



**GRADUATE STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION
GRADUATE REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL MEETING
Tuesday, November 30, 2021, 5:30 PM**

Attendees:

Tanille Shandro, President
 Alex Paquette, VP Academic
 Kirsten Neprily, VP External
 Mary Zhang, VP Finances & Services
 Brett Nelson, Speaker
 Catherine Swytink-Binnema, Clerk

Regrets: Kabita Baral, VP Student Life

Quorum

Justin	La	Biochemistry and Molecular Biology	Yes
Cynthia	Adjekukor	Biochemistry and Molecular Biology	No
Rishika	Puri	Biological Sciences Graduate Students' Association	No
Amy	Du	Biological Sciences Graduate Students' Association	No
Maria Laura	Sosa Ponce	Biological Sciences Graduate Students' Association	No
Conrad	Mielczarek	Biomedical Engineering GSA	No
Jenny	Shin	Biomedical Engineering GSA	No
Antonio	Garcia	Chemical & Petroleum Engineering Graduate Students' Association	No
Faranak	Afsar	Chemical & Petroleum Engineering Graduate Students' Association	No
Justin	Perras	Chemistry Graduate Student Association	No
Bryan	Zanca	Chemistry Graduate Student Association	No
Duncan	Brownsey	Chemistry Graduate Student Association	No
Saeid	Ghasemalizadeh	Civil Engineering Graduate Society	No
Farnaz	Hassani	Civil Engineering Graduate Society	Yes
Amit	Chaudhari	Civil Engineering Graduate Society	No
Seyedeh Zakieh	Mohammadi	Civil Engineering Graduate Society	No
Ali	Ebrahimi Emamieh	Civil Engineering Graduate Society	No
Sydneh	Burton	Classics and Religion DGA	No
Kellie	Cornforth	Classics and Religion DGA	No
Anastasiia	Gushchina	Communication Media and Film DGA	No
Kathryn	Blair	Computational Media Design	No
Navid	Akbari	Computer Science Graduate Society	No
Shahryar	Soltanpour	Computer Science Graduate Society	No

Niloufar	Farajpour	Computer Science Graduate Society	No
Philip	Piercey	Doctoral Association for Students of Haskayne	Yes
Andishe	Ashjari	Doctoral Association for Students of Haskayne	No
Mallika	Sharma	Economics Graduate Association	No
Mahrokh	Namazi	Electrical and Computer Engineering GSA	No
Ayush	Malik	Electrical and Computer Engineering GSA	No
Xen	Virtue	English Department Graduate Association	No
Omar	Ramadan	English Department Graduate Association	No
Sruthi	Rajeev	Gastrointestinal Graduate Students Association	No
Shuhua	Li	Gastrointestinal Graduate Students Association	Yes
Rhiannon	Scott	Geography Graduate Students' Association	No
Genevieve	Dryden	Geography Graduate Students' Association	No
mikail	kipirti	Geomatics Graduate Group	Yes
Allegra	DePasquale	Graduate Anthropology and Archaeology Student Association	No
Megan	Mah	Graduate Anthropology and Archaeology Student Association	No
Lukas	Sadownyk	Graduate Association of Geology and Geophysics Students	No
Pam	Farrell	Graduate Programs in Education Students Association	No
Lyliam	Jardine	Graduate Programs in Education Students Association	No
Apoorve	Chokshi	Graduate Programs in Education Students Association	No
Lisa	Taylor	Graduate Programs in Education Students Association	No
Razieh	Alba	Graduate Programs in Education Students Association	No
Madeline	Ward	Graduate University of Calgary Mathematics Society	No
Kristaps	Balodis	Graduate University of Calgary Mathematics Society	No
James	Steele	Graduate University of Calgary Mathematics Society	No
Bailey	Harray	History Graduate Students Union	No
Jessica	Tannenbaum	History Graduate Students Union	No
Trevor	Low	Hotchkiss Brain Institute Trainee Organization	No
Dion	Kelly	Hotchkiss Brain Institute Trainee Organization	No
Brooke	Belanger	Hotchkiss Brain Institute Trainee Organization	No
Oscar	Tejada	Immunology Graduate Association	No
Julia	Daun	Kinesiology Graduate Students Association	No
Nicole	Boisvert	Kinesiology Graduate Students Association	No
Michael	Esposito	Kinesiology Graduate Students Association	Yes
Quinn	Goddard	Linguistics Graduate Students' Association	No
Monikka	Sarino	Master of Management Society	No
PEIHAO	LI	Masters of Pathologists' Assistant GSA	No
Jordan	Gray	Masters of Public Policy Students Association	Yes

