

Annual General Meeting Agenda

Tuesday, September 28, 2021

Location: Zoom Online

5:15 pm: Online Registration

5:30 pm: Open Session/Meeting Begins

Item	Description	Presenter	Materials	Time
1	Approval of agenda	Speaker	In package	5:30 PM
2	Welcoming remarks	President	Verbal	5:32 PM
3	Welcome by Dr. Robin Yates, Vice-Provost and Dean, Graduate Studies	Dr. Robin Yates	Verbal	5:34 PM
4	Business arising from the past minutes	Speaker	In package	5:41 PM
5	Approval of past AGM Minutes (Sep 29, 2020)	Speaker	Decision	5:44 PM
6	GSA 101 Presentation	President & Executives	Verbal	5:47 PM
7	GSA 2020-2021 Audited Financial Statements	Finance Standing Committee Chair	In package	6:07 PM
8	GSA Revised Bylaws	President	In package	6:15 PM
9	Motion to amend GSA Bylaws	President	Decision	6:30 PM
10	Presentation for Academically Employed Graduate Students (AEGS)	AVP Labour	Verbal	6:35 PM
11	Question period	Speaker	Verbal	6:45 PM
12	Announcements	Speaker	Verbal	6:55 PM
13	Adjournment	Speaker	Verbal	7:00 PM



**GRADUATE STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
TUESDAY, September 29, 2020, 5:30 PM**

Attendees:

Tanille Shandro, President
Alex Paquette, VP Academic
Christine Cao, VP External
Mary Zhang, VP Student Life
Kabita Baral, VP Finances & Services
Kirsten Neprily, Speaker
Kristina Miller, Clerk

AGM Meeting Minutes

Meeting Began 5:30 pm

Online Registration 5:30 pm

Approval of the Agenda 5:30 pm

Motioned/seconded

Discussion: N/A

Opposed: 0

Abstained: 0

CARRIED

Welcoming remarks (Tanille Shandro) 5:32pm

- Welcome to returning and new students

Territorial Acknowledgement (Speaker) 5:33 pm

Welcoming remarks (Dr. Robin Yates) 5:34pm

- Welcome to everyone
- GSA Executive team and staff have been working hard and collaboratively with FGS; thank you to them for leading the student body
- Thank you to the DGA's for leadership and advocacy

- This will be a challenging year, due to COVID, but also institutional change – look at Ed’s announcement on Growth Through Focus – there will be lots of shifting, will need to hear graduate student voice during this
- There will be more challenges for international students through the pandemic and changes to immigration/work/study permits. GSA is working with governments to support international students
- There will be an increased focus on Black, Indigenous, and people of colour; opportunities for scholars of these backgrounds to address systemic racism within higher education
 - EDI working group has been struck and will work on initiating change
- Alberta is in a budget crisis; this will affect tuition and fees inevitably; want to work with student unions, GSA and SU to make sure we get it right and properly share responsibility with the University of Calgary
- Want to be open and collaborative and consult with graduate students

Business arising from past AGM minutes 5:40pm

- Speaker asked for business or questions arising from past AGM minutes
- None

Approval of past AGM minutes 5:40pm

Motioned/seconded

Discussion: None

Opposed: 0

Abstained: 0

CARRIED

GSA 101 (Tanille Shandro) 5:42pm

- The GSA strategic plan 2019-2022
 - Covers vision, mission, and goals.
 - Vision: to be recognized as the leader in graduate student advocacy and service delivery by our members, stakeholders, and external organizations across Canada
 - Mission: The GSA serves all UCalgary graduate students through responsive programs and initiatives to support their success during and after their academic endeavors.
 - Goals: advocacy, service delivery, communication, organizational sustainability.
- Organizational structure of GSA

- Judicial board is formed in October in GRC, and is called to a meeting if there are any issues with board members or the executive director – the Speaker is the chair
- GRC – GSA’s policy making body comprised of grad student representatives from DGA’s, provides guidance to the GSA board of directors
- Danielle Abbott oversees all the staff members
- GSA Committee Structure
 - President oversees Governance Standing Committee, GSA EDI Committee (to be formed)
 - VP Academic oversees Awards Committee and Academic Support Committee
 - VP Student Life oversees Student Experience and Events Committee (SEEC), 5 sub-committees
 - VP External oversees Ad Hoc Working Group and Residence Consultation Committee
 - VP Finance & Services oversees Finance Standing committee and sustainability committee
- AVP Labour – elected positions that oversees Labour Relations Committee
- GSA collects feedback from students through the Annual Report, AGM, GRC, Annual Survey, ad hoc surveys when looking for specific information, social media mini polls
 - Reach out to gsa@ucalgary.ca if you have questions
- GRC
 - Grad student representatives from all departments with active members
 - Last Tuesday of every month except December (2020: Oct 27, Nov 24, 2021: Jan 26, Feb 23, Mar 30, Apr 27, May 25)
 - All meetings will be on Zoom this year

