



**GRADUATE STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION  
GRADUATE REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL MEETING  
Tuesday, February 22, 2022, 5:30 PM**

**Attendees:**

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

**Quorum**

First Name	Last Name	DGA	Proxy
Jasper	Greysson-Wong	Biochemistry and Molecular Biology	No
Cynthia	Adjekukor	Biochemistry and Molecular Biology	No
Amy	Du	Biological Sciences Graduate Students' Association	No
Rishika	Puri	Biological Sciences Graduate Students' Association	No
Maria Laura	Sosa Ponce	Biological Sciences Graduate Students' Association	No
Nathan	Meulenbroek	Biomedical Engineering GSA	Yes
Ashifa	Hudani	Biomedical Engineering GSA	Yes
Duncan	Brownsey	Chemistry Graduate Student Association	No
Justin	Perras	Chemistry Graduate Student Association	No
Bryan	Zanca	Chemistry Graduate Student Association	No
Saeid	Ghasemalizadeh	Civil Engineering Graduate Society	No
Amit	Chaudhari	Civil Engineering Graduate Society	No
Zakieh	Mohammadi	Civil Engineering Graduate Society	No
Farnaz	Hassani	Civil Engineering Graduate Society	No
Ali	Ebrahimi Emamieh	Civil Engineering Graduate Society	No
Kellie	Cornforth	Classics and Religion DGA	No
Sydney	Burton	Classics and Religion DGA	No
Anastasiia	Gushchina	Communication Media and Film DGA	No
Mina	Fahim	Community Health Sciences Student Executive	No
Kathryn	Blair	Computational Media Design	No
Andishe	Ashjari	Doctoral Association for Students of Haskayne	No
Zack	Moline	Economics Graduate Association	No
Mallika	Sharma	Economics Graduate Association	No

Mahrokh	Namazi	Electrical and Computer Engineering GSA	No
Xen	Virtue	English Department Graduate Association	No
Omar	Ramadan	English Department Graduate Association	No
ShuHua	Li	Gastrointestinal Graduate Students Association	No
Alison	Hanes	Geography Graduate Students' Association	Yes
Genevieve	Dryden	Geography Graduate Students' Association	No
Allegra	DePasquale	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
Razieh	Alba	Graduate Programs in Education Students Association	No
Apoorve	Chokshi	Graduate Programs in Education Students Association	No
Lyliam	Jardine	Graduate Programs in Education Students Association	No
Lisa	Taylor	Graduate Programs in Education Students Association	No
Kristaps	Balodis	Graduate University of Calgary Mathematics Society	No
Alex	Cameron	Graduate University of Calgary Mathematics Society	No
Madeline	Ward	Graduate University of Calgary Mathematics Society	No
James	Steele	Graduate University of Calgary Mathematics Society	No
Bailey	Harray	History Graduate Students Union	No
Brooke	Belanger	Hotchkiss Brain Institute Trainee Organization	No
Trevor	Low	Hotchkiss Brain Institute Trainee Organization	No
Dion	Kelly	Hotchkiss Brain Institute Trainee Organization	No
Robert	Clarke	Immunology Graduate Association	No
Michael	Esposito	Kinesiology Graduate Students Association	Yes
Julia	Daun	Kinesiology Graduate Students Association	No
Nicole	Boisvert	Kinesiology Graduate Students Association	No
Quinn	Goddard	Linguistics Graduate Students' Association	No
Monikka	Sarino	Master of Management Society	No
Peihao	Li	Masters of Pathologists' Assistant GSA	No
Rachelle	Drummond	Masters of Public Policy Students Association	No
Julia	Jachimowicz	Masters of Public Policy 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

