



**GRADUATE STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION
GRADUATE REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL MEETING
Tuesday, May 26, 2020, 17:30
Zoom Call**

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

Quorum

Jasper	Greysson-Wong	Biochemistry and Molecular Biology
Anthonia	Anowai	Biochemistry and Molecular Biology
Lauren	McMillan	Biological Sciences Graduate Students' Association
Joey	Lockhart	Biological Sciences Graduate Students' Association
Ryan	Toth	Biological Sciences Graduate Students' Association
Miriam	Nightingale	Biomedical Engineering GSA
Catherine	Swytink-Binnema	Biomedical Engineering GSA
Sydney	Toutant	Biomedical Technology GSA
Hector	Bonilla	Chemical & Petroleum Engineering Graduate Students' Association
Calin	Lencar	Chemical & Petroleum Engineering Graduate Students' Association
Duncan	Brownsey	Chemistry Graduate Student Association
Milanpreet	Kaur	Chemistry Graduate Student Association
Madison	Timmons	Chemistry Graduate Student Association
Ali	Ebrahimi Emamieh	Civil Engineering Graduate Society
Tina	Abedi Yarandy	Civil Engineering Graduate Society
Mina	Shahirnia	Civil Engineering Graduate Society
Agnei	Marcano Pina	Civil Engineering Graduate Society
Milad	Nourizadeh	Civil Engineering Graduate Society
Justin	Nadeau	Classics and Religion DGA
Gregory	Ramsey	Classics and Religion DGA
Andrew	Thomas	Communication Media and Film DGA
Kathryn	Blair	Computational Media Design

Reza	Hedayati	Computer Science Graduate Society
Samaha	Mohsen	Council of Foothills
Zhanna	Lyubykh	Doctoral Association for Students of Haskayne
Parnia	Shokri	Electrical and Computer Engineering GSA
Laura	Brooks	English Department Graduate Association
Holly	Szczepanski	Gastrointestinal Graduate Students Association
Ramsha	Mahmood	Gastrointestinal Graduate Students Association
Kristina	Miller	Geography Graduate Students' Association
Hugh	Alvarez	Geography Graduate Students' Association
Yizhi	Huang	Geomatics Graduate Group
Bahareh	Yekkehkhany	Geomatics Graduate Group
Pamela	Narvaez	Graduate Anthropology and Archaeology Student Association
Hasinala	Ramangason	Graduate Anthropology and Archaeology Student Association
Anna	Olmo	Graduate Engineering Students Consortium
Andrea	Herzog	Graduate Programs in Education Students Association
Brit	Paris	Graduate Programs in Education Students Association
Helen	Pethrick	Graduate Programs in Education Students Association
Basak	Helvacı Ozacar	Graduate Programs in Education Students Association
Keira	Gunn	Graduate University of Calgary Mathematics Society
sarath kumar	jayaraman	Graduate University of Calgary Mathematics Society
Aviral	Bhardwaj	Haskayne MBA Society
Motahhareh	Moravvej Hamedani	Haskayne MBA Society
Stacey	Leclair	History Graduate Students Union
Trevor	Low	Hotchkiss Brain Institute Trainee Organization
Dion	Kelly	Hotchkiss Brain Institute Trainee Organization
Samantha	Baglot	Hotchkiss Brain Institute Trainee Organization
Lauren	Miutz	Kinesiology Graduate Students Association
Merion	Hodgson	Linguistics Graduate Students' Association
Lindsay	Hracs	Linguistics Graduate Students' Association
Alicia	Ussling	Masters of Pathologists' Assistant GSA
Keith	Lau	Microbiology & Infectious Diseases GSA
Sharon	Dong	Microbiology & Infectious Diseases GSA
Daniel	Castaneda Mogollon	Microbiology & Infectious Diseases GSA
Chloe	Stephenson	Philosophy Graduate Students' Association

