

SPECIAL GSA Council Meeting AGENDA

Thursday, 16 February 2023 at 6:00 pm
via Zoom

The GSA and the University of Alberta reside on Treaty 6 territory and the homeland of the Métis. This territory is a traditional gathering place for diverse Indigenous peoples including the Cree, Blackfoot, Métis, Nakota Sioux, Iroquois, Dene, Ojibway, Saulteaux, Anishinaabe, Inuit, and many others whose histories, languages, and cultures continue to influence our vibrant community. In acknowledging this traditional territory and its significance for the Indigenous peoples who lived and continue to live upon it, we recognize its longer history that reaches beyond colonization and the establishment of European colonies and recognize the GSA's ongoing collective responsibility in working with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit (FNMI) peoples and what that means for the work of the GSA as it aims to practice the principles of being Good Relations with FNMI peoples, Nations, communities, and lands.

Substantive material is sent to all GSA Council members at least one week prior to the date of the meeting to give members abundant time to review. Any additional substantive material received after this mailing will be emailed as soon as possible.

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

Acting Speaker Sophie Shi in the Chair

OPEN SESSION

**Attached Numbered
Pages**

1. Approval of the 16 February 2023 Special Meeting Agenda (*suggested time: 1 min*)

Discussion Items

2. GSA Action Regarding Tuition Increases (*suggested time: 30 min*)
Bishoi Aziz (Acting President) will present the item.

Attachments:

- i. Briefing on GSA Action Regarding Tuition Increases

2.0

Question Period

3. Written Questions (**none received at this time**)
4. Oral Questions

Adjournment

The GSA is aware of—and shares—concerns surrounding yet another proposal for increasing tuition at the University of Alberta. The increasingly untenable tuition prices at the University of Alberta, particularly when taken in conjunction with the ever-increasing cost of living, are a significant priority for the GSA and have been the primary topic of countless meetings. Graduate students are an immense asset to any Canadian research university but over the past months and years, we have faced repeated blows to our efforts to not only advance knowledge in our chosen fields, but to continue doing so without significant harm to our physical and mental wellbeing.

At the same time, the University has responded with research that indicates that tuition at U of A is lower than the national average. As you'll recall, in November 2022 GSA Council members were joined by Melissa Padfield (Deputy Provost, Students and Enrolment), who gave a detailed presentation on this issue (see Items 5 and 6 in the [GSA Council November 2022 materials](#)). The University asserts that its 2022-2023 tuition rates (for Fall 2022 intake) are lower than the average (excluding U of A) rate of the U15 Group of Canadian Research Universities.

The fact remains that the current proposal to increase tuition will impact segments of new and returning students. What's more, this proposed increase continues a trend of tuition increases that began in 2019 following an extended period of domestic tuition freeze by the previous NDP government. Since then, the current government has implemented changes that will shift the balance such that the University receives the bulk of its funding from tuition, rather than from public funds. To highlight this, since the 2018-2019 academic year, the province's contribution to the operating budgets of post-secondary educational institutions across Alberta has decreased from \$2.43 billion to \$1.97 billion, or by 18.8%.

The GSA is currently engaged in compiling the most salient data related to the current tuition hikes and the rationale underpinning them. We look forward to bringing these to the graduate student body as soon as possible, so that our discussions and intentions for future projects and initiatives are as informed as possible.

If you have any questions or concerns, or if you wish to continue discussions in person, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Bishoi Aziz, Acting GSA President