



Strategic Plan

As GSA Executives, we are committed to ensuring that all aspects of our portfolios are in alignment with the GSA's Strategic Plan. The GSA's 3-year strategic plan 2019-2022 can be found [here](#).

Tanille Shandro | President

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Hours

November 15th to January 15th

Meetings: 148

Events: 13

Other: 115

Total Hours: 276

Average per week: 39.4

Improving Advocacy

Objective: Have 30% of the GSA advocacy asks be rooted in consultation and communicated to University students year over year by April 30, 2022.

Goal: **Develop a GSA return to campus plan and advocate for an institutional plan that is reflective of graduate student consultation and prioritizes student health and safety.**

Explanation: A GSA operational plan and a University of Calgary institutional plan for return to campus is required to reflect the uncertainty and rapidly changing environment of the COVID-19 pandemic. Through consultation with graduate students, I will form a GSA Operational plan and advocate to the institution the graduate student perspective in the development of their plan that prioritizes the health and safety of the campus community.

Updates: We are currently re-evaluating components of the return to campus plan that were impacted by the changes to the UCalgary campus return moved to Feb. 19th (i.e., In-

person events, LDL, etc.). Details and most recent updates on the plan can be found [here](#).

We also continue to advocate to the University to prioritize student health and safety during these uncertain times. This has included advocating against the removal of free masks at the Foothills campus and consultations on the extension of online learning until after Winter reading break.

- Objective:** Achieve 70% of GSA Annual Survey respondents rate their satisfaction of the GSA Advocacy work as moderately satisfied or higher by April 30, 2022
- Goal:** **Develop a Consultation guideline for institutional consultation with graduate students about important topics**
- Explanation:** As consultation can be sometimes performative, I will develop clear guidelines that will be discussed with the institution for future consultations when discussing important topics, such as tuition, with the graduate student body and Graduate Representative Council.
- Updates:** One of our main collaborators, the Students' Union VP External, stepped down from their role, which has temporarily delayed the progress of this project as we were waiting for feedback on the current draft from the Students' Union. I will be following up on if the Students' Union has any changes to the document and once feedback is incorporated, we will present the proposed guidelines and discuss them with the University administration.

Improving Communication

- Objective:** Increase the GSA Annual Survey response rate to 20% of all enrolled graduate students by April 30, 2022.
- Goal:** **Prevent the GSA Communications from being filtered by the University's new IT safety software**
- Explanation:** The University has recently increased its mailing safety software, which has been flagging the GSA email communications as foreign to the system and putting it in junk mail preventing proper communications with our members. I will work with IT to prevent this filtering of emails from occurring
- Updates:** We are in active communication with the UCalgary IT team for discussion of how to move this project forward and have more members receive our communications.

Objective: Have 99% of GSA Annual Survey respondents indicate general awareness of the GSA and its services by April 30, 2022

Goal: **Develop a GRC Digest (newsletter) for GRC members to easily communicate the GRC topics with their departments.**

Explanation: Enhancing the communication between the board and the graduate students will be beneficial to the graduate student experience. This will be achieved through strategies that will make it easier for GRC representatives to pass along the information that was discussed at GRC

Updates: Completed after each GRC meeting. Graduate representative council members can continue to expect to receive these on the Friday of the week GRC occurs.

Improving Organization Sustainability

Objective: *No current objective in the strategic plan

Goal: **Develop New GSA Strategic Plan (2023-2025)**

Explanation: The current GSA Strategic Plan is set to expire in 2022. Therefore, we must start the groundwork of creating the new Strategic Plan for 2023-2025. The project will focus on the development of the 2022-25 strategic plan for the GSA to identify strategic directions, goals, and priorities to guide the work of the organization towards its vision, to be recognized as the leader in graduate student advocacy and service delivery across Canada. The desired outcomes of this project are the following: Needs Assessment Report, Stakeholder Consultation Report, 2019-22 Strategic Plan Review, 2022-25 Strategic Plan Implementation, Communication, Accountability, and Monitoring Plan. The timeline of this project runs from November 2021 until August 2022. This will allow the newly elected board for 2022-23 to have input and help develop the future strategic plan.

Updates: The deadline for proposals was January 15th. We have received six proposals and have begun their evaluations. The top proposals will be brought forward to the board of directors who will choose one company to move forward with.

Objective: Receive a satisfactory score in an external EDI audit by April 30, 2022.