Executive Goals 5:51 pm

- Tanille Shandro (President)
 - Portfolio includes: GSA bylaws and governing docs, all GSA affairs and operations, collective agreement, your voice to the Board of Governors and all levels of government
 - Improving advocacy – minimum funding policy needs to increase; actively collect student feedback on student experience as a result of changes related to COVID-19 pandemic
 - Improving service delivery – expanding service delivery to select student groups
 - Improving communication – transparent and timely – hear what students need
- Alex Paquette (VP Academic)
 - Portfolio: Grants, awards, bursaries, academic appeals and student issues, student-supervisor conflict resolution, workshops and professional development

- Improving advocacy – working with Tanille on increasing minimum funding policy, establishing NEW award for grad students with disabilities, advocate for grad students in all aspects of COVID-19 related situations
- Improving service delivery – improve applications, ToRs and adjudication criteria for all GSA Awards, improve process of applying for GSA Awards, create online awards platform for GSA awards, improve Peer Beyond Symposium
- Improving communication – establish weekly communication piece highlighting amazing work graduate students are doing at the University of Calgary (i.e. thesis talk Thursday)
- Christine Cao (VP External)
 - Portfolio: institutional, municipal, provincial, and federal advocacy; external relations; ad hoc External Advocacy Working Group
 - Improving advocacy
 - Consultation with key stakeholders and GSA membership
 - Flexible and resilient approach to provide advocacy inputs during decision-making at all levels of government, and assert GSA advocacy priorities, to expand GSA external collaborative network
 - EDI: account for how diverse groups are affected by advocacy priorities and asks
 - Adopt CASA campaign and showcase ab-GPAC work to GSA membership
- Mary Zhang (VP Student Life)
 - Portfolio: events and discounted tickets; departmental graduate associations; graduate students groups; student experience
 - Improving advocacy – increase participation in Empower Me program
 - Improving service deliver – secure Communications Media and event insurance agreements by Dec 2020
 - Improving communication – sustain online events during and after COVID-19 to reach students at farther campuses
 - Improving organization sustainability – initiate sponsorship program, contact potential sponsors by Dec 2020
- Kabita Baral (VP Finance and Services)
 - Portfolio: health and dental plan; emergency bursaries and QM; GSA investments; LDL
 - Improving advocacy – increase awareness of Empower Me program
 - Improving service delivery – collaborate with Studentcare to understand student needs and effectively communicate about COVID-19 response
 - Improving communication – communication about updates to Health and Dental plan, GSA budget handling transparency

- Improving organization sustainability – continue working on projects initiated by previous board to diversity revenue sources for GSA

Audited Financial Statements (Emily McPhail, Chair of Finance Standing Committee) 18:05

- Emily summarized the audit process
 - Audit process was different this year because of COVID-19
 - Outside body is hired, this year it was KPMG - they review all transactions and documentation; auditors put together a report to identify what is missing, and provide recommendations
- Audit highlights
 - GSA financial statements fairly represent the financial position of the GSA
 - Net income for 2020 \$295,535
 - RBC investment income was \$72,876 (unrealized gain/loss (\$59,492)) – the shares were not sold, so it was an unrealized loss, this coincided with COVID-19 and market crash
 - Net income 2020 \$438,374
 - Majority of this is restricted funds (internally restricted = \$152,128)
 - Unrestricted = \$143,407
 - GSA and LDL finances are separate
 - There were several closures of LDL renovations July-August 2019 and closure due to COVID-19 since March 2020
 - Month to month losses – job losses, tuition increase, financial pressures, fewer staff and faculty and students
 - Asset write-offs – chairs and ovens needed upgrading
 - This does not impact internally restricted funds – money from restricted funds would not subsidize LDL

Academically employed graduate students (Tanille Shandro) 6:12 pm

- The position of VP Labour is vacant right now
- The Labour Relations Committee is a union for all graduate students that hold graduate assistantship: research, teaching, and non-teaching
- There is a collective agreement with the University
- LRC committee made of AVP Labour, one representative from each faculty
- Four responsibilities: Monitor labour relations between academically employed students and the University; Advise Collective Agreement negotiation team; Advocate for high standard of graduate student employment; Educate academically employed graduate students on their rights as employees.
- AVP position is open, by-election will happen November 9th and 10th
- Duties

- Provide departmental lunch and learns and to educate students
- Meet with students facing issues, provide guidance to support students
- Discuss challenges and opportunities related to collective agreement
- Lead negotiations during negotiation years – this year is not negotiation year
- Representatives still needed from: social work, business, nursing, SAPL
- Contact lrc.gsa@ucalgary.ca