Rachelle	Drummond	Masters of Public Policy Students Association	No
Akposeiyifa	Ebufegha	Mechanical Engineering Graduate Students' Association	No
Laura	Rojas	Medical Science Graduate Student Association	No
Deepak	Patel	Microbiology & Infectious Diseases GSA	No
Daniel	Castaneda Mogollon	Microbiology & Infectious Diseases GSA	No
Sandip	Dhaliwal	Nursing Graduate Students' Association	No
Alexander	Wentzell	Philosophy Graduate Students' Association	No
maria	genova	Philosophy Graduate Students' Association	No
Mahsa	Faryadras	Physics & Astronomy Dep Grad Association	No
Pooja	Woosaree	Physics & Astronomy Dep Grad Association	No
CJ	Osakwe	Physics & Astronomy Dep Grad Association	Yes
Laura	Conrad	Political Science Graduate Student Association	No
Zach	Pfeifer	Political Science Graduate Student Association	No
Michael	McLaren-Gradinaru	Psychology Graduate Students Association	No
Jenelle	Morgan	Psychology Graduate Students Association	No
Vincent	yong	School of Architecture, Planning and Landscape	No
Emily	Kloppenburg	School of Architecture, Planning and Landscape	No
Cassiopeia	Holmes	School of Creative and Performing Arts Graduate Society	No
Cali	Sproule	School of Creative and Performing Arts Graduate Society	No
Omid	Asayesh	Sociology Graduate Students' Caucus	Yes
Evangelina	Natynczyk	Sociology Graduate Students' Caucus	No
Jordan	Arnold	Strategic Studies Students Consortium	No
Christopher	Verklan	Strategic Studies Students Consortium	No
Nicolas	Barry-Hallee	Sustainable Energy Development	No
Lindsey	Arkangel	Veterinary Medicine Grad Students Association	No
Karina	Hincapie	Vox Condiscipulum	No

November 2021 GRC Meeting Minutes

Meeting began and online sign-in 17h30

Territorial Acknowledgement (Kirsten Neprily) 17h31

Approval of the Agenda 17h33

Moved Rhiannon Massey
 Seconded Jessica Tannenbaum
 Discussion NA
 CARRIED (92% in favour)

Approval of October 2021 Minutes 17h34

Moved Kathryn Blair
 Seconded Nick Barry-Hallee

Discussion NA
CARRIED (92% in favour)

Student Care Health and Dental Presentation (Student Care Team) 17h35

- Bahareh Jokar (Program Manager with Student Care)
 - Student Care has over 25 years of experience and serves ~1 million students
 - Roles and Responsibilities:
 - Consultant:
 - Negotiation with insurer
 - Plan set-up
 - Strategy
 - Reporting and surveys
 - Administrator:
 - Member Services Centre
 - Opt-out/enrolments
 - Communications
 - Data transfer
 - Community builder
 - Network administrator
 - Note: Student Care is not the insurer (Desjardins is)
 - General coverage:
 - Health: over \$10k
 - Dental: up to \$850
 - Vision: over \$350
 - Travel: up to \$5M
 - Over \$2M in claims paid for 2020-2021
 - Student Care networks: practitioners that give student discounts (see list on website)
 - Empower Me Program: virtual health, mental health, and wellness available 24/7/365 (piloted Nov 1, 2021)
 - maximum wait time to talk to a nurse or doctor is 2 hrs
 - good way for preliminary assessment (e.g., to see if going to a nurse/doctor in-person is required)
 - see:
https://www.studentcare.ca/rte/en/IHaveAPlan_UniversityofCalgarygraduatestudentsGSA_EmpowerMe_EmpowerMe
 - Question: Is there any way to have higher coverage of psychological sessions?
 - Answer: This topic was reviewed in the latest review. Also, check the Empower Me program because it's free (although is short-term solution-based counselling).
 - Question: Could dental coverage be increased?
 - Answer: The amount of coverage is at the discretion of the GSA. Note that an increase in coverage will mean an increase in the cost of the plan. Make sure to check the network list, to get extra savings on treatment.
 - Question: Can students opt-in for coverage if they had previously opted-out?
 - Answer: If you lost your coverage because of unforeseen circumstances, you can opt-in within 30 days. IF it was foreseen, no.
 - Question: Who decides which insurance company serves students? Some of our students have had bad experience interacting with Desjardins (e.g., not all

prescribed meds were covered, and students couldn't afford to pay for them themselves)

- Answer: The insurer is something that can be change. Desjardins was selected through a competitive review process. If the GSA wanted to change it, then that's an option. Note that, this past year, the prescription meds coverage was switched to be in line with the provincial formulary.
- Don't hesitate to reach out to Student Care if there are further questions. See www.studentcare.ca for more info.

