



University of Calgary Graduate Students' Association  
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## **Sustainability Committee**

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### **Establishment**

The Board of Directors establishes the *Sustainability Committee* (Committee) under the provisions of the GSA's General Committee Terms of Reference and the authorities set out within. In the event of a conflict between the provisions of these Committee Terms of Reference and the General Terms of Reference, the General Committee Terms of Reference will govern.

The Vice-President Finance and Services (VPFS) shall provide the link between the Board and the Committee. The Board of Directors of the Graduate Students' Association has the ultimate authority.

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### **Statement of Purpose**

The Association acknowledges the imperative for sustainable development, and the need to incorporate sustainability practices and principles within its activities and initiatives. The Committee was created in the academic year 2016-2017 to develop initiatives and projects, identify relevant partnerships, and to promote and incorporate sustainable practices with the University of Calgary (UCalgary) graduate community. Further, it provides guidance and recommendations to the board of directors, to enhance the Association's and Last Defense Lounge's (LDL) activities to more sustainable and socially responsible policy and practices. These changes seek to benefit the UCalgary community at large, and the Graduate Student community in particular; as well as to acknowledge sustainability initiatives carried by graduate students.

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### **Authority**

1. The Committee has the specific authority to act autonomously as described below, on the condition that decisions made, or actions taken under this authority are reported to the VPFS and consecutively, to the Board.
2. The Committee may approve:
  - a. Spending of the committee budget;

- b. Appointing members;
- c. White papers or other recommendations to put forward to the Board;
- d. Relevant partnerships with UCalgary services after approval of the VPFS;
- e. Organization of events related to sustainability, and
- f. Other initiatives that meet the mandate of the Committee

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### **Chair & Vice-Chair**

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3. The Chair and Vice-Chair shall be Active Members of the Association and will be selected in an interview process conducted by the VPFS.
4. The Chair and Vice-Chair shall have the right to vote at all meetings of the Committee.
5. The Chair presides at meetings of the Committee and leads the Committee in all aspects of its work and is responsible to effectively manage the affairs of the Committee and to ensure that the Committee is properly organized, functions effectively, and meets its obligations and responsibilities. The chair will foster and promote the integrity of the Committee and a culture where the Committee works ethically and cohesively in the best interest of the Committee.
6. The Vice-Chair will assist the Chair in whole mentioned responsibilities.
7. The Chair shall formulate meeting agendas.
8. The Chair, or in their absence the Vice-Chair, shall be responsible for the orderly conduct of the meeting. Meetings will be conducted in accordance with all applicable laws and these Terms of Reference or, where applicable laws or these Terms of Reference are silent on the matter, as determined by a ruling of the chair, acting reasonably.

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### **Membership**

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9. All members of the Committee must be an Active Member of the GSA
10. The Committee shall consist of:
  - a. The Chair and Vice-Chair (voting)
  - b. Committee volunteer members (voting)
  - c. VP Finances and Services (non-voting)

Considering the broad and interdisciplinary mission of the Committee, the Chair and Vice-Chair may invite non-voting ex-officio members including:

- a. Executive Officer of the GSA;
  - b. The Manager of the LDL; and
  - c. Chairs of other Association committees.
  - d. Office of Sustainability staff member
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## Expectations and Obligations of Members