Question period 6:16 pm

- ***How can we improve online book and library resources? International students cannot access those resources.***
 - Tanille: working hard on advocating to get students from other countries to come to Canada; working to advocate provincially and federally; working on removing restriction from coming to Canada
 - The University just signed a new agreement to digitize all books in the library, this was in place before COVID-19 – the new contract has two caveats – 1) anyone can access all books on Canadian soil, 2) even if in Calgary you cannot access physical books – everything would be digital
 - There needs to be strong student-supervisor position to advocate for international students → voice needs to come from both angles
- ***Accessibility of language used to describe Health and Dental plan – issue with communication with StudentCare; student couldn't figure out if they can use health coverage – they were not sure couldn't help. Can there be improvement in making information more accessible?***
 - Kabita: Understand the barrier of language; will work on it – over the past few months working to utilize news and views to provide snippets of information; will work on increasing blog posts on the website to provide information
- ***Could you speak a little bit about the EDI process? We (in History) have already been contacted by a professor to join the committee***
 - Tanille: This is a separate departmental internal committee
 - FGS committee will be for all graduate students, will collect feedback from internal committees
 - GSA committee is separate and will have members sitting on the FGS committee – internal in evaluating GSA in itself; looking externally to the community and internally – discussion on internal GSA EDI audit
 - No info online yet, right now at early stage
- ***What is the purpose of the GSA's investment into RBC shares? Will these ever be realized? Is there a specific investment goal?***
 - Emily: the funds in reserve are able to make money instead of just sitting there – capital preservation, income generation, inflation protection – need the money to be benefitting the GSA. Yes, the shares will be realized – investment income –

the gains came back to GSA. The GSA has an investment policy – no dollar amount for income goal, but the objective is that the cash flow is greater by 2% than what is invested – there are guiding principles for how investments work

- Investment policy is available and will be reviewed this year
- ***What is gsa plan to compensate LDL loss?***
 - Emily: this is not something that is compensated to students, however the GSA staff and LDL staff have been working hard at reducing costs and bringing in income – anticipate that the focus will continue when LDL will reopen.
 - Staff were terminated, severance, vacation had to be paid out
 - Cost of perishable food items had to be disposed of and were donated
 - Focus on increasing efficiencies with LDL and increase revenue while decreasing losses
 - Kabita: don't have ways to get the money back but working to minimize loss and increase revenue, been looking at different lenses and will be doing the same when LDL will reopen
 - The university is forgiving the rent for LDL, University hasn't required rent in Mac Hall
- ***What is the single strategy to advocate for increasing funding for grad students?***
 - Tanille: we need to create a policy that increases it and bring it to GRC – the decision making body
 - Have to do all the research, there will be pushback from departments - need 51% of the vote
 - On track to make this possible
 - Alex: have compared funding in other universities and compared to salary a person needs to survive in Alberta – plan is to increase the minimum funding as much as possible to be as close as possible to other universities – hoping for increase of \$2-3,000 dollars; concern for Arts faculties
 - Tanille: growth through focus plan – review it → to increase student numbers, increase minimum funding
- ***Has there been any communication with the tri-councils with respect to greater funding?***
 - Christine: the Tricouncil is NSERC, CIHR, SSHRC – many venues where we are exploring those options; AB government has a working group to explore how they can get more funding to support research universities – conversational stage, nothing concrete out of it yet
 - On the GSA have been working with CASA to put forth proposals specifically for graduate students to advocate for more funding and leniency from tricouncil
- Suggestion to send out an email to the student body informing them of the library's HathiTrust/recall?

- Tanille will look into that and will communicate it to the library
- Each department should also have a liaison librarian who should be communicating already about HathiTrust etc. – this is department specific for now

Announcements 6:45

- Sexual and Gender based violence policy survey → GSA will present information to the university
 - Link in News and Views! Look it up
 - Deadline is October 4th
- Empower Me – available 24/7/365 – qualified counselors, life coaches, consultants; we are covered by Health Plan to access this ; for more info askgsa@ucalgary.ca
- Finance Standing Committee is recruiting volunteers – 5-7 hours/month – send CV and short statement of interest fsc.gsa@ucalgary.ca
- Awards, bursaries, grants deadlines:
 - Quality Money October 15
 - GSA bursary October 26
 - PDG November 16
 - Emergency bursary open year round
 - gsa.ucalgary.ca/financial
- Road to success in grad school
 - October 5 3-5 pm
 - Interdisciplinary graduate students and alumni – will be talking about strategies to be successful in graduate school

Prizes 6:50

- Email crystal to claim prize

Adjournment of Open Session 6:54pm

Motioned/seconded

Discussion: N/A

Opposed: 0

Abstained: 0

CARRIED

Meeting adjourned at 6:54pm