Goal: **Complete internal EDI Audit of the GSA**

Explanation: As the GSA continues to strive for best EDI practices we will be bringing in a third-party auditor to evaluate the GSA and identify areas of strength and weaknesses we can improve on.

Updates: We are finalizing the different auditors available to complete this project. In the coming weeks these options will be presented to

the EDI committee who will determine who should complete this very important work and we will begin the process of the audit with that auditing group

Objective: *No current objective in the strategic plan

Goal: **Remove legal liability of the Federal Advocacy Contingency Fund of 300K to be used for graduate student initiatives.**

Explanation: There is currently a contingency fund that holds funds set aside for a specific legal liability concern. This year I would like to work with our legal team to remove the legal liability, which would then release the funds and they could then be used for other student initiatives.

Updates: As this is highly confidential due to the legal nature of this topic any updates and questions that Graduate Representatives have would need to occur in an in-camera session of the Graduate Representative Council Meeting. Please request this in the meeting if you would like to know more.

Alex Paquette | Vice President Academic

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Hours

November 15th to January 15th

Meetings: 96.5

Events: 1

Other: 88

Total Hours: 185.5

Average per week: 26.5

Improving Advocacy

- Objective:** Increase the number of well-researched Advocacy asks to Institution and all levels of government by 20% year over year by April 30, 2022.
- Goal:** **Increase Minimum Funding Policy for PhD Students**
- Explanation:** The current Minimum Funding Policy for PhD students is \$18,000 per year. The goal is to increase this amount to \$24,000 for incoming graduate students. This increase would start in September of 2022.
- Updates:** The Faculty of Graduate Studies (FGS) and GSA have developed a proposal for this increase in funding. This proposal was officially passed on December 16th, 2021. New domestic PhD students will now have a minimum funding of \$22,000 per year and international PhD students will have \$24,000 per year. These changes will start in August 2022 for PhD students who are starting in September 2022.
- Objective:** Increase the number of well-researched Advocacy asks to Institution and all levels of government by 20% year over year by April 30, 2022.
- Goal:** **Develop a Minimum Funding Policy for Master's Students**
- Explanation:** At the moment there is no Minimum Funding Policy for thesis-based master's students. This means that programs do not have to pay master's students who are in a thesis-based program. The goal is to create a Minimum Funding Policy for master's students that would start at \$18,000 per year.
- Updates:** The Faculty of Graduate Studies (FGS) and GSA have developed a proposal for this increase in funding. This proposal was officially passed on December 16th, 2021.

Starting May 2023 all thesis based Master's students will have a minimum funding of \$10,000.

Objective: Increase the number of well-researched Advocacy asks to Institution and all levels of government by 20% year over year by April 30, 2022.

Goal: **Flexible Grading Option Policy for Graduate Students**

Explanation: In 2020 a proposal was developed and passed for undergraduate students to have a flexible grading option called Credit Granted (CG). This option gives undergraduate students the chance to take a grade of "credit granted" for a maximum of 9 units in a degree and use this grade for their GPA. My goal is to work with FGS to create a similar option for graduate students. Although instead of a maximum of 9 units it would be 3 units for graduate students since graduate students take less courses than undergraduate students.

Updates: This proposal was officially passed in December 2021 by the Graduate Academic Program Subcommittee and the Academic Program Subcommittee. The flexible grading option will start in September 2022.

Improving Service Delivery

Objective: Increase the number of submitted financial support applications including Quality Money, awards, bursaries, and grants by 15% year-over-year by April 30, 2022

Goal: **GSA Awards Platform**

Explanation: Last year's goal was to start developing a new awards website for members of the GSA. The goal this year is to complete that website and begin using the website in August of 2021.

Updates: The new GSA awards website was completed June 30th of 2021 and is now being used as the main website for students to apply for GSA awards, bursaries, and grants. So far over 600 students have used the new website and the feedback has been great from applicants and reviewers.

Objective: Increase unique event attendees at GSA events and committee events to 12% by April 30, 2022

Goal: **Increase the Number of GSA Academic Workshops and Events**

Explanation: In a typical year the GSA will host 6-8 academic workshops and events. The goal for this year is to double that number to 12-16 events. Graduate students are always looking for

opportunities to gain new skills and network. Having more academic workshops and events will increase these opportunities for our GSA members.

Updates:

Since September, the GSA Academic Support Committee has run 9 events including Mitacs Workshops (5), Voices on the Margins (2), Road to Success and Academic Horror Stories. The committee will run 11 events in the Winter semester including Peer Beyond.

