109,820 available for the fiscal year)** and 10 applications totaling \$18,837 submitted since April 1, 2014, which were processed using funds carried over from 2013-2014 and the \$50,000 advance on the GSSF provided by the University on May 22, 2014.

### Week in Review – Office Operations:

- Compiling the **GSA Media Tracker** and assisting with **planning for fall orientation and departmental orientations.**
- Building **wiki pages on key issues** (ie, MNIFs).
- **Research on elections bylaws and policies** at GU15 institutions, **ERC support**, and Early Call for Talent planning.
- Developing a **list of GSA committee members on the GSA website**, and assisting the Nominating Committee with **filling vacancies on several committees** (FGSR Council, etc).

## Management Report to the GSA Board, August 13, 2014

Dear All,

The following issues have dominated management's attention in the week since the last GSA Board meeting on August 6, 2014:

### Strategic

- **Main Issues Dealt With in the Past Week:** Collective Agreement (conclusion of negotiations and a special meeting of GSA Council), presentation to VPC, croquet with the SU, Vice-Provosts, and Linda Duncan, Health and Dental Reserve Fund (HDPRF) four-year plan and attendant proposed revisions to GSA Bylaw on the Health and Dental Plan and HDPRF, looking for alternate spaces to hold GSA Council (Telus 1-34 will no longer be bookable beginning in September as UAI begins to move into the Telus Centre), GU15 debrief, developing a GSA communications strategy (hiring a subject matter expert), planning for Fall Orientation and departmental orientations (first departmental orientation, for Physical Therapy, was held on August 7), Chili Social planning (drafting a program and invitation and reaching out to S Price to discuss having "mentors" in attendance), Health and Dental agreement renewal (current agreement expires August 31, 2015), and moving forward with external consultants on reviews of governance, internal operations, HR systems, and training in fair process.
- **Bylaw and Policy Review** – R Coulthard's contract has been extended to focus on Bylaw and Policy review in August (**Editorial:** integrating bylaw and policy into one document (a draft has been prepared and is being reviewed), a review of all Bylaws and Policies for inconsistencies and errors, and creating a "definitions" section and **Substantive:** thinking regarding a review of the Board Policy Manual, and a targeted focus on some specific policies, is underway.
- **Graduate Student Groups:** renewing the MOU with the Dean of Student and Student Group Services, template constitution, alcohol liability waiver, ability for the GSA to assist groups experiencing governance issues, **the next stage of the Department Liaison Initiative (getting into departments) and connecting effectively with constituents, assisting groups experiencing registration difficulties with SGS (feedback on the process received from graduate student groups was submitted to SGS and R Overall – a meeting to further discuss streamlining processes has been scheduled for August 14).** Examining sources of funding for graduate student groups from across campus with an aim to providing a comprehensive list to graduate student groups. Allocation of grants based on attendance at GSA Council. Thinking on ways to better acknowledge the contributions and activities of graduate student groups.

### Grants and Operations

- **Social Media:** Facebook = 433 likes (up 32 from August 6), Twitter = 242 followers (up 10 from August 6) and a **review of the GSA website (suggested changes are being integrated into a shadow site for a focus group style review by DEOs, Speaker, and select Councillors).**
- **Grants review and processing:** (**NOTE:** THE CURRENT GRANTING PERIOD OPENED ON JULY 1 BUT, AS COLLECTIVE BARGAINING HAS NOT YET BEEN CONCLUDED (A SPECIAL MEETING OF GSA COUNCIL TO CONSIDER RATIFICATION WILL OCCUR SOON), FUNDS HAVE NOT BEEN REPLENISHED FOR PDAs, CCGs, and EBs (ASGAs ARE FUNDED FROM THE GSA'S OPERATING BUDGET). APPLICATIONS ARE BEING ACCEPTED BUT INFORMATION IS PROVIDED, PROMINENTLY, ON THE WEBSITE NOTIFYING GRADUATE STUDENTS THAT THEY WILL RECEIVE FUNDS SUBJECT TO THE GSSF BEING REPLENISHED. ALL APPLICANTS WILL BE ALSO BE INFORMED BY EMAIL WHEN THEY SUBMIT AN APPLICATION AND WILL BE NOTIFIED WHEN THEIR APPLICATION IS PROCESSED) **Professional Development Awards (no funds – period opened with \$0, had we received the same amount as last year the balance would have been approx. \$95,126 available for the period of which \$45,297 remains)** and 103 applications submitted this period (19 pending processing), **Childcare Grants – APPLICATIONS CLOSED (no funds – period opened with \$0, had we received the same amount as last year the balance would have been approx. \$39, 741 available for the period, of which \$3,741 remains)** and 26 applications submitted this period (3 pending processing), **Academically-Related Student Group Awards closed (period opened with \$3,886, of which \$2,387 remains)** and 1 application submitted this period, **Emergency Bursaries (no funds – no periods but had we received the same amount as last year there would have been approx. \$109,820 available for the fiscal year)** and 10 applications totaling \$18,837 submitted since April 1, 2014, which were processed using funds carried over from 2013-2014 and the \$50,000 advance on the GSSF provided by the University on May 22, 2014.

### Week in Review – Office Operations:

- Compiling the **GSA Media Tracker** and assisting with **planning for fall orientation and departmental orientations.** Assisting with planning for the **Chili Social.**
- Building **wiki pages on key issues** (ie, MNIFs) and **grants processing.**
- **Research on elections bylaws and policies and CRO and DRO position descriptions** at GU15 institutions, **ERC support,** and Early Call for Talent planning.
- Developing a **list of GSA committee members on the GSA website,** and assisting the Nominating Committee with **filling vacancies on several committees** (FGSR Council, Sustainability Advisory Committee, Student Library Advisory Committee, etc).