Kailyn	Stenhouse	Physics & Astronomy Dep Grad Association	No
Pooja	Woosaree	Physics & Astronomy Dep Grad Association	No
Davor	Curic	Physics & Astronomy Dep Grad Association	No
Laura	Conrad	Political Science Graduate Student Association	No
Zach	Pfeifer	Political Science Graduate Student Association	No
Jenelle	Morgan	Psychology Graduate Students Association	No
Emily	Kloppenburg	School of Architecture, Planning and Landscape	No
Jo-Lynn	Yen	School of Architecture, Planning and Landscape	No
Vincent	Yong	School of Architecture, Planning and Landscape	No
Cassie	Holmes	School of Creative and Performing Arts Graduate Society	No
Evangelina	Natynczyk	Sociology Graduate Students' Caucus	No
Omid	Asayesh	Sociology Graduate Students' Caucus	No
Christopher Verklan	Verklan	Strategic Studies Students Consortium	No
Nicolas	Barry-Hallee	Sustainable Energy Development	No
Sebastian	Castiblanco	Sustainable Energy Development	No
Lindsey	Arkangel	Veterinary Medicine Grad Students Association	No

## February 2022 GRC Meeting Minutes

Meeting began and online sign-in 17h30

Territorial Acknowledgement (Mary Zhang) 17h32

Approval of the Agenda 17h32

Moved: Julia Daun

Seconded: Jasper Greysson-Wong

Discussion: NA

CARRIED (83% in favour)

Approval of January 2022 Minutes 17h35

Moved: Jasper Greysson-Wong

Seconded: Rachelle Drummond

Discussion: NA

CARRIED (87% in favour)

GSA 2022-2023 General and Health & Dental Fees for Approval (Mary Zhang) 17h36

- We expect these few years of increase to steady out soon
- Health and Dental Plan Fees Proposal
  - Individual plan: increase by 8% (estimated 15% increase in plan premium)
    - difference subsidized by Reserve funds: ~\$110k (\$306k if virtual healthcare services continues)
  - Additional 1 dependent: increase 8% (like the individual plan)
  - Additional  $\geq 2$  dependents: gradually phased increase to bring more in line with actual cost and in line with individual cost (this is 2x individual fee)
    - will additionally increase 8% (to remain in line with individual fee)

Plan	Estimated plan cost	Current	Proposed	\$ Change
<b>Individual</b>	\$648.35 (\$689.30 if virtual healthcare continues)	\$579	\$626	\$47 (8%)
<b>Add: 1 dependent</b>	\$648.35 (\$689.30 if virtual healthcare continues)	\$579	\$626	\$47 (8%)
<b>Add: 2 or more dependents (family)</b>	\$1,296.70 (\$1,378.60 if virtual healthcare continues)	\$1,035	\$1,252 (2x indiv. fee)	\$123 (phased incr.) + \$47 x 2 (from 8%) = \$217

- Motion 1: To approve the following: No change to the GSA General fee amount for the 2022-2023 year **AND** Motion 2: To approve the following: Increase the Health and Dental Plan (H&D) student fee from \$579 to \$626; increase the H&D fee for one dependent from \$579 to \$626; and increase the H&D fee for 2 or more dependents from \$1,035 to \$1,252
  - Moved: Mary Zhang
  - Seconded: Jasper Greysson-Wong
  - Discussion:
    - Question: Why do we use a third-party admin (Studentcare)?
      - Answer: We don't have the resources to do it by ourselves, and they can get a better deal than we can get.
    - Question: Can we expect that this fee stays the same for the next years? (as it did prior to covid)?
      - Answer: No. Inflation, and added benefits mean it will go up.
    - Question: What is the economic reasoning behind increasing these fees?
      - Answer: There was a built-up artificially low cost caused by two years of no increase.
    - Question: A family increase of \$217 seems a bit steep...is there a way it could be slightly subsidized again this year, then "catch up" to the other fees next year?
      - Answer: Right now, they are paying less than 2x the cost of individual plan, so are already very low compared to the other plans.
    - Question: What extra services are we getting for an increase fee?
      - Answer: Includes the EmpowerMe services (we were not charged for the first year).
    - Question: I am wondering how do these fees compare to fees and services at other Universities?
      - Answer: Email Mary and you can get the comparison. However, it is difficult to compare because different schools provide different services, etc.
    - Question: How many families are enrolled in the plan compared to individuals/couples? (e.g., how much would it cost to subsidize families compared to the subsidy in place for individuals?)
      - Answer: Don't have the numbers now, but can get them for you.