Kirsten Nepriily | Vice President External

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Hours

November 15th to January 15th

Meetings: 63

Events: 4

Other: 76

Total: 143

Average per week: 20.4

Improving Advocacy

Objective: Increase the number of well-researched Advocacy asks to Institution and all levels of government by 20% year over year by April 30, 2022.

Goal: **Adopt a flexible and collaborative approach to providing advocacy asks during decision making at all levels of the government and assert GSA advocacy priorities to strengthen the GSA's collaborative network.**

Explanation: By collaborating with student advocacy groups, the GSA can further strengthen their advocacy asks, provide comprehensive research as a foundation for their asks, and ensure these priorities reflect the graduate student voice.

Updates: Presented graduate advocacy asks in three core areas (e.g., tuition and funding, childcare and caregiving, and international student PR) to multiple MLA's and city councillors during abGPAC's advocacy week in November. AbGPAC has submitted a response to the provincial government's budget 2022-2023 survey. I will be presenting graduate student advocacy asks at the upcoming CASA Supercon Advocacy Week to the federal government in February.

Objective: Have 30% of the GSA advocacy asks consulted with the UCalgary and 3 levels of government by April 30, 2022.

Goal: **Engage in meaningful consultations with all key stakeholders, student advocacy associations, and GSA membership.**

Explanation: Ensure the GSA have a voice at the table with the Federal / Provincial / Municipal governments, student advocacy groups, external stakeholders, and university stakeholders. In addition, create a portal to gather student

feedback on topical advocacy issues, to increase the number of students consulted in ongoing advocacy efforts.

Updates:

Through student surveys, I have stayed updated on the top priorities of graduate students at the municipal and provincial level. These priorities have guided the advocacy asks brought to the abGPAC advocacy week and meetings with key city councilors, MLAs, and university stakeholders.

Goal:

Achieve two advocacy wins on our tuition and fees consultation with the University.

Explanation:

The University will be proposing increases in tuition and fees this year. We want to ensure that we are holding them accountable.

Updates:

Many of these goals are ongoing as we continue to advocate on behalf of students with many key stakeholders. As of **Tuition and Fees Increases:** Proposals went to the Board of Governors on December 10th and all tuition and fees for 2022-23 were approved with no changes since FPC.

Tuition Wins

Master of Music program fee decrease from 7% to 2%

Commitment of the reinvestment bursary to be 15% of overall revenue

Student Service Fee Wins

Student fee decrease from 10% to 7 %

Athletic Fee Wins

Dino fees reduced to 2%

Athletic & Campus Recreation Fees Asks

Maintain the Active Living \$25 credit for gear rentals and programs

Ancillary Services Wins

Parking

Provide 20 visitor passes to Varsity Courts residents

Residence Services - Varsity Courts

Matching the market to provide move-in and retention bonuses to students

Installing communal bike storage to tackle the issue of bike thefts in VC

Minimum Funding- VP Academic Alex Paquette

Major win for graduate students on the passing of the minimum funding increase proposals through the FGS Council! Kudos to our VP Academic and partners within FGS. Minimum funding for incoming domestic and international PhD students will increase by \$4,000 and \$2,000, respectively. We also created the first university-wide minimum funding policy for thesis-based Master's students starting at \$10,000. These new minimum stipends will provide new graduate students with a just and equitable income to cover increases in tuition, rent and other living expenses.

Improving Communication

Objective: Increase the number of advocacy-based communication to our membership by 20% annually / Have 99% of GSA Annual Survey respondents indicate general awareness of the GSA and its services by April 30, 2022.

Goal: **Adopt a communications strategy that targets all GSA membership through various forms of media (e.g., website, blogs, Instagram live, videos).**

Explanation: **Adopt CASA GOTV campaign and 1 abGPAC campaign** Ensure all GSA membership is aware of ongoing advocacy efforts by adopting multiple media formats so there are different ways of gathering advocacy information. Use communications

strategy to showcase CASA and abGPAC advocacy to the GSA membership.

Updates:

Currently working on a CASA national advocacy campaign. The campaign for January is focused on student mental health and wellness. We hosted a successful Instagram live in November with Councillor Jasmine Mian and are hosting an Instagram live in January with Dr. Andrew Szeto to discuss the campus mental health strategy. I have been active on social media with our advocacy updates and posts from meetings with stakeholders. Advocacy blogs are posted monthly and sent to GSA members through the GSA emails.

