



**GRADUATE STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION
GRADUATE REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL MEETING
TUESDAY, February 26, 2019, 6:30 PM
ST 147**

Attendees:

Brit Paris, President
 Elena Favaro, VP Academic
 Marcela Lopes, VP External
 Mina Iskander, VP Student Life
 Mohammad Mansouri, VP Finances & Services
 Kyle McCallum, Speaker
 Haley Vecchiarelli, Clerk

Quorum

Biochemistry and Molecular Biology DGA (BMBDGA)	Laura Mak
	Megha Murali
	Ali Shariat
Biological Sciences Graduate Students Association (BGSA)	Claudia Ladisa
	Nicolas Fournier
	Kyle McDade
Biomedical Engineering (BMEG)	Melina Varguez Rie
Biomedical Technology GSA	Kaitlyn Reilly Baggs
Cardiovascular & Respiratory Science Student Association	
Chemical & Petroleum Engineering Graduate Students Association	Mailad Ahmadi Khoshooe
	J. A ?
Chemistry Graduate Students Association	Duncan Brownsey
	Natasha Garner
	Thomas Welsh
Civil Engineering Graduate Society (CEGS)	Hiva Jalilzadeh
	Mohammadmahdi Ershad

	Sadra Azizi (proxy)
	Mandeep Pandey
Classics and Religion DGA (CLARE)	Justin Nadeau
Communication Film & Media DGA (CMFDGA)	
Community Health Sciences Student Executives (CHSSE)	Bria Mele
	Sophie Hu
	Sumedh Bele
Computer Science	Behnam Ousat
Council of Foothills (CFD)	Rachel Kratofil
Doctoral Association for Students of Haskayne (DASH)	Steven Granger
	Ke Wang
Economics Graduate Association	Abraham Sucedo Cepeda
	Mohammad Hossein Rezaei
	Atena Qaedi
Electrical and Computer Engineering GSA (ECEG)	Mostafa Raeisi and Fatemeh S.
English Department Graduate Association (EDGA)	Ben Groh
	Hong Nguyen-Sears
Environmental Design Students Association (EVDSSA)	Tyler Caswell
	Rosemary Joseph
	Alexander Mayhew
Gastrointestinal Graduate Students Association	Fernando Vicentini
Geography Graduate Students Association (GeoGSA)	Kristina Miller
	Sarah St. Germain
Geomatics Graduate Group (G^3)	Sandra Simeonova
	Rudrigo Silva

Graduate Anthropology and Archaeology Students Association (GAASA)	Li-Dunn Chen
	Cynthia Fasola
Graduate Association of Geology & Geophysics (GAGGS)	
Graduate Engineering Students Consortium (GESC)	Hiva Jalilzadeh
Graduate Programs in Education Students Association (GPESA)	Harrison Campbell
Graduate University of Calgary Mathematics Society (GUMS)	Keira Gunn
	Ryan Morril
Haskayne MBA Society	Ania Karzynska
History Graduate Students Union (HGSU)	Nick Gillen
	Shawn Brackett
Hotchkiss Brain Institute Trainee Organization (HBITO)	Christopher Duszynski
	Michael McLaren
	Aaron Lanz
Immunology Graduate Association (IGA)	Amanda Zucoloto
Kinesiology Graduate Students Association (KGSA)	Emily Macphail
	Adrijana D'Silva
	Nabangshu Das
Linguistics Graduate Students Association - A Higher Clause	Merion Hodgson
	Elias Abdullahnejad
Masters of Public Policy Students Association (MPPSA)	
Mechanical Engineering Graduate Students Association (MEGSA)	Annamaris Olmo-Velazquez
	Shaghayegh Shajari
	Adbdul Kalim Khan
	Mohsen H.
	Sina Rezani
	Chidera Nwaroh

Medical Science Graduate Students Association (MDSC-SA)	Jodi Rattner
Microbiology & Infectious Diseases GSA (MIDGSA)	Leah Hohman
	Keith Lau
Nursing Graduate Students Association (NGSA)	Mia Ortiz
Philosophy Graduate Students Association	TJ Perkins
	Lara Roth
Physics & Astronomy Dep Grad Association (PHAS DGA)	Taylor Cameron
	Svetlana Kuznetsova
Political Science Graduate Student Association (PSGSA)	Taruneek Kapoor
Psychology Graduate Students Association (PGSA)	Brooke Russell
	Chelsea Fitzpatrick
	Julie G
School of Creative and Performing Arts Graduate Society	Melike Ceylan
Sociology Graduate Students' Caucus (SGSC)	Lindsay Kokaritis
	Alex Van Olm
Strategic Studies Students Consortium (S3C)	John Reyes
	Timothy Choi
Sustainable Energy Development (SEDEV)	x
Veterinary Medicine Grad Students Association (VMGSA)	Diego Nobrega
Vox Condiscipulum (French, Italian, Spanish)	Caitlin Ryan

