

Saaka Sulemana Saaka
President
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September 1st - October 14th

Improving Advocacy

Objective: Have 30% of the GSA advocacy be informed by consultation and communicated to university students year over year by April 30, 2023.

Goal: **Consult with graduate students to determine the advocacy prioritizes for the GSA2024/26 Strategic Plan.**

Explanation: As our current strategic plan nears its end, we need to draft a new three-year plan. First, Sherry led consultation with key stakeholders. Second, a survey is currently open to understand the advocacy needs of fellow graduate students. Hence, through consultation with graduate students, I will form the working group on key themes that should form the core of the plan.

Updates: The GSA put out a survey in August that captured the student voice regarding they will like my team to advocate for. Once the survey closes, we will better we will use the data to inform our advocacy to the municipal, provincial, and federal governments. We constituted a strategic plan working group to discuss the data collected by Sherry and will begin drafting the plan.

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, we care continuing with a project Tanille was working on

in conjunction with the SU. The expectation is to 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:

The development of this plan will give a clear outline of expectations for the students and the University when consultation occurs. In the past, students have brought up that when the University comes for consultation with students, they feel that the institution has already made its plan and it is more of a one-way conversation rather than collecting feedback from students and taking it into consideration for their plans. I have met with the Students' Union (undergraduate) and Provost office about developing these key stakeholder consultation guidelines and both parties are interested. More updates to come as we have begun developing a draft.

Improving Communication

Objective: Increase the GSA Annual Survey response rate to 20% of all enrolled graduate students by April 30, 2022.

Goal: **Decentralize consultation and improve relationship with fellow graduate students at the department level.**

Explanation: We want graduate students to take ownership of the GSA and fully engage in its governance. One of the gaps we heard from fellow students is the lack DGA involvement. My team intends to lay foundation for reengaging our DGAs.

Updates: I have attended several departmental orientations and listened to some concerns of fellow graduate students. It was also obvious that several colleagues do not fully know what the GSA is doing for them and it's important for members to be informed. We are hoping to visit DGAs for coffee chats as the year unfolds.

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:** As GRC is the bridge between the main body of GSA and the student member I want to focus on decreasing the barriers of GRC members passing the information along to the students in their department. Therefore, every month by the end of the week that GRC falls in I will complete a “GRC digest” or short report that will be emailed out to all representatives. This report is to be shared with all graduate students to keep students informed about the important things that are going on at the GSA. If and GRC members have feedback about what to include/not include please reach out to me at pres.gsa@ucalgary.ca

Improving Organization Sustainability

- Objective:** First, develop the 2024/26 strategic plan. Second, hire permanently for the role of the Executive Director and review some key documents that govern the work of the GSA to reflect changing needs of the organization.
- Goal:** **Develop New GSA Strategic Plan (2023-2025)**
- Explanation:** As noted above, the current GSA Strategic Plan is set to expire at the end of year. Therefore, we must start the groundwork of creating the new Strategic Plan for 2023-2025.
- Updates:** Sherry has done tremendously well in interviewing some key stakeholders and has collected data to guide our discussion and drafting of the next strategic plan. We have a team of 12 members comprising members of the GRC, non-GRC graduate students, LRC, Executives, and staff. Sherry will facilitate discussions. We’re hoping to have a draft in the next few months.

Total Hours

Meetings: 127

Events: 21

Other: 89

Total Hours: 237

Average per week: 39.5

Meetings notes: all meetings attended are recorded in my weekly reports.

James Steele
VP Academic
vpa.gsa@ucalgary.ca
September 26th – October 24th

Strategic Plan Goals

As VP Academic, I am committed to ensure that all aspects of my portfolio are in alignment with the GSA's Strategic Plan. The GSA's 3-year strategic plan 2019-2022 can be found [here](#).

Improving Advocacy

Graduate Student Vacation

- Advocating for graduate student vacation to be increased from a suggested minimum of 2 weeks to protected minimum of 3 weeks.
- Working in collaboration with FGS to compile data and research to support this proposal.
- We will begin to present this proposal various committees that must give the OK for this proposed policy change in November through early February.

Student Supervisor Best Practices

- Another collaboration with FGS to compile an extensive set of best practices supervisors and their students.
- For now, the goal of this project is simply to create a reference for best practice, though with the expectation that the research will reveal policies that must be updated. I will advocate for these changes as needed, should the changes be a priority for graduate students.

I want to come chat with your DGA!

- If you would have me, I would love to come chat with your DGA sometime this fall.
- I have already reached out to certain DGAs and am making my way down the list, but if you and your DGA has a meeting coming up and have some time to spare, please send me an email!
- I would love to come learn about what academic advocacy priorities that are important in the context of your department.
- This will aid me in structuring our larger academic advocacy agenda.

