2018-19 ANNUAL REPORT
Graduate Students’ Association of the University of Calgary
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November 2018
Message from the President

The 2018-2019 has been another fantastic year for the Graduate Students’ Association of the University of Calgary! We again set out in pursuit of our vision to be a recognized leader in graduate representation in Canada, and in many ways met this goal as we made new forays into federal and municipal advocacy. We had a record number of applications to our Professional Development Grants and made new connections with politicians and policy makers at all levels of government. We offered more discounted event tickets than ever before, hosted new sustainability workshops, and renegotiated our Health and Dental plan.

None of this was possible, however, without the incredible hard work of the executive team, Elena, Marcela, Mohammad, and Mina; all of our committee chairs; and volunteers. I am so grateful for all the hours all of you put into this organization to move towards our vision. It has been an honour to serve our community alongside all of you.

Of particular note were the changes in the GSA office this year. We (sadly) said good bye to our Executive Director, Jason Unsworth, and welcomed (enthusiastically) Danielle Abbott into the role. Other staff members also took on new roles and I am very excited to see where the GSA goes.

With the new academic year comes a new executive team and particularly this year, a new strategic plan. I have every confidence that the new team will move mountains and take the GSA to new heights.

The GSA is truly an amazing organization making its mark across the country and supporting graduate students in this very unique time in our lives, but we can’t do it alone. I encourage everyone reading this report to get involved and volunteer. Try something new, get involved, and find your passion!

And of course we wouldn’t have accomplished anything without our amazing GSA staff! We said sadly goodbye to Jason Unsworth, our Executive Director for the last three and a half years, and excitedly welcomed Danielle Abbott into the role. All of our staff were amazing during this transition and we are all so grateful to them for the hard work and commitment they show day after day. Our LDL staff continued to go above and beyond as the LDL became a second home for the Executive, a regular lunch spot for faculty, staff and students from across the University. The entire Executive team is so grateful to our staff for their support this year.

Wishing you continued academic and personal success,

Brit Paris
GSA President, 2017-2019
A YEAR IN REVIEW
2018-2019

1 REPRESENTATIVE FOR EVERY 65 GRADUATE STUDENTS

7 council meetings

$224,332 grant, bursary, and award money distributed to outstanding & in-need graduate students

5,740 graduate students attended 136 GSA-hosted events

$262,612 48 graduate student projects funded by Quality Money

$26,269 recorded savings for graduate students through our discounted ticket program

2,071 tickets sold

235 STUDENT VOLUNTEERS donated time & talent for 13 committees & GSA events

400 events hosted by 48 Departmental Graduate Associations 16 Graduate Student Groups
Brit Paris, President
Brit is a PhD student in Educational Research, investigating the design of instructional strategies to support undergraduates develop feedback literacy. She served as the GSA President from 2017 to 2019 and strove to be a leader of leaders to create inclusive community environments and will continue to do this as the Associate Vice President, Labour for the GSA in 2019-2020.

Accomplishments:
- Chaired the hiring committee for the GSA’s new Executive Director
- Led the development of the new 2019-2022 GSA Strategic Plan
- Directed the visioning and negotiations that resulted in That Grad Space
- Supported the development of the Calgary Student Alliance
- Developed the Quality Money Pillars
- Piloted federal advocacy efforts to join the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations (CASA)
- Launched “Rights and Responsibilities of TAs and RAs” lunch and learns
- Participated in the President Search Committee for UCalgary

Elena Favaro, VP Academic
Elena is a PhD Candidate in the Department of Geography and focuses her research on bridging the gap between planetary scientists and geomorphologists when it comes to investigating bedrock-abraded landforms and aeolian (wind-blown) bedforms on Earth and Mars.