GRC Meeting Minutes

Meeting Began 18:45

Roll Call 18:47

Approval of Agenda 18:50

Motioned/seconded

Amendments:
Opposed:0
Abstained:1
CARRIED

Approval of January 2019 GRC Minutes 18:51

Motioned/seconded
Opposed:0
Abstained:0
CARRIED

Health and Dental Update: Request for Proposal (Mohammad Mansouri, VPFS & Danielle Abbott, Interim Executive Director and Finance and Operations) 18:53

- Process Overview
 - Three-step process
 - Select plan administrator
 - Set fee
 - Negotiate plan coverage
- Timeline (May 2018-ongoing)
 - May & June 2018
 - Drafted a timeline for the request for proposal (RFP) process
 - Studentcare sent survey out to a sample of students
 - 300 responses
 - Tried to learn about concerns, desires that students have
 - Studied current plan
 - Studied annual usage data since 2014, received from Studentcare
 - July & August 2018
 - Approached other student associations
 - To talk about their experience in the RFP process
 - BoD approved the decision to move forward with an RFP
 - Recommendation for insurance consultant
 - Announced RFP to the market, including:
 - Studentcare
 - Gallivan
 - Student VIP
 - WeSpeakStudent
 - Searched for an insurance consultant
 - September 2018
 - Presented insurance consultant options to the BoD
 - Presented two options
 - VPFS & ED recommended Mercer

- Large company, lots of experience, has a branch in Calgary
 - Hired Mercer as insurance consultant in the RFP process
 - Called for volunteers for the H&D Advisory Committee
- October 2018
 - Collaboration with Mercer
 - Provided historical H&D data
 - Described structure of GSA
 - Additional information provided by Studentcare
 - First H&D Advisory Committee Meeting
 - Provided members with a history of the H&D plan
 - Discussed fee changes since 2014
 - Reviewed a comparison with other student associations
- November 2018
 - Second H&D Advisory Committee Meeting
 - Led by Mercer
 - Defined relevant key words and definitions for members
 - Discussed evaluation criteria and their weights
 - Scoring Matrix (Rubric)
 - Mercer drafted a scoring matrix based on discussion and their experience
 - Feedback received from H&D Advisory Committee
 - Scoring matrix was finalized
 - Key Criteria: Cost, customer service, discount network
- December 2018
 - Drafted RFP
 - Revised and finalized RFP
 - Sent out the RFP to companies
 - Answered companies' questions
- January 2019
 - Received 4 proposals
 - Studentcare
 - Gallivan
 - WeSpeakStudent
 - Student VIP
 - Initial review of proposals and invited three companies for finalist presentation (WeSpeakStudent was removed because did not answer questions from GSA)
 - Studentcare
 - Gallivan
 - Student VIP

- February 2019
 - Mercer and H&D Committee evaluated each company
 - Each company had 2 hours for presentation and Q&A
 - Recommendation Process
 - Mercer and H&D each made recommendation
 - Made the same recommendation
 - Forwarded to the BoD for their decision
- Board Decision
 - Based on recommendation from Health and Dental Committee, as well as Mercer, BoD decided that Studentcare will be retained as the administrator.
 - RFP started as best practice, but also we know that there have been issues with Studentcare, we want to make sure that we got the best administrator to support graduate students
 - Administrator is different than the insurance company (Studentcare versus Desjardins)
 - This was to make sure we have the best administrator to give us support/advising and be the intermediary group between us and Desjardins
 - Why remain with Studentcare?
 - Lowest cost per student
 - Strongest negotiating power
 - 2-year guarantee
 - Stability in budging, projections and our plan
 - Technology and service capability
 - Best of all the four companies
 - Only company with an app to submit claims
 - Provider network (discounts)
 - Other companies had similar networks, but Studentcare would be better equipped to provide better discount to students
 - Administration
 - Some issues with day to day service inquiries, but none of the companies scores the maximum, Studentcare is the most hands on of the companies and they have more people on the ground answering phone call and emails compared to competitors
 - Support and trouble shooting
 - Only company that has direct access to claim information