Personal Advocacy

- Throughout the year, I advocate for individual students and help guide them through any academic difficulties they might be encountering. This can include trouble with a supervisor or an instructor but can take many shapes.
- If you or someone you know requires assistance related to such matters, please feel free to contact me; no problem is too small and I meet with multiple students each week.

Committees

- I sit as the graduate student representative on various committees. If you have concerns that you want heard, please let me know and I will be sure to voice them at the appropriate meeting.

Improving Service Delivery**PEER Beyond 2023**

- Working with the help of our capable events coordinator Jaime and communications manager Thao, PEER Beyond 2023 is starting to take shape!
- The graduate research conference will take place during February 11th and 12th at the Taylor Institute for Teaching and Learning.
- Visit our website to register now! You will have the opportunity to present a talk, poster, or performance piece relevant to your research.
- This year, we also have a contest for graphic design and slogan design for the conference! The winners will be chosen by a poll open to all graduate students. We cannot wait to see what you all come up with!
- We will also be collaborating with FGS to have the awards ceremony for Images of Research during Peer Beyond.
- The Academic Support Committee will host several Professional Development workshops to prepare students for PEER Beyond.

Awards for Fall

- The awards committee is currently in the process of adjudicating the Citizenship Awards and the Inclusion Scholarship (CB).
- The GSA Bursary is currently open to submission and the Professional Development Grant will be open soon.
- We also hear your concerns about the Emergency Bursary: we are working with the adjudicators to improve this process to reduce wait times and ensure that adjudication is happening equitably.

Improving Communication**Integrity Week Workshop**

- On Oct. 17th I ran the workshop “What does Academic Integrity Mean for Graduate Students”.
- The aim is to educate graduate students on academic integrity at the graduate level.
- The turnout was great, and we were requested to turn the workshop into a quick-reference pamphlet, which I am currently working on.

Improving Organization Sustainability

Student Supervisor Best Practices

- One goal of this work is to reduce the amount of conflict between students and their supervisors.
- This will hopefully make the role of VP Academic more sustainable in the future, as advocating on behalf of students in conflict with their supervisor is a major part of the role. While it may be the most important, reducing conflict from the get-go will benefit students and allow future VP Academics extra time to focus on other portions of the portfolio.

Other Accomplishments

Academic Support Committee

- The Academic Support Committee had its first meeting and is working on a professionalization workshop series.
- More details to come!

FYI & Highlights

MITACS Workshops

- Oct 26th – Funding Opportunities Workshop
- Nov 2nd – Finding an Industry Partner Workshop

Total Hours

Meeting: 73

Others: 62

Total: 135

Average per week: 33

Notes:

Meetings Attended

Meeting name	Day of the Week	Date
Student Advising	Monday	Sept 26 th
VP Leslie Reid 1:1	Monday	Sept 26 th
Board Meeting	Monday	Sept 26 th
Learning Tech. Advisory Committee	Tuesday	Sept 27 th
GSA AGM	Tuesday	Sept 27 th
BoD Meeting	Wednesday	Sept 28 th
External Teaching and Learning Committee	Wednesday	Sept 28 th

Academic Support Committee SLT		
Awards Committee	Thursday	Sept 29 th
Images of Research – PEER Beyond Collaboration	Thursday	Sept 29 th
FGS Council	Thursday	Sept 29 th
Student Advising	Tuesday	Sept 30 th
	Tuesday	Oct 4 th
FGS -Student Supervisor Review	Tuesday	Oct 4 th
BoD Meeting	Wednesday	Oct 5 th
PEER Beyond Huddle	Wednesday	Oct 5 th
GSA Awards	Thursday	Oct 6 th
GFC Full Council	Thursday	Oct 6 th
Student Advising	Friday	Oct 7 th
Academic Support Committee SLT	Friday	Oct 7 th
FGS – Vacation	Tuesday	Oct 11 th
GSA Advocacy Townhall	Tuesday	Oct 11 th
BoD Meeting	Wednesday	Oct 12 th
Associate Deans Research Council	Wednesday	Oct 12 th
Registrar Office – Emergency Bursary Review	Wednesday	Oct 12 th
PEER Beyond Huddle	Wednesday	Oct 12 th
GSA Awards	Thursday	Oct 13 th
Funding & Tuition Advocacy Huddle	Friday	Oct 14 th
FGS – Funding & Tuition	Tuesday	Oct 17 th
What Does Academic Integrity Mean for Graduate Students?	Tuesday	Oct 17 th
GFC TLC	Wednesday	Oct 18 th
GFC GAPS	Wednesday	Oct 18 th
BoD Meeting	Wednesday	Oct 18 th
GFC Executive	Wednesday	Oct 18 th
GSA Awards	Thursday	Oct 19 th
McKaig-Killam Ceremony	Thursday	Oct 19 th
PEER Beyond Huddle	Thursday	Oct 19 th
Academic Support Committee	Friday	Oct 20 th
Research and Scholarship – GFC	Friday	Oct 20 th