Example Communication strategy:

- 2 Blogs a month: 1st focusing on advocacy, 2nd overview of the GRC.
- 20-30 min monthly Instagram live with special guests to chat about advocacy.
- 10 second Instagram personal video weekly to highlight current advocacy initiative
- Advocacy survey's more frequently to gather feedback.

Objective:

Increase the number of media releases

Goal:

Contact media relations teams to conduct interviews on top GSA advocacy priority issues.

Explanation:

Foster relationships with UToday (internally) and local news stations to increase public awareness and understanding of advocacy efforts that highlight the GSA stance/voice. Media is a critical source of information and "education" to the public that can increase our visibility.

Objective:

Increase the number of politicians knowing the GSA and our advocacy priorities, independent of CASA and abGPAC/ Increase the number of advocacy events and meetings that the GSA attends.

Goal:

Meet with municipal and provincial politicians once per semester to discuss the GSA's Advocacy Priorities.

Explanation:

Foster relationships with municipal and provincial politicians to increase their awareness and action on the GSA's advocacy priorities.

Updates:

abGPAC met over 17 councilors and MLA's during the November advocacy week. We were able to share key graduate student advocacy priorities (e.g., support for tuition and funding, childcare and caregiving, international student PR, and mental health) and get a commitment to work collaboratively on these areas. I met with councilors Jasmine Mian and Mayor Jyoti Gondek. We discussed Affordable housing, More Opportunities/post-graduate job opportunities for young people

in Calgary, Increasing safety in the city, Public Transit (UPass, Fair Entry), and revitalization of the downtown core. Mayor Gondek supports the UPass and I got a commitment work collaboratively on negotiations for the UPass.

Kabita Baral | Vice President Student Life

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Hours

November 15th to January 15th

Meetings: 60

Events:

Other: 60

Total Hours: 120

Average per week: 24

Improving Advocacy

Objective: Achieve 70% of GSA Annual Survey respondents rate their satisfaction of the GSA Advocacy work as moderately satisfied or higher by April 30, 2022

Goal: **Complete mental health consultation with 6 visible minority groups on campus**

Explanation: I will work together with campus mental health strategy to consult with five minor groups of graduate students: LGBTQ+, older/parents group, international students, indigenous students and BIPOC and students with disabilities community to ensure proper mental health consultation has been performed as university moves towards bridging the gap in post-secondary mental health strategies.

Updates: We got back the survey response from 325 students who filled it out and had some focus groups. We could not capture more than a couple of indigenous students' response and few students from LGBTQ+ community. So, we will find other means to send the surveys to those groups. Meanwhile, we have identified some gaps, especially in academic front and how students' mental health is (not) valued by research/classroom settings. We are having discussions on what can be the way forward from this.

Improving Service Delivery

Objective: Achieve 90% of GSA Annual Survey respondents rate their satisfaction of the GSA programs and services as moderately satisfied or higher by April 30, 2022

Goal: **Work with GSA SEEC committees and collaborate with EDI committee to bring more student faced events for graduate students**

Explanation: Right now, we sit at 80.84% satisfaction and from our surveys we have seen that students would like more student front events. So, I will create collaborative spaces internally within SEEC and between GSA committees to bring more student focused events.

Updates: We hosted first two panel sessions of our Intersectionality series and are planning one for February, with the theme of 'Black History Month' on Feb 16th.

Objective: Increase unique event attendees at GSA events and committee events to 12% by April 30, 2022

Goal: **Plan at least one event per committee and 5 collaborative workshops/panel series events**

Explanation: We sit at 8%, excluding committee and Peer Beyond Symposium. I'd like to tie this goal to my first goal and plan more exciting events that students have shown interest in. I will also work with various offices on campus like ISS, MH strategy and FGS to cross promote our events and reach a wide audience.

Updates: We have a total of over 20 events lined up for the next couple of weeks from various committees. Our hope is to bring in a wide variety of events that appeal to every student so that we have something for everyone.

Improving Communication

Objective: Maintain 65% open rate of the GSA weekly News and Views by April 30, 2022

Goal: **Review our news and views monthly with Thao to ensure we are catering it towards students' needs.**

Explanation: I will work closely with Thao to monitor our news and views open rates and maintain or increase click rates by improving contents of our newsletters as required.