Feedback on USRI Report (USRI Team; presenting: Leslie Reid, Andrew Estefan) 17h49

- USRI Working Group:
 - Leslie Reid (Vice-Provost, teaching and learning), co-chair
 - Andrew Estefan (Faculty of Nursing), co-chair
 - Dawn Johnston (Faculty of Arts)
 - Wendy Benoit (Faculty of Science)
 - Barb Brown (Werklund School of Education)
 - VP Academic (Students' Union)
 - VP Academic (Graduate Students' Association)
 - Jacqueline Lambert (Office of Institutional Analysis)
 - Natasha Kenny (Taylor Institute for Teaching and Learning)
- Institutions across Canada are conducting reviews of how students evaluate instruction
 - the USRI hasn't been formally reviewed since 2003
 - there have been significant advancement in terms of our understanding teaching, evaluating, systemic bias, etc.
- USRI working group formed in Jan 2019
 - reporting to Traditional Learning Centre, General Faculties Council
 - purpose: to conduct a system review and to bring forward recommendations
- Recommendations: system overhaul
 - focus feedback on students' learning and course experiences
 - questions should be based on research in teaching and learning
 - currently, some of the questions are problematic
 - the questionnaire's new name should focus on students' learning experience
 - allow for time-sensitive feedback to course instructor and, when appropriate, to academic leaders
 - to allow more effective engagement with feedback
 - e.g., during the course instead of at the end
 - give ample time to provide feedback
 - adopt a tech platform that allows flexibility
 - e.g., to allow for small classes or non-traditional components to also get feedback (ones that would not usually have a USRI)
 - include graduate TAs in new student feedback system
 - allow easy summary and visualization of data
 - advance EDI
 - ensure that the questions eliminate the opportunity for bias
 - ensure that the Office of EDI and EDI practices are involved in all aspects
 - provide training and professional learning opportunities for those responsible for administering and using student feedback
 - ensure the new feedback system is accessible and inclusive to staff and learners of all abilities

- embed Indigenous Ways of Knowing
 - ensure that the office of Indigenous Engagement and Indigenous Ways of Knowing are being involved in all aspects
 - ensure that the feedback system reflects and demonstrates value for Indigenous pedagogies
 - explore how parallel processes could be reflected in the new feedback system, including oral systems and traditions
 - provide training around Indigenous approaches and how to support Indigenous scholars
- improve communication and education
 - develop communication and learning opportunities that:
 - promote the value and purpose of feedback
 - teach how to give feedback
 - teach how to respond to feedback
- Examples of recommendations:
 - new questionnaire: with institutional-set questions, but also questions specific to the faculty- and program- level, and optional questions for specific courses
 - new technological platform
 - the purpose of student feedback should be understood by all stakeholders
 - develop a committee to build and review the new platform (to have ongoing evaluation of it)
 - new name for feedback questionnaire
- Question: Re accountability of data, how will the data be reported to the community, especially in terms of how graduate students will see their data responded to?
 - Answer: Those decisions haven't been decided yet. The process will be developed from scratch. The committee (which will include grad student representatives) will be involved in deciding.
- Question: Will there be alternative ways of providing feedback to the online system?
 - Answer: We want the information to be online, but don't want to limit the access to being only an online link.
- Question: Who will be responsible for rewriting the questions? Who will be reshaping the feedback process?
 - Answer: The committee that has been recommended will be responsible.
- Question: The USRI is a formal tool for instructional feedback, are faculty supported/asked/encouraged in other ways to collect student feedback during a course?
 - Answer: Yes, the Taylor Institute has resources.
- Question: Knowing many of us are sessional instructors, with interim feedback from students, will adjustments to courses, contrary to course outlines be possible? Is taking this discussion up part of the plan to move forward with mid-semester data collection from students? ...where instructors can make meaningful adjustments to their courses mid semester?
 - Answer: The changes we're expecting to occur wouldn't be changes to the course outline, because that isn't often helpful. But feedback would hopefully give opportunity to change things about how the course is being done. If a large change is required, then the change would happen with next iteration of the course.
- Question: Given the current "blackbox" system in place with the USRI, how will this approach allow for information to be shared more broadly with the community?
- Questions: Do you have any specific examples on how the enhancement of EDI and indigenous ways of knowing will look like?