Cameron Armstrong
VP Finance and Services
Cameron.armstrong@ucalgary.ca
September 26-October 24

Strategic Plan Goals

As Vice President of Finance and Services, I am committed to ensure that all aspects of my portfolio are in alignment with the GSA's Strategic Plan. The GSA's 3-year strategic plan 2019-2022 can be found [here](#).

Improving Advocacy

Labour Relations

- Renaming Labour Relations Committee to Graduate Labour Union to better align with purpose and established naming conventions
- New committee member added to assist with financials
- Harassment procedure and HR support being investigated

Improving Service Delivery

Health and Dental Upgrades

- Preferred provider network now online! Practitioners added for:
 - Chiropractic
 - Massage therapy
 - Physiotherapy
- Process improvement areas being followed up with StudentCare:
 - Shortening blackout period
 - Rolling intake/approval for students
 - Customer service KPI establishment and tracking

Improving Communication

Financial Education Workshops

- Self-directed investing workshop held on October 4
- Inflation discussion and savings strategy workshop held on October 19

Improving Organization Sustainability

Sustainability Committee Workshop Series

- Trivia held on September 21
- Build-your-own terrarium scheduled for November 2

Other Accomplishments

Started operation of Finance Standing Committee without Chair:

- New Chair to be elected during October 25 GRC

Promotion of discounts through GSA website:

- Discount resources emailed to students
- Inflation education workshop held
- Student discount cards promoted and permanently fixed to website

Parking permit restructuring for Varsity Courts proposed to the Parking Office:

- Reduced rates for residents
- Opt out reimbursements available
- Additional, discounted, permits available for UC students and staff

FYI & Highlights

Upcoming financial education workshops:

- November 8 – Investing in cryptocurrencies, 4-5 PM
- November 22 – Budgeting Basics, 4-5 PM

Total Hours

Meeting: 48

Others: 44

Total: 92

Average per week: 23

Notes:

Meetings Attended

Meeting name	Day of the Week	Date
Executive Board Meeting	Monday	September 26, 2022
AGM Overview	Monday	September 26, 2022
GBFS Meeting	Monday	September 26, 2022
AGM	Tuesday	September 27, 2022
Executive Board Meeting	Wednesday	September 28, 2022
Check-in	Wednesday	September 28, 2022
FSC Meeting	Thursday	September 29, 2022
FGS Meeting	Thursday	September 29, 2022
Grad Student Interview	Monday	October 3, 2022
LDL Marketing Meeting	Monday	October 3, 2022
GBFS Meeting	Monday	October 3, 2022
UC/GSA Meeting	Tuesday	October 4, 2022
Financial Education Workshop	Tuesday	October 4, 2022
Grad Student Interview	Tuesday	October 11, 2022
Executive Board Meeting	Wednesday	October 12, 2022
Bursary Meeting	Wednesday	October 12, 2022

LRC Meeting	Wednesday	October 12, 2022
GBFS Meeting	Wednesday	October 12, 2022
FGSC Meeting	Thursday	October 13, 2022
Registration Meeting	Friday	October 14, 2022
H&D Meeting	Friday	October 14, 2022
GBFS Meeting	Monday	October 17, 2022
GSA Staff Meeting	Tuesday	October 18, 2022
GSA Board/Staff Meeting	Tuesday	October 18, 2022
Hunter Hub Launch	Tuesday	October 18, 2022
Executive Board Meeting	Wednesday	October 19, 2022
Financial Education Workshop	Wednesday	October 19, 2022
LDL Event	Thursday	October 20, 2022
LDL Marketing Meeting	Friday	October 21, 2022
ALAC Meeting	Friday	October 21, 2022

Masume Akbari
VP Student Life
vpsl.gsa@ucalgary.ca
September 1-October 25

Strategic Plan Goals

As Vice President Student Life, I am committed to ensure that all aspects of my portfolio are in alignment with the GSA's Strategic Plan. The GSA's 3-year strategic plan 2019-2022 can be found [here](#).