- Can pull up where your claim is in the process; other companies need to take your information and then contact the company
 - There are areas that require improvement, but they are the best solution
 - This process has allowed the staff and president of the GSA to learn more about the process and we can hold Studentcare accountable
 - We showed that we are willing to seek unbiased advice outside of Studentcare, which puts us in a better position to negotiate with them
- Fee Recommendation
 - Student Only
 - 2018/2019 Fee
 - \$600.67
 - Proposed 2019/2020 Fee
 - \$590.67
 - One dependent
 - 2018/2019 Fee
 - Add \$618.58 to student fee
 - Proposed 2019/2020 Fee
 - Add \$618.58 to student fee
 - More than one dependent
 - 2018/2019 Fee
 - Add \$913.51 to student fee
 - Proposed 2019/2020 Fee
 - Add \$913.51 to student fee
 - \$10 decrease in fee for 2019/2020 compared to 2018/2019
 - 2019/2020 fee includes at least 2018/2019 level of coverage
 - We are not voting today, we are voting in March, this is what we are proposing, get feedback from your DGAs
- Next Step—Negotiate Plan Coverage
 - Review potential enhancements in H&D Plan
 - Dental
 - Psychology
 - Physio/Osteopath
 - Drug maximums
 - Email feedback to vpfs.gsa@ucalgary.ca

2019-2020 GSA Fees (for approval) (Mohammad Mansouri, VPFS) 19:11

- Brit: Update, last month, we told you to prepare for a 2% increase + \$3 increase on advocacy levy (which we thought we would have to go to referendum, but we don't have to)
 - Therefore, we are combining into a single proposal, so the dollar amount is the same, but the % looks different because we put it all together (2% increase + advocacy levy increase)
- 2019-2020 Fee Update
 - PDG
 - No change
 - Currently \$5
 - Staying the same
 - Advocacy Levy
 - Increase \$3
 - Currently \$6
 - Increase to \$9
 - Operating Fee
 - Increase 2%
 - Currently \$159.65 for full-time students and \$130.40 for part-time students
 - Increase to \$162.84 (\$3.19 increase) for full-time students and \$133 (\$2.60 increase) for part-time students
 - Total
 - Full-Time Students
 - 3.6 % (\$6.19) increase
 - Currently \$170.65
 - Increase to \$176.84
 - Part-Time Students
 - 3.7 % (\$5.1) increase
 - Currently \$141.20
 - Increase to \$147.00
- What This Means for You
 - Intensify federal advocacy efforts
 - Grow part-time researcher position to full-time Researcher, Policy and Advocacy Coordinator
 - Increase SLT fellowships
 - Enhance Awards Gala
 - Increase to liability insurance
 - Inflation
- Motion
 - BIRT

- GRC approves an increase to the GSA fee of 3.6% from \$170.65 to \$176.84 for full-time students and an increase of 3.7% from \$141.20 to \$147.00 for part-time students for the 2019-2020 academic year.
- Motion/Seconded
- Discussion
 - Q: Total fees from 2017/18?
A (Brit): Same as 2018/19
- Favor: 65
Opposed: 7
Abstained: 1
CARRIED

Draft Budget (Mohammad Mansouri, VPFS) 19:22

- Budget is for presentation, and we will vote next month, so discuss with your DGA and we'll come back and vote next month
- There are larger changes in the following areas:
 - Staff salaries & professional development
 - Adding full-time staff position
 - Senior Leadership Fellowships
 - Constant for a long time, increasing a little bit
- We can answer questions at vpfs.gsa@ucalgary.ca

President's Report (Brit Paris) (In package ONLY)

Vice-President (Academic) Report (Elena Favaro) (In package ONLY)

Vice-President (External) Report (In package ONLY)

Vice-President (Student Life) Report (Mina Iskander) (In package ONLY)

Vice-President (Finances and Services) Report (In package ONLY)

Question Period 19:26

Health and Dental Plan

Q: We have a middle man (Studentcare) to get to Desjardins, why do we need that?

A (Danielle, Interim ED): They are the administrator for student plans, and set up app and negotiate with insurance provider, because they are the ones with the know-how.

Q: They are annoying to deal with.

A (Danielle, Interim ED): If we went as individuals to insurance companies would probably be very similar. We know it hasn't been easy, but they are the best of the lot. Now we have what we need to push back on them for better service.

A (Marcela, VPExt): They negotiate not only for GSA but for other student groups, so when you have 300 thousand people, we get better deals.

A (Danielle, Interim ED): They have the largest block of students so strongest power in the marketplace to negotiate for discounts, etc.

Q: \$10 doesn't seem like that much, why not keep the price the same and increase the benefits?

A (Brit, Pres): Potentially. We do have some room, there is a small difference between what we charge and what we are charged. Because of the reserve, so we were able to reduce the fee and get enhancements, so why not do both.

A (Mohammad, VPFS): We need to consider ALL students; some students have through that it was too expensive. There are people who want to pay more for better service, but we

Q: Last year, there was a discussion around increasing the fee for more than one dependent, but it wasn't proportional. How is this taken into account, so this is proportional?

A (Brit, Pres): It is balanced now.

