

To: GSA Council
From: Tiffany Kung
Date: November 6 2023

Dear Council Colleagues,

I hope everyone has had a wonderful October! Please see the meetings I attended this month attached. Please note I will be away at a conference from November 9-19, which will explain the gap in meetings for that week.

IGSA & FPH Gathering (Oct 16)

At this regular meeting, we discussed the IGSA's upcoming tuition levy, as well as some updates from First People's House, including a timeline for their move to the new space in Education (2026), as well as upcoming events and cultural programming.

UASSC Meeting (Oct 17)

The group briefly discussed the current events in the Middle East and security concerns among specific groups of students, as well as the University's strong stance against violence, and reiterated that students should reach out to UAPS, UASSC, or any other relevant groups (such as the GSA) if they had concerns they felt needed to be addressed. The group then discussed September updates, including updates to the building action plan and communications.

RA Team Meeting (Oct 17)

The group discussed the GSRA as well as regular meetings between the GSA and students who live in residence. The tentative dates for these visits to East campus have been set to happen in November and February.

Residence Advisory Council Meeting (Oct 20)

The group invited James Allen to discuss some UASSC initiatives (such as those discussed above). The group heard about the proposed rent increases. Residence services noted that inflation is around 6.9% for residence-related costs, and the rent increase will be 5.5% for the year. The proposed meal plan inflation is 8.9%, and the meal plan increase will be 6%. Questions were asked around a breakdown of how utilities are paid for (e.g., the campus provides some electricity as well, so how does that reduce our utilities bills?) and that information will be brought to the next RAC meeting. The rent rationalization update was proposed, where there were discussions about offering a second type of product (double bed option) at RSFJ to reduce rental costs in that residence. Residence services committed to consultation with RSFJ (Campus Saint Jean residence) folks in the process to better understand what that process will look like.

Meeting with R Epp (Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (GPS) Dean) and IGSA (Oct 23)

The group was introduced to Amber Smith, the new supporting aboriginal graduate enhancement (SAGE) coordinator. The group discussed the community-based/land-based GRA equivalent for Indigenous students engaging in land-based learning. Roger Epp has committed \$25,000 to this fund that is expected to be spent in two years to pilot. The group discussed eligibility for the awards, how much the awards should be, and who would adjudicate the awards. The group also discussed the IGSA writing retreat and goals in terms of budgeting, and additional matters including the Indigenous Documentation committee, the Indigenous staff positions in GPS and First Peoples House (FPH), the capacity of settler professors to supervise Indigenous students, and how the structure of graduate programs could be flexed to support Indigenous students engaged in community research that requires longer periods of relationship-building and field work.

Regular International Students' Association (ISA)/GSA meetings (Oct 23)

Rija (VP Academic) and I met to discuss the ISA's upcoming tuition levy proposal.

Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) Advisory Council (Oct 24) The SGBV advisory council heard updates from Deb Eerkes regarding work around the harassment, discrimination policy and academic policy translation to French, as well as work around the UAlberta SGBV survey (released, please email me for the link if you cannot find it online), the Options Navigation Network, the HRHSE Workplace response coordinator pilot, and updates on training available on eclass. From this meeting, I will be meeting with members of the University of Alberta Sexual Assault Centre (UASAC) to try and get the SGBV eClass module approved as PD-credit for graduate students. The group also discussed upcoming projects of the sexual harassment in experiential learning project (discussed below), psychological and social safety in the workplace and workplace restoration toolkit, and concerns around the locking of building on safety of students taking night classes (a separate working group with representatives from the UASU is being assembled to discuss this).

Student Staff Network (Oct 24)

The group discussed some updates on events happening in each respective portfolio, including a Wellness Day/Fair for BIPOC students that residence services will be hosting on January 17!

Dean's Advisory Committee (Oct 25)

The Dean's Advisory Committee (DAC) convened for the first time and briefly discussed student group event approval deadlines for undergraduate students, how the University planned to work with SEAP in light of the proposed enrollment increase, and problems around physical space on campus.

SEAP Accountability Framework Meeting (Oct 26)

I met with Sarah Wolgemuth from the Student Experience Action Plan (SEAP) team to discuss what aspects of SEAP the GSA could claim responsibility for. We discussed a few aspects, and I will be meeting with the GSA Board to discuss if they agree on the responsibilities we worked out, and how we can work that accountability into future years' work.

GSA./Parking services meeting (Oct 27)

Haseeb (VP Student Services) and I met with Parking services to discuss how we could improve student experiences with parking and specifically the audit process for tickets. Many ideas were discussed, but it was proposed that Parking Services be a vendor at our GSA Orientation to introduce themselves and parking expectations to students upon their entry into the program.