Accomplishments:
- Improved access to student support during academic crises through developing resources that tell students where to turn for help through outreach
- Improved fiscal accountability and accessibility through a comprehensive review and renewal of the current program
- Increased awareness of the Awards program through a marketing and communications plan including social media and video projects

Marcela Lopes, VP External
Marcela is a PhD Student in Department of Transportation at the Schulich School of Engineering. Marcela is passionate about the aerospace industry and aims to find engineering solutions to provide an easier, faster, safer, and more reliable transportation system.

Accomplishments:
- Participated in the development of the new 2019-2022 GSA Strategic Plan
- Supported the re-establishment of the Calgary Student Alliance
- Acted as the Vice Chair of ab-GPAC. In 2018-19, ab-GPAC succeeded in lobbying to the Government of Alberta to have Bill 19 passed after 4 years of advocacy work by past GSA VP Externals and hosted the first ever official lobbying meetings with Members of Legislative Assembly (MLAs)
- Contributed to the creation of the 2019-2024 Senate Strategic Plan
- Enhanced the relationship with the UCalgary especially in the area of government relations
- Hosted the Provincial Post-Secondary Forum for the 2019 provincial election with the UCalgary and Students’ Union
- Developed the proposal with the steering committee and advocated to have the Graduate College recognized as a permanent group by the UCalgary’s Graduate Faculty Council
- Worked towards officially registering the GSA as an official member of Canadian Alliance of Student Associations (CASA)
Mohammad Mansouri
VP Finance & Services

Mina is a PhD Candidate in the Department of Civil Engineering. His research is on Fracture Mechanics of brittle solids under compression.

Accomplishments:
• Provided better DGA and GSG support
• Secured agreements for the continuing benefits of our students
• Implemented a new collaborative structure for the Student Engagement Standing Committee
• Provided on-ground communication and promotion for the GSA
• Supported and hosted events on remote campuses

Mina Iskander
VP Student Life

Mohammad is a PhD Candidate in the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering. His current research focuses on identifying sources and parameters of disturbances in power systems, which increase the robustness of power systems.

Accomplishments:
• Renegotiated the Health and Dental Plan with enhanced and additional coverage, while decreasing fees for students.
• Maintained favourable financial results of the Last Defence Lounge despite unexpected maintenance costs
• Reviewed and revised the GSA's Investment Policy
• Updated the Terms of Reference for the Finance Standing Committee
• Increased transparency in the GSA's finance report to the Graduate Representative Council
• Participated in developing the GSA's new strategic plan
• Participated in the hiring committee for the GSA's new
Mohammad Mansouri, President
PhD Candidate in Electrical and Computer Engineering

Portfolio:
• GSA Bylaws & governing documents
• All GSA affairs and operations
• Collective Agreement
• Your voice to the Board of Governors and governments

Goals:
• Negotiate amendments to the current Health and Dental contract and monitor this change to get the full benefit for graduate students
• Introduce a full training/professional development program for GSA committee members to ensure the members engage and get the best out of their efforts
• Develop a robust Investment Policy to generate more non-student fee revenue

Committee: Governance Standing Committee
Email: pres.gsa@ucalgary.ca

Mohamed Abdelsamie, VP Academic
PhD Candidate in Environmental Engineering

Portfolio:
• GSA awards and grants
• Academic appeals and student issues
• Workshops and professional development

Goals:
• Create an online awards application platform
• Add more academic workshops designed for graduate students
• Compile an academic resource handbook

Committees: Academic Support Committee, Awards Committee
Email: vpa.gsa@ucalgary.ca

Marcela Lopes, VP External
PhD Candidate in Transportation

Portfolio:
• Municipal, provincial, federal advocacy
• External relations

Goals:
• Establish an official ab-GPAC advocacy week
• Develop relationships with the new government officials
• Run Get Out the Vote (GOTV) campaign to promote participation in the federal election in fall of 2019
• Develop advocacy and research documents with the support of the newly hired Research and Advocacy Analyst
• Lobby for support from stakeholders for graduate student priorities

Committee: External Advocacy Committee
Email: vpest.gsa@ucalgary.ca
Basem Halawa, VP Student Life
Master’s Student in Civil Engineering