- Any further questions can be directed to Leslie Reid, Ander Estefan, or Alex Paquette
- Share feedback: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSf1aOLkrQXXJmuMo27K-8IOzcthtnGtDP6N5jELt3LY6nZOAQ/viewform>

Finance 101 (Mary Zhang) 18h16

- GSA Financial Oversight Structure:
 - Staff: preparing documents
 - VP Finance & Services, and the Board of Directors: review
 - Finance Standing Committee (FSC): review, bring up questions
 - Chair selected by GRC
 - Graduate Representative Council (GRC)
 - Members (Graduate Students): attend GRC meetings, and can join FSC
- Net income: revenue minus expenses
 - there is a separate income statement for GSA and LDL
- Overall GSA revenue:
 - mainly from Health and Dental, then GSA Fees, then Other [note: the exact % or \$ not given]
 - Other: mainly Quality Money (from U of C), then CA Levy (support Labour Relations Committee), then Advocacy Levy, the PDG Levy (Professional Development Grant)
- Expenses:
 - mainly Staff Salary and Benefits, then GSA Executive Fellowships, then Other, then Professional Fees, then Administrative Expenses, then Marketing & Website, then Amortization
 - Other: mainly LDL loss, then Awards Gala, then GSA Executive Expenses, then Senior Leadership Fellowships, then Investment Fees, then Staff Training and Development, then Exec Conferences and Functions, then GRC Meeting Expenses, then Standing Committee
- Question: Reserve Funds?
 - Answer: Currently being put into saving, investments, etc.
- Question: Do we have an ethical investing policy?
 - Answer: We do a review of bank that we do the investments with. We don't have an ethical investment policy.
- Comment: Would be great to see the \$ amounts to have better context.
 - Response: The audited financials are included in the annual report on our website. Annual budgets are also available by email request, as the GRC is the body that approves these each year.
 - 2020-2021 GSA Annual Report: <https://gsa.ucalgary.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/2020-21-GSA-Annual-Report.pdf>

Last Defence Lounge (LDL) options (Mary Zhang) 18h23

- (See October minutes for LDL Space Future Options)
- Summary of graduate students' feedback:
 - the majority of feedback supported reopening of LDL
 - desire for increased publicity as affordable event space
 - integrate arcade or board games option
 - integrate coffee shop, snack bar options
 - act as pop-up space for local Calgary restaurants
 - no need for more study space
- Proposed changes

- Snack-bar style menu in addition to full-meal menu
- QR code menu
- reduced hours
- main campus delivery
- reduced staff count: previously had 3 full-time managers
- increased employment of graduate students: part-time, or full-time, or international
- more coffee/tea options
- maybe: board games once risk of sharing items is reduced
- maybe: booking the space once process and policy is in place
- Motion: The GSA will reopen the LDL in Winter 2022 following all Provincial and University COVID-29 requirements.
 - Moved Mary Zhang
 - Seconded Cassie Holmes
 - Discussion
 - Question: Will it be possible to implement all or almost all the changes in time for reopening?
 - Answer: Once we know what we want the LDL to look like, we can figure out how to implement it.
 - Question: Will there be a cost to DGAs if they want to book the LDL?
 - Answer: Likely will have a discount or have a minimum order over which the rental is free.
 - Question: What are plans for catering to different allergies/eating styles if the menu is limited?
 - Answer: There will be different versions of the items
 - CARRIED (65 in favour, 7 opposed, 2 abstained)

Executive Reports 18h37

- The reports here are just snapshots of what the execs are doing.
- If you have anything you want to discuss, feel free to email execs.
- President:
 - Advocacy:
 - Return to Campus Plan: both institutional and GSA (both the Events and the GSA Office)
 - We are looking at hosting in-person events. All DGAs will get details soon.
 - We are still under a public state of emergency, which doesn't allow the GSA office to be open.
 - Consultation Guideline for Institutional Consultation with Grad Students
 - Example: about tuition increases
 - Communication:
 - GSA Email Communications
 - There have been issues with GSA emails being filtered as junk and not reaching students.
 - GRC Digest Newsletter
 - This is a new initiative, and so please give feedback
 - Organization Sustainability:
 - Strategic Plan: All goals are based on this plan