- Question: If the motion is opposed, would we be able to fight for a lower increase or would it be a higher increase if we do not agree to these numbers?
  - Answer: The 15% is the estimated increase that will occur to the premium. Students will pay only 8% in their Plan Fee. The GSA is subsidizing some of that (using the Reserve), so that the increase can be “spread over” a few years.
- Question: Do you have the information to clarify the number of years we can expect to see these increases?
  - Answer: We don’t have the information
- Question: Not directly related to current increases, but is there any intention to review the plan/insurance provider in the future?
  - We currently have a five-year agreement with Studentcare
- Question: How long can the GSA continue to subsidize fee increases? Relatedly, how is this funded - is it sustainable?
  - Answer: We are figuring that out, and expect the fees to plateau in a few years.
- CARRIED (39 in favour, 14 oppose, abstain 13)

### **2022-2023 GSA/LDL draft budgets (Mary Zhang) 18h09**

- Draft GSA budgets will be sent out to GRC representative for review Feb. 23, 2022
- GSA Restricted Budgets
  - Collective Agreement Budget
    - Revenue source: 0.5% payroll deduction from academically employed graduate students
    - Major expenses include: LRC honorariums, Service agreement fees to PSAC, GSA staff support
  - Advocacy Budget
    - Revenue source: \$9 Advocacy Levy paid by graduate students
    - Major expenses include: CASA & ab-GPAC membership dues, Advocacy meetings, conference expenses
  - Professional Development Grant Budget
    - Revenue source: \$5 PDG Levy paid by graduate students
  - Quality Money Budget
    - Revenue source: allocated from University of Calgary
    - Increased grad student groups support funding, admin staff support allocation, reallocation of GSA citizenship awards and awards website to GSA operating budget
  - Health & Dental Budget
    - Revenue source: Health & Dental fees paid by grad students
    - Budget reflects a 15% increase in Studentcare premiums and an 8% increase in Health & Dental Fees
- GSA Operating and LDL Budgets
  - Operating Budget
    - Major revenue source: membership fees paid by grad students
    - Expenses include: GSA Bursary Top-up, reallocation of GSA citizenship award and awards website to GSA operating budget, increased LDL loss due to reopening costs since March 2020 closure
  - Last Defence Lounge Budget
    - Sales estimate is 50% of last operating year (2019-2020)

- Reduced staffing levels, hours of operation, and menu offerings to minimize costs
- For questions regarding GSA budgets, email: [vpfs.gsa@ucalgary.ca](mailto:vpfs.gsa@ucalgary.ca)

### **Executive Reports 18h13**

- (details in package)
- President
  - Advocacy
    - Return to Campus Plan: see <https://gsa.ucalgary.ca/contact/covid-19-impacts-on-gsa-operations/>
      - things are shifting back to in-person, with mask mandate still in place
      - GSA sent out a survey asking students about their thoughts regarding the shifts
    - Consultation Guideline for Institutional Consultation with Grad Students
      - was supposed to be with SU as well, but their VP External stepped down, so it might be just with GSA
  - Communication
    - GSA Email Communications: email issue solved
    - GRC Digest Newsletter: sent out every Friday
  - Organization Sustainability
    - Strategic Plan: we are currently reviewing options, and will move forward with a company in the next few weeks
    - Internal EDI Audit: will be done next Monday
    - Federal Advocacy Contingency Fund
- VP Academic
  - Advocacy
    - Minimum Funding Policy: Complete
    - Flexible Grading Option Policy: Complete
    - Extension Policy: our desired change is so that supervisors can no longer use the extension against you
    - Annual Progress Report: we want to update this
      - e.g., why do we not get to give feedback on our supervisors?
  - Service Delivery & Organization Sustainability
    - GSA Awards Platform: Complete
    - GSA Academic Workshops & Events: Complete
    - Peer Beyond Symposium: Happening this week!
      - <https://gsa.ucalgary.ca/events/peerbeyondsymposium/>
- VP External
  - Advocacy
    - Governmental Advocacy (federal/provincial): have had meetings with various councillors of different wards
    - Consultation with Key Stakeholders: e.g., NDP MLA David Eggen and Minister of Advanced Education (Dimitrios Nikolaidis), specifically re upcoming provincial budget and what students want
    - CASA Supercon Advocacy Week: week of conference meetings
      - discussing: mental health, increased Indigenous access to education, funding/grants, streamline co-op process, increase PR for international students