Improving Advocacy

Equity, Diversity, Inclusion (EDI) Committee

- Equity, Diversity, Inclusion (EDI) initiatives and statements:
 - Assisting with Calgary Pride statement, Sep 2022
 - Releasing a statement on Iran Protests, Sep 2022
 - Working on different EDI related issues at the University of Calgary that have been brought to GSA from graduate students.

Gender and Sexuality Alliance Subcommittee (GSA^2)

- GSA^2 statements:
 - Working on Calgary Pride statement, Sep 2022

Human Chain events

- Organizing a human chain event in collaboration with Iranian Graduate Students' Association (IGSA) in solidarity with Iranian students, Oct 2022

Student Supervisor Conflict

- Advocating for students in a consultation capacity to GSA VP Academic in their project on student supervisor relationships.

Improving Service Delivery

Student Engagement and Events Committee (SEEC)

- Organizing events by SEEC subcommittees to cater to various groups of graduate students interests and needs.
 - Equity, Diversity, Inclusion (EDI) events:
 - Peer support sessions for Iranian graduate students in collaboration with Iranian Graduate Students' Association (IGSA) and Student Wellness Centre, Oct 20, Oct 26

- Event Subcommittee (ES) events:
 - Assisting event coordinator with kayaking Canoeing, Sep & Oct 2022
 - Escape Room at Espace 60, Oct 26
 - Laser Tag, Nov 2022

- Gender and Sexuality Alliance Subcommittee (GSA²) events:
 - Calgary Pride, Sep 4
 - LGBT Trivia Night @ LDL, Oct 3
 - Queeroween Pumpkin Carving, Oct 28
 - 2SLGBTQIAP+ Book Club and Coffee Chat, Nov 17
 - Transgender Day of Remembrance, Nov 21
 - Queer Speaker Series, Nov 23
 - Queer Gingerbread House Decorating, Dec 7

- Mental Health and Wellness Subcommittee (MHWS) events:
 - Wellness Resource Scavenger Hunt, Sep 26- Sep 30
 - Crafts and Snacks with GSA, Nov 1
 - Mocktail Event for National Addictions Awareness Week, Nov 24
 - 12 Days of Giveaways, Dec 1 to Dec 12

- Newcomers and International Students Subcommittee (NISS) events:
 - Banking 101, Sep 13
 - Literature Review Seminar, Nov 2

Improving Communication

Communication and social media

- Reviewing GSA weekly Newsletter contents to ensure GSA Marketing and Communication team operates towards meeting graduate students' interests.
- Suggesting methods to GSA Marketing and Communication team for increasing student engagement through GSA social media.
- Attending GSA events to open an in-person line of communication for graduate students to express their concerns, ask their questions, and provide me with their feedbacks.

Improving Organization Sustainability

Events at LDL

- Encouraging different committees and subcommittees to hold their events at LDL to boost LDL operation.

Other Accomplishments

Departmental Graduate Associations (DGAs)

- Increasing DGA Event Grant (in a pilot program for a year) to \$1300
- Removing the cap of \$150 on event grant requests to GSA

Graduate Student Groups (GSGs)

- Removing the cap of \$150 on event grant requests to GSA

Mentorship program

Mentorship program for newcomers and international students to help them adapt with life in Canada, improve their language skills, and reduce their stress level. This project will follow these steps:

- Approaching ISS, Welcome Centre, and other organizations across campus and the city of Calgary to investigate about the existing resources and similar groups.
- Asking for different GSA committees' inputs and ideas on preparing a guideline for this mentorship program. The guideline includes the first steps you need to take when you move to Calgary (opening a bank account, applying for SIN at a registry, etc.), showing the students around the campus and city (if possible), introducing GSA resources, etc.
- Calling out for volunteers who are interested in joining this program as a mentor.
- Mentor orientation.
- Initiating the program and opening it to graduate students before they move to Calgary.

FYI & Highlights

- MHWS will be a part of UCalgary [UFlourish](#) event this year (Oct 24- Nov 4).
- GSA^2 in collaboration with EDI and MHWS is planning for intersectionality symposium.