Davor	Curic	Physics & Astronomy Dep Grad Association
Hadi	ZADEH HAGHIGHI	Physics & Astronomy Dep Grad Association
Raj	Lakhan	Political Science Graduate Student Association
Andrew	Kemle	Political Science Graduate Student Association
Jaimie	Beveridge	Psychology Graduate Students Association
Chelsie	Hart	Psychology Graduate Students Association
Diba	mohebzadeh	School of Architecture, Planning and Landscape
Dimitri	Giannoulis	School of Architecture, Planning and Landscape
Vincent	Yong	School of Architecture, Planning and Landscape
Yihui	Xu	School of Architecture, Planning and Landscape
Melike	Ceylan	School of Creative and Performing Arts Graduate Society
Chene	Redwood	Sociology Graduate Students' Caucus
Megan	Martins Da Ponte	Strategic Studies Students Consortium
Marianne	Grenier	Strategic Studies Students Consortium
Jin Lun	Du	Sustainable Energy Development
Ellen	de Jong	Veterinary Medicine Grad Students Association
Abigail	Williams	Vox Condiscipulum

GRC Meeting Minutes

Meeting Began 17:30

- Territorial Acknowledgement

Roll Call (Speaker) 17:33

Approval of the Agenda 17:35

Motioned/seconded

Discussion: N/A

Opposed:0

Abstained:0

CARRIED

Approval of the April 2020 Minutes 17:36

Motioned/seconded

Discussion: N/A

Opposed:0

Abstained:0

CARRIED

Global Engagement Strategy & Fall 2020 Plans (Dru Marshall, Provost and VP Academic) 17:36

- Internationalization has been an important priority at the University for the past 10 years, as part of Eyes High initiative
 - Global Engagement Plan is a spin off from this
 - Goals of Internationalization Strategy:
 1. Increase diversity on campus – international students from around the world → increasing international students on campus at undergraduate and graduate level
 2. Improving global and cross-cultural competencies
 3. Enhance educational and research partnerships
 4. Leverage international development
 - Discussion of achievements in the strategy
 - Both targets achieved for the first goal
 - Not achieved target for international learning experience
 - Two global research facilities abroad: Beijing, China and in Mexico City – in the area of energy
 - Significant academic partnerships and collaborative research grants
 - Hosting international events with support of Calgary Consular Corps
 - External recognition including six excellence/innovation awards
- Overarching vision of the global engagement strategy
 - Further develop the U of C reputation as a global intellectual hub
- 5 principles:
 - Strategic partnerships
 - Faculty driven
 - Incentivized activities
 - Build capacity
 - Sustainability
- Three goals for the (new) Global Engagement Strategy: diversity of campus community, improve intercultural capacity; enhance global partnerships
- Foundation of the new strategy – research and academic priorities → a strong recommendation from the panel
- Defined a responsibility matrix for accountability
- Over the next 5 years, academic and research plans will guide the global engagement plan
- **Question:** how to rectify current situation in Alberta with financial cuts; international students are hit the hardest with tuition increases.
 - Everyone is trying to deal with this; at the high level the tuition for international students is still among lower 1/3rd in the country, in the U15 institutions it is still relatively low; the quality of education at U of C is high – U of C is in the top 5 in the country based on the metrics → this speaks

to the work that goes into raising the university's profile and education experience.