- survey re return to campus: over 1300 responses: over 60% felt that the changes were premature, and 80% of current TAs were extremely concerned about lifting covid restrictions
        - data will be made public via social media
        - will be on website
        - these results will be brought to the U of C Board of Governors meeting in March
      - Tuition & Fees Consultations
    - Communication
      - Communications Strategy
      - Media Relations
      - Meet with municipal and provincial politicians
  - VP Student Life
    - Advocacy
      - Mental Health Consultations: if there is any barrier, let us know so we can work to diminish the barrier to access
    - Communication
      - GSA Newsletter: we are working to make sure that students can get the most out of them
    - Service Delivery
      - Popular Online Events
      - SEEC & EDI committee collaborative events
      - Ticket Program: let us know if there are any you want us to add
    - Organization Sustainability
      - Sponsorship Package
  - VP Finance & Service Report
    - Service Delivery
      - Health & Dental Fees: note that coverage changes when status (full time vs part time) changes
      - Financial literacy workshops
      - Sustainability Committee event and initiative: working on styrofoam recycling with university
    - Communication
      - GSA Budget
    - Organization Sustainability
      - Sponsorship Package: new partnership with Dream Scents candle business
      - Discounted tickets: e.g., Sunshine Village, Calgary Zoo
    - LDL: new manager has started their term, and hiring will start in March
  - Call to join the Collective Agreement Bargaining Team (Allan Lyons, Vice Chair of LRC)
    - LRC is responsible for negotiating, etc. for academically employed grad students
      - past collective agreement will expire, so U of C could initiate negotiations at any time
    - required roles: Outreach Team (e.g., designing surveys), Steering Team (e.g., analyzing data), Negotiating Team (requires high time commitment for several days)
    - LRC bi-monthly meetings are open to all academically employed grad students
    - for details, email: [lrc.gsa@ucalgary.ca](mailto:lrc.gsa@ucalgary.ca)

**Question period (Speaker) 18h36**

- Question: What are the chances that covid safety measures will actually be reviewed before the term ends?
  - Answer: (Kirsten) The U of C is keeping all safety protocols announced in January (e.g., masking, social distancing) until end of winter term. We are in consultation right now, looking at where things will go.
  - (Tanille) The Minister of Higher Education gave a directive to U of C, but most students don't want it (see survey mentioned above). We want physical and mental safety to be taken care of.
  - (Alex) At the end of the term, all safety protocols will be reviewed. Reminder: If you are having any issues as a TA, go to the LRC (they are there to help you.)
- Question: When can we expect LDL to reopen?
  - Answer: (Mary) Early April, likely.
- Question: I heard that the Minister of Advanced Education of Alberta is advocating for all post-secondary institutions to align their COVID-19 policies with that of the Alberta province (i.e., removing everything by March 1st). Is there any likelihood that the University will go along with that and remove safety measures like masking before the term is over?
  - Answer: (Kirsten) No, not until the end of semester.
- Question: How will social distancing be effective in a small and full classroom?
  - Answer: (Tanille) Not sure all social distancing will be fulfilled, because of room sizes.
- Question: When will we learn about the results of the GRC poll about potentially keeping these meetings online?
  - Answer: (Crystal) Any changes will be communicated once the board has reviewed the results.
- For more questions, reach out to the execs: <https://gsa.ucalgary.ca/about-the-gsa/gsa-executive-board/>