Total Hours

Meeting: 50
Others: 130
Total: 180
Average per week: 25
Notes:

Meetings Attended

Meeting name	Day of the Week	Date
Executive Board Meeting	Wednesday	September 7, 2022
SEEC chair meeting	Thursday	September 8, 2022
GSA board-staff meeting	Thursday	September 8, 2022
Health and Dental committee meeting	Friday	September 9, 2022
Events team meeting	Monday	September 12, 2022
GSA Grad O de-brief	Tuesday	September 13, 2022
FGS Grad O de-brief	Tuesday	September 13, 2022
Executive Board Meeting	Wednesday	September 14, 2022
Engineering Grad Student Engagement meeting	Thursday	September 15, 2022
Event 101 for SLT chairs	Monday	September 19, 2022
Events team meeting	Tuesday	September 20, 2022
Executive Board Meeting	Wednesday	September 21, 2022
EDI Committee Meeting	Wednesday	September 21, 2022
SEEC #2 meeting	Thursday	September 22, 2022
Events team meeting	Tuesday	September 27, 2022

Executive Board Meeting	Wednesday	September 28, 2022
FGS Council	Thursday	September 29, 2022
Events team meeting	Tuesday	October 4, 2022
Executive Board Meeting	Wednesday	October 5, 2022
GSA board-staff meeting	Thursday	October 6, 2022
SEEC #3 meeting	Thursday	October 6, 2022
Intersectionality Planning meeting	Friday	October 7, 2022
Events team meeting	Tuesday	October 11, 2022
Executive Board Meeting	Wednesday	October 12, 2022
GSA bursary initiatives	Wednesday	October 12, 2022
SEEC chair meeting	Thursday	October 13, 2022
Health and Dental committee meeting	Friday	October 14, 2022
Executive Board Meeting	Wednesday	October 19, 2022
Engineering Grad Student Engagement meeting	Thursday	October 20, 2022
ALAC meeting	Friday	October 21, 2022

A.C. Cameron
VP External
vpext.gsa@ucalgary.ca
[Date Range: May 1st – Oct. 15th]

Strategic Plan Goals

As VP External, I am committed to ensure that all aspects of my portfolio are in alignment with the GSA's Strategic Plan. The GSA's 3-year strategic plan 2019-2022 can be found [here](#).

Improving Advocacy (External Partners)

Gauging Priorities of Members

- Created the Advocacy Priorities Survey in July to assess the most urgent needs of campus and inform my advocacy work over the summer.
- In order of ranked urgency, I've heard calls for:
 - Financial support (Restoring provincial funding of post-secondary, better funding options, and responding to the rising cost of living)
 - Health and Wellbeing (access to therapy: shorter wait times, culturally appropriate sessions, safer spaces on campus,)
 - Quality of Program (improving community on campus, work experiential learning, employment after graduation, immigration support)
 - Ecological Sustainability (mitigating the worst impacts of the climate emergency, localizing our food supply, following Indigenous leadership, education)
 - Social Harmony (Truth and Reconciliation, anti-racism strategies, harm reduction, voter accessibility, addressing income-wealth inequality)
- This survey will remain open for the fall semester. Please encourage the rest of your DGA (all students in your department) to complete. [Survey link here](#).

CASA Membership

- UC-GSA is a full member of the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations (CASA).
- I sit on the Federal Policy Committee and chair the Graduate Advisory Committee
- So far have been reviewing and updating the policy manual, developing our Asks for CASA's Advocacy Week with the federal government at the end of November.

Federal Policy Committee (FPC)

- Updating CASA's federal policy manual this year, Andrew and myself are leading or coordinating updates to the following policies this year:
 - Grants for Graduate Students
 - Student Loans
 - Intellectual Property
 - New Policy: Food-Security
 - New Policy: Affordable Housing
- With other committee members, Andrew and I are helping to draft a policy paper on food-housing insecurity. Looking for short-term ideas to bring to Advo Week.

Graduate Advisory Committee (GAC)

- There are few associations in CASA's membership who represent graduate students, so CASA offers one of its five Asks to the GAC.
- As chair, and with the help of the CASA's Policy Research Analyst, I have helped define "grad student", coordinated meetings, agendas, and a workplan.
- So far, we have updated the Grants for Graduate Students policy, and are developing our Ask for Advo Week from this policy:
 - Expanding the research to include the steep cost of living.
 - Calling for an expansion of the Canada Student Grants program to include graduate students with high financial need (\$25000+ debt).
 - Maintaining the doubling of the student grants program through.
 - Calling for a new grant specifically for graduate students.
- UEQ (Quebec Student Union; CASA partners) are updating the Tri-Council policies to call for improved funding and access to these agencies.
- With policies updated, we are developing and framing our Asks for Advo Week.

ab-GPAC Membership

- Met with our fellow members (May) in the Alberta Graduate Provincial Advocacy Council (ab-GPAC) to set priorities and workplans for the year (July).
- Honestly, this organization is lacking strong internal leadership, and has been largely idle since our summer meetings. Working groups have not yet met, and communications are sparse.
- We are evaluating our position as a paid member. More info to come.