- Calgary has always been a city that is dependent on the cyclical feel of the oil and gas industry, which results in economic downturns. During the economic downturns is when innovation happens and when research intensive universities rise up to help and lead; it's a good opportunity for grad students to be a part of it – the opportunities that don't present in other institutions.
- **Question:** How are global partners selected? Main criteria for choosing the partners? Why China/Mexico?
 - In the first strategy, the country strategy included 6 countries: US, Mexico, Middle East (campus in Qatar), China, Germany (b/c of post-secondary system and research intensity), Eastern Africa → chosen on basis of scholarship at the time, the number of partnerships that existed, number of publications written with partner institutions → each country would be privileged by ensuring senior leader was considering the partners, gave seed money to help along the partnerships
 - Partnerships in other regions still grew where individual scholars had connections → high ranked institutions similar in terms of global outlook; highly ranked in subject areas; partnerships that were broader than just single degree that would have multiple points of contact (including research and programmatic)
 - Janaka: Partners are chosen depending on faculty interest and faculty connections based on criteria above → bottom-up approach is good – existing connections saw positive outcome
- **Question:** are there any plans to address pandemic-like crises in the future?
 - The country strategy no longer exists, now tied to academic and research priorities → at a high level the reviewers suggested the six countries were chosen based on ongoing research/academic activity; faculties will drive the connections.
 - Related to COVID – knowing many borders are closed, will take long time to go back to traveling like we did before, will be lots of opportunities for virtual connections
 - Academic conferences are how we exchange information around the world – virtual conferences are happening and it is what we will be seeing in the short term at least; as borders open, there will be opportunity for more and different exchanges, but in the near future, there will be more virtual work
 - Might be more virtual work than before to protect safety and security of people and countries and economy.
 - Ex. Campus in Qatar – 4 meetings would typically happen, have had 2 online meetings that worked well, some cases more

effective than face to face; however, relationship has not accelerated in the same way – some face to face interaction is important

- **Question:** At the Cumming School of Medicine, I hear from the international graduate students that there are very limited scholarships that are available to international students. Is this something that you plan to address?
 - Yes. With tuition increases one of the main objectives is to increase scholarships and awards; 15% of the tuition increase would go to students (either need or merit based) students want to see more needs based awards
 - This is a primary driver for any new philanthropic campaign – this will be front and centre; advocacy into Canadian government where not all awards are available to foreign students – this is being looked at right now
- Fall 2020 updates
 - Planning for many scenarios right now – task force meetings
 - Have been pushing for graduate student advocacy
 - The University of Calgary treated issue of ‘critical research’ differently from other institutions – broader than “COVID-related”
 - Now going to second tier related to graduate students
 - Focusing on graduate student research; identified a list of people added to critical function list; looking at how to open the list going forward
 - Learning over time about disease transmission
 - Emergency GAT’s were being put forth – \$500 K were made available to increase opportunity for grad students; carried this on into spring/summer – \$1.25 million were in total added
 - Library – for students at critical points in the program, library was open in a couple different locations to ensure students had internet and quiet place to do exams under good conditions
 - As we go into Fall term, will strive to have 30% of instruction face to face – that’s similar to every other announcement made earlier → academic task force been meeting for 6 or 7 weeks; students are now added to the task force → the initial group looked at series of important guidelines to be used in course development – currently deciding what courses/sections of courses will be online and taught face to face – the info is due to Dru on May 31st
 - Heat map of campus was constructed in prep for face to face instruction, faculties have to confer with academic staff who will be teaching – some will prefer to stay at home to ensure safety
 - Heat map was used to plan how students can enter/exit classes

- When students leave class, smaller hallways are more difficult to navigate – the heat maps showed that the largest number of 15 or 20 in a class
 - Different faculties approaching it differently and making own guidelines
- **Question:** who was chosen to be a part of the task force?
 - Some members chosen because of their position in the university; expansions included students from SU and GSA and included members of TUCFA and asked all the groups to name their representatives
- **Question:** have guidelines been developed with scenarios that result in shut down?
 - Reviewed scenarios, i.e. what happens if you get positive test on campus. The worst thing to do is to face scenario where quick transition needs to happen like it did in the Winter term. Nobody was planning for pandemic – going online quickly would be hard to do from mental health perspective, the cost was considerable.
 - Will be guided by the Medical Officer of Health, will be times where university doesn't have much say in what happens – health guidelines come first and foremost
- **Question:** faculties decide which courses will be online/in-person; what will happen in the case that a class decides to be in-person, but one or two people can't attend in-person – will faculties be designing courses to have measures in place so students can participate in classes?
 - In the guidelines looking at academic accommodations; depends on whether it is a professional faculty; larger faculties look at difficulty of partial online/in-person component – how to accommodate and not disadvantage students → this is part of the guidelines given to the faculties – some faculties are going all online or all in-person – decisions made by field and discipline.
- **Question:** will the guidelines be available publicly?
 - A number of guidelines are already on the COVID-19 site (<https://ucalgary.ca/risk/emergency-management/covid-19-response>) . Not sure if planning guidelines will be posted; will be transparent on why decisions were made
 - In every crisis, communication is important – when there is lack of communication, there has been lots of inaccurate information; encouraging students to read COVID-19 website with information that will help answer some of the questions students have
 - What's the argument for non-public guidelines?
 - Some guidelines are personnel related
- **Question:** For students who have put in the application for return to lab under the new/expanded critical research designations - is there a timeline for when we will be notified about a potential date to return to lab?