Updates: We are continuously making changes to our newsletters and other communication strategies to see what works best. We also have a monthly events newsletter that we send out with all the events for upcoming month highlighted.

Improving Organization Sustainability

Objective: Increase operating revenues from sources other than student fees: 5% by 30th Apr 2022

Goal: **Diversify GSA revenue source**

Explanation: The GSA aims to diversify GSA revenue to ensure that we have sources of revenue other than student funding. For this, I will review the investment performance in GSA, complete the request for proposal process started by our predecessors and update the investment policy based on the result of this project in collaboration with the President.

I will also work with the Vice-President Finance and Services on the sponsorship packages started by our predecessors.

Updates: VPFS and I along with our team of staff are continuously reaching out to new businesses to secure discounts for graduate students. We also have an array of discounted tickets for Sunshine Village, Calaway Park, and more.

Mary Zhang | Vice President Finance and Services

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Hours

November 15th to January 15th

Meetings: 58.5

Events: 9

Other: 45

Total Hours: 112.5

Average per week: 16.07

Improving Service Delivery

Objective: Achieve 90% of GSA Annual Survey respondents rate their satisfaction of the GSA Health and Dental Plan as moderately satisfied or higher by April 30, 2022

Goal: **Address graduate students' H&D needs and keep students updated on any changes**

Explanation: A key responsibility in the VP Finance and Services Portfolio is the GSA Health and Dental Plan. I will work towards addressing student feedback on the plan and ensuring that students are aware of any updates.

Updates:

- Held a GSA Health and Dental Q&A session during Winter 2021 orientation to introduce services to new graduate students and provide them with a platform to ask questions.
- Discussed GSA H&D fee with the committee and Studentcare representative.
- Working with campus wellness services to provide direct billing and discount for graduate students.

Improving Service Delivery

Objective: Increase unique event attendees at GSA events and committee events to 12% by April 30, 2022

Goal: **Create financial literacy workshop series for graduate students**

Explanation: Having a basic understanding of debt management, myths around credit, and knowledge about investing will help graduate students manage their finances and give them

peace of mind to allow them to focus on their graduate research. It is also extremely important for international students to learn more about managing their finances in Canada which will enable them to develop healthy financial habits.

Updates:

- Planning one financial workshop each month for winter semester, including topics on mortgage, real estate, investment, cryptocurrencies, wills and estate.
- Promoted MoneySmart Events
- Posted two GSA blogs on financial topics
 - o How to successfully approach your new year's resolution to invest
 - o Client-focused reforms: Addressing material conflicts of interest in adviser-client relationships

Improving Communication

Objective: Maintain the trust, transparency, and inclusion score measured in the GSA Annual Survey at 80% by April 30, 2022

Goal: **Ensure financial transparency**

Explanation: I believe that it is important for students to understand where GSA funds are allocated. As such, I will ensure continued transparency in the GSA budget and have FSC Chair communicates to GRC every 6 months on finances.

Updates: Presented monthly income statements at the GSA board meetings. At FSC meeting, committee members have been reviewing monthly income statements.

Improving Organization Sustainability

Objective: Earn 2% of unrestricted revenues through new revenue streams by April 30, 2022.

Goal: **Diversify GSA revenue sources**

Explanation: I will work to diversify GSA revenue sources and expand benefits for our members through the newly initiated sponsorship program. I will work with the GSA sponsorship team to finalize the sponsor package, including GSA advertisement opportunities for sponsors,

sponsor pricing, and sponsor contracts. Meanwhile, I will be continuing business profiling for our potential sponsors to ensure their business goals align with GSA's vision & mission before finalizing sponsorship details.

Updates:

- Offering discounted Sunshine lift ticket and Calaway park pass
- Offering discount on editing service, thesis/dissertation formatting, writer's coaching and transcription
- Working on the sponsorship approval procedure to make it more efficient
- LDL reopening update - We have selected our new manager after shortlisting and interviews. Due to the uncertain nature of in-person activities returning to campus, we are taking a cautious approach to the LDL. However, we still want to make progress toward the opening. Manager start date will be January 31 and instead of full time and salary, we are going to offer part time (min 20hrs) and hourly to start, with potential to move to salaried when there is more stability in the industry and on campus. There is plenty of work for the manager to do before the restaurant is ready to open so we are hoping to spread out the work with part-time hours to get us closer to a realistic opening date. Since this is so dependent on the Covid-19 situation we will keep a close eye and make appropriate decisions as we go.