Calgary Student Alliance Membership

- Group has two main committees: D-EDI and Transit Reform.
- I sit on Transit Reform Committee – we are exploring options to enroll students in the low-income transit pass, as opposed to the UPass which pro-rates a bulk discount from the adult passes. Need to follow up with Shane for info on who signs UPass contract.
- Discussion of transit safety: continuing to emphasize that we need to address the roots of these issues: investing in harm reduction, rather than increasing police presence.

Advocacy: Local and On-Campus Initiatives**Food-Security Huddles with the Students' Union and Provost's Office**

- Taking survey of the food-access programs and opportunities on campus.
- Following up on an institutional website to improve information sharing for food-security and food-access. Website has gone live, [see link here](#).
- Assessing the University's commitment to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially Goal #2 – Zero Hunger. Looking for an institutional strategy to achieve this goal, on campus.
- Change of Provost means we've had to ensure the conversation remains (promising).
- Assessing the utility of the Presidents United to Solve Hunger (PUSH) initiative, as a framework to guide our efforts on campus. [20-point PUSH action plan here](#).
- Reviewing both the [Meal Exchange National Student Food Insecurity Report](#), and the recent [PROOF \(UToronto\) report on Household Food Insecurity](#).
- First efforts aiming at an institution-wide hunger assessment (one of the PUSH items).

Food-Housing (ad-hoc) Working Group

- Goal is to lead the development of the hunger assessment, building on the Meal Exchange and PROOF reports, to incorporate housing considerations (cost, roommates, access to kitchen, commute time, access to groceries). Looking for data to inform key barriers preventing students from access to quality nutrition.
- So far, developing thematic areas with a student in our School of Public Policy.
- Still forming the full group, drafting guidelines; Interviewing potential chair, late Oct..
- Second goal aims to explore opportunities for housing/food-access partnerships in the city, and to expand the [GSA's Food-Housing Website](#) with further info.

Advocacy Engagement Working Group

- Founded to improve students' access and engagement to the advocacy efforts.
- Focused on facilitating ground-up advocacy, by encouraging members to understand their default advocacy structures, and work within them to best effect.
- Created Guidelines for the Working Group, and passed through Board approval (aug).
- Onboarded Jessica Meyer as chair for the group. Membership is open to fluctuate.

Collaborative Opportunity – FASA.

- Ongoing meetings with the Faculty of Arts Student Association (FASA) to align our engagement efforts. FASA has been coordinating departmental organizing towards democratic actions in support of restored education funding from the province.
- FASA has collaborated with us on preparing and promoting our Town Hall.

Collaborative Opportunity – CAUS.

- Met with CAUS-Outreach Committee (OPEC) to discuss a collaborative opportunity for province-wide info sharing leading up to the election.
- CAUS is limited not a registered Third Party Advertiser with Elections Alberta, and therefore is limited in their efforts once the election is called.
- We've been asked to formalize a proposal for how a partnership with them will look.

October Town Hall

- Aimed to promote lanes of engagement for the student body, in response to the question: "What is the cost of your education?"
- Frankly, under-attended and chaotic. Notes:
 - Learned: need more time to plan and advertise; clearer posters.
 - Learned: need clearer expectations of schedule. Less info towards the cost of education, more info to our plan to respond to it.
 - Learned: students have felt disempowered by their formal advocates.
 - Learned: need stronger group-discussion formats, to still let everyone speak, but be able to get through the point of why we're here today.

Next Steps – Regroup.

- Improving internal coordination by creating specific roles and team-leads in the group:
 - Events & Logistics; Outreach & Onboarding; Research & Messaging.
 - Planning a timeline for onboarding and trainings.
 - Planning our next public event sufficiently far in advance.

Improving Service Delivery

Emergency Housing Support

- Calgary is in a housing crisis (1% vacancy rate for rentals). This is impacting newcomer students especially hard; many are denied rentals until they can arrive in-person.
- Fielded dozens of requests for emergency stay and temporary accommodations.
- Working with the Office of Ancillary Services to connect incoming students to their emergency housing (temporary stay) program. Sheltered roughly 15 students who had no other supports for a total of 81 days (last I checked).

GSA's Food-Housing Website ([link here](#))

- Created a website (Shoutouts to Thao!) to list resources in the city that we have found providing immediate and near-term food access.
- Housing-access in development.

Improving Communication

Introductory Meetings with MLA's

- During transition into my role, met with members of legislature both virtually and in-person: Jason Copping; David Eggen; Ministry of Advanced Education.
- Discussed priority areas and pushed for clarity on health regulations, student funding, overall party priorities. Received very few commitments.