### **DGA period (DGAs) 18h43**

- World Stage Design is a conference that happens every four years on a different continent this summer it's here in Calgary. We have designers from all over the world coming.
  - If you have any interest, the opportunities are endless. Many of the MFA drama majors are working on organizing the conference.
  - You can find out more information here <https://wsd2021.ca/wsd-exhibition-2/>
- Hi everyone! Sociology Graduate Student Caucus (SGSC) rep here :)
  - I wanted to share that we are holding our Graduate Student Research Symposium on March 3rd and 4th, on Zoom.
  - If you want to attend any of the presentations and would like to receive the program agenda, please contact us at [soci.gsr@ucalgary.ca](mailto:soci.gsr@ucalgary.ca).
- Classics and Religion Department: Fundraiser: We are collecting recipes and putting them into a recipe book and selling it.
- The BGSA (Biological Sciences) is hosting our annual graduate symposium from March 23 - 25!
  - We will have a keynote speaker from NASA, Dr. Sharmila Bhattacharyal and an EDI speaker, Dr. Mahadeo Sukhai.
  - Let us know if you want more information at [biogsa@ucalgary.ca](mailto:biogsa@ucalgary.ca)
- Newsletter/marketing submission form: <https://gsa.ucalgary.ca/contact/newsletter-submission-form/>



## **Announcements (All) 18h46**

- Quality Money
  - Intake #4: Feb. 21-Mar. 7, 2022 (deadline Mar. 7 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
  - see [gsa.ucalgary.ca/financial-support/bursaries/](https://gsa.ucalgary.ca/financial-support/bursaries/)
- Peer Beyond GSA Conference: Feb 23-25, 2022 on gather.town
  - Abstract deadline: Jan 26, 2022 at 11:59 pm
  - [gsa.ucalgary.ca/events/peerbeyondsymposium/](https://gsa.ucalgary.ca/events/peerbeyondsymposium/) for more info
- 2022 GSA Elections: voting on Mar. 14&15, 2022
  - candidate platforms at: [gsa.ucalgary.ca/elections](https://gsa.ucalgary.ca/elections)
  - by-election soon for President and VP Academic roles
- Land Acknowledgement Workshop: Tuesday, March 8 from 1-3 pm (MST) on Zoom
- 2SLGBTQIAP+ Book Club: Thursday, March 10 from 6-7:30 pm (MST)
  - reading The Black Flamingo, by Dean Atta
  - virtual
- “Going Donuts for Bath Bombs”: March 10 from 6-8 pm (MST), \$5/ ticket
- Voices on the Margins: March 15 from 12-1 pm (MST) on Zoom
  - Derritt Mason (Department of English): Voice and Marginality at the Intersection of Children’s and Young Adult Literature, Queer Theory, and Cultural Studies
- “Investing in Cryptocurrencies: Understanding the Fundamental and Risks”: Thursday, March 22 from 4-5 pm (MST) on Zoom
- DGA Food Drive: March 15-April 15, 2022
  - email will be sent to DGAs
  - website: [gsa.ucalgary.ca/dgasgrns/dga-food-drive/](https://gsa.ucalgary.ca/dgasgrns/dga-food-drive/)
- Mortgage workshop: <https://gsa.ucalgary.ca/product/buying-your-first-home/>
- for more details, see [gsa.ucalgary.ca/events/](https://gsa.ucalgary.ca/events/)

## **GRC prize draw 18h50**

Three winners announced, Crystal will email winners tomorrow.

## **Other business 18h51**

- Alex: Faculty of Grad studies has changed the terms of some funding
  - AGES is no longer available if you’re past 36 months past start of your program
    - AGES is also only for domestic students, not international and not for out-of-province
  - GAC will only be for thesis-based students
  - Talk to your departments about the implications of these changes!

## **Adjournment 18h54**

MOTION to adjourn February 2022 GRC meeting at **18h54**: Jasper Greysson-Wong

Seconded: Bryan Zanca

CARRIED (85% in favour)