- Some of the decisions are already made; under public health guidelines, May 25 was critical date (provincial relaunch) – notification to come out yesterday and today about opportunities to return to labs
- June 1st is when they anticipate supervisors will receive pre-approval or not; if grad students were nominated through supervisor, they will receive letter from FGS asking for consent to different conditions to be approved
- Don't want students to be coerced into research environment where they're not comfortable
- **Question:** If classes are online, will students be able to access workspaces on campus?
 - Trying to determine when the spaces will become available – part of general campus reopening
 - Libraries are close to last on the list for provincial reopening
- **Question:** For international students who will newly come in and current students back from overseas for the coming 2020 fall semester. Should they be prepared for quarantine? What kind of measures will be taken to ensure the safety of the campus?
 - The regulations are guided by provincial and federal guidelines
 - Might be dependent on the global zone you are coming from
- **Question:** Will it be possible for students to submit applications to go back to campus later on (if they are more comfortable in future)?
 - Yes, but students won't submit, the supervisors will submit on their behalf; ask supervisor to submit EID form to the VPR, ad hoc fashion
 - Reverse is possible – if situation changes, you can ask to be removed from the list
- **Question:** Will the results of the heat maps be available to everyone?
 - Invited a team of people who work in Registrar's office with GIS skills and people with expertise in optimization exercises – will go through exercises again when everyone's plan is submitted → a publication would be public if it comes to it; happy to share data with individuals and share methods how it's managed
 - If interested in the data, who to contact ? → call Dru directly (403-220-5464)
 - The team right now is busy and will limit some of the requests at this time – might share data later
- **Question:** Has there been any discussion in conjunction with the Chief Medical Officer towards testing faculty, staff, and students?
 - Lots – one of the debate points with people in the ministry – have talked about screening coming on to campus and how that would look
 - Chief Medical Officer has not advised clearly, yet
- **Question:** Are there any updates regarding GAC applications?

- No, has been delayed; professors pulled away to update courses to remote format, leading to delays
- **Question:** Will there be opportunities for grad students to request permission to return to their offices to work? Especially if it improves their productivity?
 - Will be part of the relaunch strategy
- **Question:** How will TA and RA safety be guaranteed?
 - RA's and TA's will be important – have put more money in to ensure that profs are getting help with the shift, but also that grad students have job opportunities; if you are given a teaching assignment, if the grad student is assigned in-person and they're uncomfortable, will decide how to manage
 - TA's and RA's will be continuing as part of grad student funding
 - Safety first, if uncomfortable, talk to GSA/FGS/course coordinators who can deal with it on case by case basis ; GAT's will look different than they did a year ago
- **Question:** What is the university's current thinking about fees in the fall?
 - At the high level, tuition will not change; not thinking that it will change b/c same instructors/profs are teaching, anticipate the same quality; students are receiving a U of C credential
 - Fees -- If facilities are closed and not able to get to them, would not make sense to pay the fee – have been looking at fee structure to determine what the fees are going to, what they are offering online to ensure the service exists, will have a tuition and fees consultation committee; will go to the Board in June as they set the fees, announcement will follow
- **Question:** what do the discussions around face mask usage on campus presently look like?
 - Masks disadvantage the hearing impaired ; Ongoing discussions around this;
 - At this point, public health guidelines say wear a mask ; will see what happens in the fall and what the Medical Officer of Health guidelines are at the time
- **Question:** If we are able to return to the lab on June 1st (or sometime soon after that), will we be able to get UPasses again? And/or will parking be free?
 - If UPass is impacted, there probably won't be a fee; parking will probably still be a discussion, parking fees are difficult - too early to make decisions at this time – the discussions will be taking place though