Improving Organization Sustainability

Staff Transition: role of Advocacy Advisor

- Formerly: Policy and Research Analyst (held by Nancy Wanye, who resigned in May.)
- Restaffing was a long process, and I was working largely alone for a month.
- Created a temporary position "Interim Advocacy Advisor", held by Tanille Shandro, late June to mid Aug. Tanille helped us transition the new hire.
- Sat on the hiring committee for the role; hired Andrew Kemle (completing his masters in political science student) as our new Advocacy Advisor.
- Andrew has been a heavy-hitter for research and policy development with CASA!

Other Accomplishments

We are well-received at CASA

- Policy: Grants for Graduate Students passed plenary very smoothly, in time for the federal pre-budget submissions.
- Sustainability and ecological awareness have permeated into many workplans, including the drafting of a new operating policy focused on such. Consultations ongoing.

Senate.

- Member of the Community Engagement Working Group
- Highlighting Truth and Reconciliation:
 - Reminder: there are clear calls for how to support Indigenous peoples in these times. Respect sovereign lands, clean the water, honour the treaties, listen.
 - Reminder: call to action #16 – degree streams in Indigenous languages.

FYI & Highlights

Alberta Teacher's Association – Rally for Education, [Oct 22, Ab Legislature](#).

- All hands on deck!

Tuition and University Budget Cycle:

- Proposals for tuition and fee changes are underway (news is broken to us via TFCC).
- Tuition rates in particular are set by the Provost's Office – "Budget Committee". I do not sit on this committee, so I am exploring their consultation process.
- We can expect a final decision on the University's budget from the **Board of Governors meeting, December 9th 2022, 08:00 – 12:30**.
- If you would like the GSA to run advocacy campaigns beyond GRC, TFCC and meetings scheduled by the University, I need you to pass motion at GRC of what you'd like to see.

*How to move the GSA as an Organization

- As an organization, our definitions, protocols, and procedures are given in [our Bylaws](#).
- The GSA is made of "active membership", meaning all graduate students currently enrolled at UCalgary. Every active member is automatically a member of their respective departmental graduate association/consortium. Each department elects their representative to correspond with the executive Board through the GRC.

Graduate Representative Council (GRC)

- The GRC has authority over priorities and focal points of the Board.
- GRC generally follows [Roberts Rules of Order](#).
- The Board must abide by motions tabled and passed at GRC meetings. If there is something you would like the Board to do, you need to table and pass a motion at GRC.

As a departmental graduate association (DGA) or consortium

- Your departmental association/consortium is governed by your internal constitution/bylaws. Ask your DGA exec where you can find these posted.
- Your DGA is free to endorse/act in solidarity

As an individual or self-assembled collective

- You are free to act so long as you remain in the [University's Policies and Procedures](#).

Support Our Science – [Letter Campaign](#)

- Tri-Council Awards values haven't increased since 2003. These used to be prestigious and sufficient monies to live off of, but cost of living has caught up if not more.
- Support our Sciences is a movement calling for restored fundings of these awards.

Danielle Smith Elected as new UCP Leadership, currently residing as Premier.

- Last sat as Wildrose in Highwood Riding (2012-2015, Majority). Currently without a riding, but running for Brooks-Medicine Hat in next By-Election (currently vacant. Vacated Oct 7 by Michaela Frey, so that Danielle Smith may run for a seat in abLeg).
- Expecting an election in the Spring (potentially sooner).
- Received 53.8% of votes (42,423 votes) in leadership election by 6th round ranked ballot.
- This is 34% of UCP memberships, and 0.97% of Alberta residents overall.
- Already back-pedaling on her Sovereignty Act.
- Has said she will prioritize rural voices – does not bode well for education!

Bills 17 and 32

- In-short, the GSA is legislated to be the exclusive bargaining agents for academically employed (and unionized) graduate students. This was set to expire July 1, but has been extended now indefinitely (Bill 17). Moreover, there are restrictions on what
- Since April, we received no consultation from the provincial government on these changes.
- See your AVP-Labour for more information.

Major Staff Turnover.

- Since our second week in office, we have had to fill resignations/promotions of staff:
 - Events Coordinator – formerly Shannon, now Jaime.
 - Executive Assistant (front desk) – formerly Jaime, then Sejal, now Taruneesh.
 - Executive Director – Danielle, now Daniella (interim).
 - Financial Analyst – formerly Daniella, now Chantel (interim).
 - Governance Coordinator – formerly Crystal, then Se, then Marian, now vacant.
 - Research and Policy Analyst – formerly Nancy, now Andrew.

September Hours:

Meetings: 85

Research: 29

Communications: 38

Events and Other: 30

Total: 182

Average per week: 36.