11. Members will read and adhere to these Terms of Reference
  12. Members are expected to:
    - a. Ensure that they can devote sufficient time and energy to carrying out their duties effectively,
    - b. Make every effort to attend all Committee meetings and activities, in person whenever possible, and carry out all duties requested of them by the Chair
    - c. Come to meetings prepared to engage in respectful, meaningful discussion and provide considered, constructive, and thoughtful feedback and commentary, express opinions and ask questions to enable the Committee to exercise its best judgement in decision making and advising,
    - d. Act honestly, in good faith, and in the best interests of the Committee and the graduate students of UCalgary without regard to their own private interests,
    - e. Act with integrity, and in a manner befitting the trust and confidence placed in them and that will bar up under public scrutiny, and
    - f. Once a decision is made, respect the authority of the Committee and its decisions.
  13. Members acknowledge that the Chair is the only official spokesperson of the Committee
  14. Members will consider these Terms of Reference before acting and, where there is any doubt, will refrain from the action in question and seek guidance from the Chair  
Confidentiality
  15. Members will hold in strict confidence all confidential Committee information, documents, proceedings, deliberations, interviews, and opinions expressed therein and will sign a confidentiality agreement articulating their obligations in this regard.  
Conflicts of Interest
  16. Members are required to:
    - a. Disclose to the Chair a potential or existing, real, or apparent Conflict of Interest, including any Private Benefit, Related Person or Related Entity that could give rise thereto, at the first opportunity after they become aware of it,
    - b. Review agenda items and declare any conflicts in respect of an item at the beginning of each meeting,
    - c. Actively manage a conflict by applying one or more of the following options, as appropriate for the circumstance and as agreed to by the chair of the meeting, if in a meeting, and the Chair if otherwise. Options for action are:
    - d. Removing themselves from any discussion and decision on matters for which the conflict exists or is perceived to exist,
    - e. Removing themselves from the circumstance that gives rise to the conflict, and/or
    - f. Resigning their position with the Committee.
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## Operations

### Meetings

17. Other than as set out in these Terms of Reference, the Committee shall establish its own operating procedures.
18. The Committee will meet in accordance with a meeting schedule provided to members in advance of or at the first Committee meeting of the terms of the members. Additional meetings may be called at any time by the Chair. Except in the case of an emergency meeting, notice of meetings that do not appear in the schedule will be provided at least two (2) days in advance of the meeting date. The accidental omission to send notice of any meeting to, or the non-receipt of any notice by, any of the persons entitled to notice does not invalidate any proceedings at a meeting.
19. Whenever possible, meeting materials will be distributed to members in advance of a scheduled meeting.
20. In the event that both the Chair and an appointed Vice Chair are unable to attend a specific meeting, the meeting will be cancelled. In the event that neither the Chair nor the Vice Chair is present within fifteen (15) minutes of the time fixed for commencement of the meeting, the meeting will be cancelled.

### Quorum

21. A majority of voting members shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at any meeting of the Committee
22. If quorum for a Committee meeting is not present within fifteen (15) minutes of the time fixed for the commencement of the meeting, the chair of the meeting may adjourn or cancel the meeting
23. A meeting adjourned for lack of quorum may be adjourned to a date and time that is not less than one (1) day after the date of the original meeting and the number of members in attendance at the adjourned meeting shall constitute a quorum thereat and may transact the business for which the meeting was originally called.

### Voting

24. Only voting members may move, second, and vote on motions and each member is entitled to one vote.
25. Motions will be decided by a show of hands, a roll call (voice), consensus, or otherwise in such manner that clearly evidences a member's vote and is accepted by the chair of the meeting. Voting by proxy is not allowed.
26. An affirmative vote of majority of the members present and eligible to vote, or consent without objection is required to pass a motion. The Chair does not have a casting vote.
27. A declaration by the chair of the meeting that a motion has been carried and an entry to that effect in the minutes shall be *prima facie* evidence of the action taken. Any

member may ask at the time of the vote that the member's individual vote or abstention be recorded in the minutes.

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### **Review and Evaluation**

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28. The relevance of the Committee will be reviewed annually by the Chair and the VPFS.
29. An annual report will be an essential component of the review process, which should include the presentation of the committee's activities and a plan outlining recommendations and potential actions to be carried out by the next Committee.
30. The Board will review the relevance of the committee missions and orientation every year, during the review of the Terms of References.

**Committee Approval Date:** August 13, 2019

**Board Approval Date:** April 14, 2023

**Revised Date:** April 14, 2023