Experiential Learning and SGBV Working group (Oct 30)

The working group convened to discuss how we can reduce rates of SGBV in work-integrated learning. The scope of the working group was limited to instances where the University sends students out of the University for working opportunities, either paid or unpaid for-credit opportunities. The group discussed the difficulties of enforcing expectations and regulations on outside organizations, especially ones that may be paying students, as well as members that may be missing from the working group. The group is scheduled to meet in December to lay down how the group is expected to work, and the hope is that the group will apply Possibility Seeds' toolkit to improve experiential learning experiences for students beginning 2025. If you're a student who has participated in work-integrated learning and has any thoughts or opinions on the working group's work, please let me know.

SEAP Support Team (Oct 31)

The SEAP support team gathered to discuss accountability around SEAP. The group brought up key measures and outcomes for students to see accountability, and for relevant parties to feel accountability. Discussions around concerns such as buy-in from all parties, how resources will be delegated to SEAP in the current fiscal reality, the difficulty in translating the ambitions of SEAP into reality, and how the University can continue to reinforce the importance of SEAP with faculty and student turnover was discussed.

EDI Faculty Leads Network Meeting (Oct 31)

The group met to discuss what information should be incorporated into the upcoming EDI Action plan. It mostly centered around not duplicating important work that was being done across different offices, and how we can transition equity and justice work from being seen as something done “in addition to” into “what we do”.

EDI Plan Steering Group Monthly Meeting (Oct 31)

The group discussed what was mentioned at the morning meeting (EDI Faculty Leads Network Meeting) as well as how to engage students in the time of consultation fatigue. Pedro (UASU) and I brought up the possibility of offering incentives for students who respond to surveys (e.g., entering a draw for an iPad or incentivising with SU perks), and this work is underway.

UASSC/GSA Communications Content Meeting (Nov 1)

The group met to discuss communications as well as a potential addition to the GSA planner on “who to call” in times of emergency.

BGSA & Dean of Students (Ravina Sangerha, Lula Adam) Meeting (Nov 3)

The group met for the first time to discuss how the Dean of Students (DoS) can aid the Black Graduate Students’ Association (BGSA). The group discussed the BGSA’s goals and hopes, including a permanent office space, since a temporary office space has been found, what DoS resources BGSA and Black students can access, how DoS can improve the BGSA community, and conversations about increasing funding opportunities for Black graduate students, who currently only have one specific funding opportunity available.

2023-2024 GSA VP Student Life’s Meetings Attended (Tiffany)

Please find below a list of meetings I attended between 16 October to 20 November 2023 (not inclusive of weekly GSA Board meetings). The meetings were accurate at the time of printing.

16 Oct	IGSA & FPH Gathering
17 Oct	UASSC Meeting
17 Oct	RA Team Meeting
20 Oct	RAC Meeting
23 Oct	Meeting with R Epp and IGSA Members
23 Oct	ISA/GSA Regular Meetings
24 Oct	SGBV Advisory Council Meeting
24 Oct	Student/Staff Network
24 Oct	Meeting w/ Chancellor Garritty and GSA Execs
25 Oct	In-Person Meeting with Board of Governors Chair
25 Oct	Dean's Advisory Committee
26 Oct	SEAP Accountability Framework
27 Oct	GSA/Parking Services Meeting
30 Oct	Experiential Learning and Sexual and Gender-Based Violence Working Group
31 Oct	SEAP Support Team
31 Oct	EDI Faculty Leads Network Meeting
31 Oct	EDI Plan Steering Group - Monthly Meeting
1 Nov	UASSC/GSA Communications Content Meeting
3 Nov	BGSA & Ravina Sanghera (Dean of Students) Meeting
6 Nov	Graduate Student Support Group Connect
6 Nov	Student Housing Stability Working Group
6 Nov	Meeting with Heather Ritz (Wellness Services) RE: World Social Justice Day
6 Nov	Meeting with GSAB to discuss SEAP Accountability Framework
7 Nov	Meeting with Amber Smith (SAGEpod Coordinator)

7 Nov	Meeting RE: Graduate Students in Residence Association
7 Nov	Student Mental Health Network
8 Nov	Meeting with a Student RE: EDIC
8 Nov	FGSR Council
9 Nov	Meeting with a Student RE: EDIC
9 Nov	Meeting with a Student RE: EDIC
9 Nov	Meeting with the Sexual Violence Response Coordinator
20 Nov	Monthly meeting with the Office of Indigenous Programming and Research and the IGSA