- Current strategic plan is coming to an end, and so have put out proposal to companies to put this together for us. And then will put out call for getting input into it.
 - Internal EDI Audit: Making sure we “walk the walk”
 - Will bring 3rd party into the GSA. Currently looking at companies that can provide this review/audit.
 - Federal Advocacy Contingency Fund: part of the president’s legal responsibility
- VP Academic:
 - Advocacy:
 - Minimum Funding Policy: This discussion has been difficult. (Faculty of Arts has been difficult especially: \$18k for MSc was proposed, but the faculty would prefer \$6-8k.)
 - The changes would only affect incoming students, not current students, but we are pushing for current students to be affected too.
 - Flexible Grading Option Policy: This policy has been put in place for undergrads, where they can get “credit granted” for up to 9 units. Grad students will get this same option for 3 units, likely starting next September.
 - Service Delivery & Organization Sustainability:
 - GSA Awards Platform: Completed a website to allow students to apply to awards more easily.
 - GSA Academic Workshops & Events: Have already run nine events, and have many coming up in Winter term
 - Peer Beyond Symposium: registrations opens up Dec. 1
- VP External:
 - Advocacy:
 - Governmental Advocacy (federal and provincial): e.g., fast-tracks for international student residency, more support for student financial aid
 - Consultation with Key Stakeholders: e.g., increasing student support
 - Tuition & Fees Consultations: Occurs internally at the university. We’re pleased with the amount of student consultation (and we’re seeing small changes in response to student suggestions)
 - Unofficial numbers on tuition increases:
 - Thesis-based: 2% increase (domestic and international)
 - Course-based: 7% increase to domestic, 10% increase to international
 - M. Eng.: 7% increase to domestic, 56% increase to international
 - Doctor of Design: 2% increase
 - SAPL, Master of Music, MBA: 2% increase
 - Covid 19 recovery fund, and tuition reinvestment fund are likely going to occur
 - Student services fee: 7% increase
 - Athletic fee: 4% increase (the GSA is asking to be consulted re any changes to \$25 credit)
 - Communication:
 - CASA Campaign
 - Showcase ab-GPAC work

- Have been hosting Instagram Live sessions related to advocacy, and also have advocacy blog to see what's being done re advocacy.
 - Contact if you have any questions about advocacy.
- VP Student Life:
 - Advocacy:
 - Mental Health Consultations
 - Service Delivery:
 - Popular Online Events
 - SEEC & EDI committee collaborative events
 - Ticket Program
 - Communication:
 - GSA Blog
 - GSA Newsletter
 - Organization Sustainability:
 - Sponsorship Package
- VP Finance & Service:
 - Service Delivery:
 - Virtual Healthcare Service (Empower Me): provide feedback, so we know whether it's useful
 - Financial Literacy Workshops: this month is Financial Literacy month
 - Communication:
 - GSA Budget
 - Organization Sustainability:
 - Sponsorship Package

Question period (Speaker) 18h56

1. Question: Would minimum funding policy affect international students?
 - a. Answer: We're currently proposing an increase for PhD students. We're asking for increase to \$24k, plus the tuition differential. We currently don't have any minimum funding policy for MSc, so we're trying to get something in place.
 - i. Departments might require more TAing if the minimum funding increases.
2. Question: What are some other arguments of the Faculty of Arts, regarding the minimum funding policy?
 - a. Answer: They claim it would "make the programs unsustainable," but the programs might already be unsustainable. They claim it would "cause fewer students to join, which would decrease diversity," but it would be preferable to have a few students paid fairly rather than more students paid unfairly.
 - b. Answer: They also claim that they "can't predict how much funding they will get" and that a higher minimum funding policy would mean that "students will have to TA more, but there aren't enough courses to TA."

DGA period 19h01

- At SCPA, there are a lot of current events happening, e.g., Bus Stop. There are free tickets available ("Claim Your Seat" website).
 - see: website <https://arts.ucalgary.ca/creative-performing-arts/news-and-events/school-events>

Announcements 19h03

- Quality Money:
 - Intake #2 closed

- Intake #3 closes Jan. 15, 2022, at 11:59 pm MT
 - <https://gsa.ucalgary.ca/financial-support/quality-money-program/>
- GSA Emergency Bursary & GSA Support Bursary
 - applications are accepted year-round
 - gsa.ucalgary.ca/financial-support/bursaries/
- Health & Dental Committee: needs GRC Rep positions
 - 2-3 hr/month commitment, with Zoom meetings
 - email vpfs.gsa@ucalgary.ca
- Transdisciplinary Workshop: Dec. 3 at 10h on Zoom
 - https://ucalgary.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJUoduuppz0vEteVFiDv6_ftSjXgJxxo2R2a
- Cook Up Jam: Dec. 2 at 19h
- Winter door-decor workshop: Dec. 9 at 18h30 on Zoom
- Holiday closures: U of C closed Dec. 25-Jan. 1, GSA closed Dec. 24-Jan. 3, GSA resumes Jan. 4
- See <https://gsa.ucalgary.ca/events/> for upcoming events

GRC prize draw 19h09

Three winners announced, Crystal will email winners.

Other business 19h08

- NA

Adjournment 19h08

MOTION to adjourn November 2021 GRC meeting at 19h08: Laura Sosa

Seconded Lisa Taylor

CARRIED (92% in favour)