Swearing in of Incoming VP Finance & Services (Speaker) 18:44

- Kabita Baral sworn in for 2020-2021 role

President's Report (Tanille Shandro) 18:46

- Goals for the year:

- Advocacy, service delivery, communication, organization sustainability
- Minimum funding policies with FGS increased
- Expand service delivery to select groups using annual survey
- Clearly communicate advocacy accomplishments with GSA members
- Diversifying GSA revenue sources – right now heavily reliant on student numbers and fees

VP Academic Report (Alex Paquette) 18:50

- Increased minimum funding policy
- Peer Beyond Symposium has had success, want to make it more successful, have more participants
- Online platform for awards that is user-friendly
- Make it easier to apply for awards

VP External Report (Christine Cao) 18:51

- Improvements to advocacy
 - Consultations with stakeholders and GSA members
 - Prioritize diverse groups in advocacy
- Improved communications – CASA campaign and ab-GPAC work

VP Student Life Report (Mary Zhang) 18:54

- Increase participation of Empower Me program
- Improved service delivery
 - Comm/media and event insurance agreements to support DGAs and GSGs
- Improved communication
 - Sustain events at all campuses
- Initiate sponsorship program

VP Finance and Services Report (Kabita Baral) 18:55

- Increased awareness over Empower Me program
- Focus on Health and Dental plan, LDL, and improved communication/transparency
- Working with Mary on Empower Me project, part of Health and Dental; online resource for students needing mental health aid; working with the Wellness Centre
- Service delivery – collaborating with Studencare to understand what the student needs are

Question period 18:57

- Is there any financial assistance during COVID-19 from GSA?

- Reviewing emergency bursaries; need to fill out a form (<https://gsa.ucalgary.ca/financial-support/bursaries/>)
- Emergency COVID bursary available from the Registrar → GSA is first step for that
- My concern is that not all of these goals had specific examples of actions to be taken. Do you all have specific action-based plans for achieving your goals?
 - Yes, the GRC reports are kept short to be consumable for everyone – more details exist along with smaller goals, would be happy to have the conversation offline to discuss the goals and action based plans to achieve them.
- With the unusual Fall 2020 situations, many DGAs (including ours) will be functioning very differently. What resources will be available to DGA executives to best support their individual departments?
 - Don't have concrete plan right now but will be working on it, what events are happening. Will be following up
 - GSA team want to be part of DGA meetings, can send email to board members and be part of meetings
 - Event grant is still available
 - Email governance.gsa@ucalgary.ca with specific questions
- There are a lot of well-loved graduate student activities and programs, free yoga for example. I know Fall is a long ways away, but what sort of approach are you thinking about taking for these social and well-being based programs?
 - All programming will be digital for foreseeable future
 - All things that can be done from home will continue
 - Some services are coming up in Instagram stories (<https://www.instagram.com/gsacalgary/?hl=en>) – respond to surveys
 - Events section on the GSA website (<https://gsa.ucalgary.ca/events/>)

DGA period 19:04

- Reminder that the vote for the Collective Agreement is ongoing; if you are eligible but did not receive email contact lrc.gsa@ucalgary.ca

Announcements 19:06

- Health and Dental committee looking for GRC representative; if interested send resume/statement to Kabita Baral at vpfs.gsa@ucalgary.ca by May 31st 11:59 pm
- Fall 2020 Student Survey – DGA reps look for email in early June
- GRC attendance awards
- All departments who had perfect attendance receive \$100 additional funding (if proper steps are completed for 2020-2021 DGA updates)
- Labour relations committee looking for faculty reps in almost every faculty, 5-10 hrs/month, comes with honorarium lrc.gsa@ucalgary.ca

Other Business 19:10

- N/A

Adjournment 19:11

- Motioned/seconded
- Discussion: N/A
- Opposed:0
- Abstained:0
- CARRIED