Q: Was the \$10 decrease from the negotiator working or the H&D committee?

A (Brit): Because we took it to RFP, Studentcare knew we were willing to go get a better deal, so they came back with a better deal.

A (Mohammad): By bringing to the market, there was a competition.

Q: What are the chances that next year the fee will go up?

A (Mohammad, VPFS): There is a two-year guarantee. We should be careful about enhancements, so that for the third year the price doesn't go up drastically because of usage.

A (Brit, Pres): In the second year, the fee won't go up, but in the third year it might, but this is why we have a reserve fund, to buffer that change to students.

Q: This negotiation process is successful; how can we institutionalize?

A (Danielle, Interim ED): Contract will be the next step. Three-year contract and options to renew for 2 years, we would likely go to RFP at year 5. Because in the past we went to RFP, there is pressure on Studentcare to keep prices low.

Q: How long of a commitment to stay with Studentcare?

A (Danielle, Interim ED): Three years

Q: What happens if we don't approve the motion?

A (Brit, Pres): You can put forward an amendment to fee. Board decision to stay with Studentcare is final. Based on what is passed the Board will adjust coverage. What you approve, gives us the mandate to pick coverage plan based on that fee.

Q: Is there a possibility to have different levels of coverage? Or enhance something like dental versus chiropractic?

A (Danielle, Interim ED): We have to be careful about the loss ratio and we did some research. If we did this, we might make students happy this year, and we might have to double the fee for the next year and we want sustainability.

A (Elena, VPA): There are some needs that I have that aren't covered. That's an insurance trick. We are not a large enough population to get the step increases. What the insurance provider does is comes to us with an a la carte list and we can choose what kind of coverage we want based on the fee, and there's a balance between services to add. We would lose all of our negotiating power because we don't have the capacity. If every university was with Studentcare and everyone decided that was what they wanted, we might have that negotiating power. It's the power in numbers.

A (Brit, Pres): Students are welcome to purchase their own individual plan. We are trying to make it work for the most people possible.

Q: Psychology as potential enhancement, how to improve mental health resources through plan?

A (Brit, Pres): There used to be a requirement that you had to have a primary physician's note to claim mental health care visits, and that is not in place anymore. Increasing amount of coverage. We haven't gotten further than that but if you have thoughts, please email us.

Budget

Q: Can you go more into what SLT and Executive Fellowships are?

A (Brit): Fellowships and honoraria for SLT members eligible to up to \$1300/committee for last 4 years, but now up to \$1500/committee (split between Chair and co-Chairs). Executive fellowships are funds that the Executive get, seconded to the GSA on a full/part time basis and we get an honorarium

Q: Where do DGA operational bursaries come from?

A (Brit, Pres): GSA QM. Approved by Board

Q: Executive expenses and administrative expenses?

A (Brit, Pres): Executive expenses include meeting expenses, cell phones, travel for conferences we go to for GSA.

A (Danielle, Interim ED): Administrative expenses are costs associated with running an office like office supplies, printing, etc.

Q: Do we pay rent to UCalgary?

A (Danielle, Interim ED): Yes, some for the LDL space.

Q: What are the working groups and thesis promotion?

A (Brit, Pres): Last year we reduced number of committees, and instead of having a standing committee, we now have working groups, so there is a budget for events/meeting expenses. The thesis defense promotion, sparkling beverage at LDL when you successfully complete your thesis.

Q: GSA executive increases but volunteer appreciation was decreased?

A (Danielle, Interim ED): Volunteer appreciation is the cost of an event, and the cost has been reduced.

DGA Period 19:44

- [3rd Annual Biological Sciences Graduate Student Symposium](#)
 - March 21/22
- [Women in Data Science Conference](#)

- Mar 4

Announcements 19:45

- GSA Elections
 - Remember to vote!
 - Any student who sees a violation of the Elections Policy should contact cro.gsa@ucalgary.ca
- Award Nominations
 - GSA Champion
 - GSA Lifetime Achievement
 - GSA Volunteer Excellence
 - GSA Distinguished Service
 - Nominations due to pres.gsa@ucalgary.ca by March 11, 2019
- [Quality Money](#)
 - Next intake due March 6!
 - But a rolling intake until then
- [3 Minute Thesis Competition](#)
 - Sign up by March 1
 - Go see your fellow graduate students compete in heats, March 19-22!
 - Finals, April 3, 5-7 ENC 70

Other Business 19:48

Q: Updated timeline for next PDG grants?

A (Elena, VPA): 8-10 weeks from the intake deadline, as listed on the ToRs.

Next Month 19:52

Adjournment of Open Session 19:52

Moved/seconded

Opposed:0

Abstained:0

CARRIED

Meeting adjourned at 19:52