October Hours (to the 17th).

Meetings: 37

Research: 17

Communications: 20

Events and Other: 19

Total: 93

Average per week: 38

Notes: Sept 30th off; Oct 10th off. Still 47 hours Wednesday-Wednesday, over the Harvest (10th).

Total Hours

Meeting: 387

Research: 90

Comms: 139

Events and Other: 123

Total: 764

Average per week: 33

Notes: Y'all advertised 20-30hrs for this position.

Meetings Attended

Please refer to my Board Reports for finer details and internal meetings.

Meeting name	Day of the Week	Date
Transition/Orientation		May 1 st - 14 th
Senate		May 5
Jason Copping		May 18 th
Ab-GPAC: Intro		May 20 th
Calgary Student Alliance		May 24 th
Land Acknowledgement Workshop		May 25 th
David Eggen		May 27 th
CSA AGM		June 1 st
CASA - Foundations		June 5 th - 10 th
Team Charter Session		June 27 th – 28 th
SLT Interviews		June 29 th - 30 th
Food Justice Now		July 5 th
Food Security with SU		July 6 th
President's BBQ		July 12 th
Federal Policy Committee (FPC)		July 12 th
Ab-GPAC Board Retreat		July 14 th - 16 th
CASA Policy Workshop		July 18 th
CSA Monthly		July 18 th
CASA Consultation		July 20 th
Partisan Policy Overview		July 26 th
Onboarding Andrew		July 26 th
FPC Action Plan		July 29 th
PUSH with Provosts Office		Aug 2 nd
GSA Strategic Planning		Aug 2 nd
Grad Advisory Committee (GAC)		Aug 3 rd
FPC		Aug 4 th
SLT Orientation		Aug 4 th
CASA – Policy & Strategy		Aug 8 th - 12 th
Priorities Huddle with SU		Aug 16 th
Intros with Loaded Ladle		Aug 16 th

Ab-GPAC Board Meeting	Aug 16 th
CASA Policy Assignments	Aug 18 th
FPC Huddle	Aug 23 rd
TFCC	Aug 24 th
Policy chat with CASA home office (Trevor)	Aug 25 th
Orientation Week (Meetings with DGAs)	Aug 29 th – Sept 2 nd
FPC	Aug 30 th
Intro: ULethbridge GSA	Aug 30 th
GAC - Workplan Development	Sept 2 nd
New Senator Orientation	Sept 2 nd
Food-Housing WG Brainstorm	Sept 4 th
Board Meeting with LRC	Sept 5 th
Engagement Huddle with Jess (Chair)	Sept 7 th
Housing chat with the SU	Sept 7 th
GAC Working Session	Sept 8 th
Student Leaders Orientation	Sept 9 th
Board Meeting: regarding Quality Money	Sept 12 th
CASA E-Plenary Consultation	Sept 13 th
GSA O-Week Debrief	Sept 13 th
Advo Engagement	Sept 13 th
GAC Policy Draft	Sept 16 th
Writing Symbols Lodge Open House	Sept 20 th
Ancillary Rates Primer	Sept 22 nd
CSA Monthly	Sept 22 nd
Food Studies Interdisciplinary Research Group, Intro/Welcome Event	Sept 23 rd
CASA E-plenary	Sept 23 rd
FPC	Sept 26 th
GSA AGM	Sept 27 th
Advo Engagement Table	Sept 29 th
FGS-Council	Sept 29 th

Internal Huddle: ab-GPAC	Oct 4 th
GAC	Oct 4 th
Senate: Community Engagement Orientation	Oct 4 th
Organizing chat with FASA	Oct 5 th
TFCC	Oct 6 th
CASA Webinar -- The New Abnormal: State of Student Mental Health	Oct 6 th
Elections chat with CAUS	Oct 6 th
LaFontaine-Baldwin Lecture: Mary Simon, Canada's Governor General	Oct 6 th
Roundtable w/ Mary Simon	Oct 7 th
Solidarity with Iran: Human Chain	Oct 7 th
Food-Housing with Andrew	Oct 11 th
FPC: planning out the Food-Housing Paper	Oct 11 th
Food-Security Huddle w/ SU	Oct 11 th
Advocacy Town Hall	Oct 11 th
Food-Security: Provost, SU	Oct 12 th
GSA Bursary Allotment with Registration Services	Oct 12 th
Senate: CEC – Mentorship Working Group	Oct 12 th
Chat with ab-GPAC Chair	Oct 13 th
TFCC Huddle w/ Pres, VPA	Oct 14 th
Advo Engagement Huddle	Oct 15 th