Portfolio:
• Events and discounted ticket sales
• DGAs and GSGs
• Student experience

Goals:
• Add extra spring and summer graduate student events
• Diversify the GSA's discounted ticket program
• Enhance the sustainability of the GSA committees by hosting team building events for the committees' chairs and members
• Introduce a brand-new graduate student service

Committees: Student Experience and Events Committee, Mental Health and Wellness Subcommittee, GSA Gender and Sexuality Alliance Subcommittee (or [GSA]^2), Events Subcommittee, Newcomers and International Students Subcommittee, Community Engagement Subcommittee

Email: vpsl.gsa@ucalgary.ca

Mina Iskander, VP Finance & Services
PhD Candidate in Civil Engineering

Portfolio:
• Health & Dental Plan (H&D)
• Bursaries
• Last Defence Lounge

Goals:
• Develop literacy workshops on the topic of personal and corporate financial management for graduate students
• Monitor the H&D plan performance with the new contract and minimize complaints
• Initiate sustainable revenue model discussions with the Executive Director and President

Committees: Finance Standing Committee, Sustainability Committee

Email: vpfs.gsa@ucalgary.ca
Strategic Plan
2019-2022

VISION

To be recognized as the leader in graduate student advocacy and service delivery by our members, stakeholders, and external organizations across Canada.

MISSION

The GSA serves all UCalgary graduate students through responsive programs and initiatives to support their success during and after their academic endeavours.

GOALS

Advocacy – Engage in meaningful consultation, research, and policy development in order to relentlessly advocate for the changing needs of UCalgary graduate students to the university and all levels of government.

Service Delivery – Maximize the impact of our services with the available resources through collaboration and consultation to support the success of all graduate students.

Communication – Foster direct and constructive communication between the GSA members, staff, and board to promote transparency, trust, and inclusion.

Organizational Sustainability – Foster a nurturing, professional, and productive environment that empowers innovation and risk taking, while maximizing efficiency and impact.
The GSA welcomes newly elected officials for the 2019-2020 academic year after our 2019 election held on March 11 and 12. A total of 7 percent of UCalgary graduate students voted at this election.

Two Executive positions were acclaimed prior to the campaign period. The current Vice President Finance and Services, Mohammad Mansouri, captures the President position; and Marcela Lopes continues her Vice President External role for a second term. Mina Iskander, this year’s VP Student Life, is elected as the Vice President Finance and Services.

The other two Executive positions, Vice President Academic and Vice President Student Life, were filled by by-election on April 30, 2019.

Mohamed Abdelsamie was elected as the 2019-2020 VP Academic and Basem Halawa was elected as VP Student Life.

Special thanks to our Alejandra Garcia, Chief Returning Officer and Haley Vecchiarelli, Deputy Returning Officer for managing the elections this year.
Danielle Abbott
Executive Director
With the GSA since 2014
danielle.decoste@ucalgary.ca
Oversees all aspects of the GSA's operations and services, provides guidance and leadership to the GSA and the LDL, and acts in an advisory capacity to the GSA Board of Directors.

Daniella Irukusi
Finance and Operations Manager
With the GSA since 2015
daniella.ikurusi@ucalgary.ca
Oversees the Last Defence Lounge (LDL) and manages the GSA finances and operations.

Lina Girgis
Human Resources Manager
With the GSA since 2010
lgirgis@ucalgary.ca
Oversees the GSA's human resources, Volunteer Recruitment Program, Collective Agreement, and the Health and Dental Plan.

Thao Nguyen
Marketing and Communications Coordinator
With the GSA since 2016
thao.nguyen1@ucalgary.ca
Manages the marketing and communication effort for the GSA and the LDL.

Crystal Ellis
Governance Coordinator
With the GSA since 2017
governance.gsa@ucalgary.ca
Manages the GSA's DGA/GSG Program, Quality Money Program, Awards/Bursaries/Grants, and provides operational support to the GSA Board of Directors.

Adelina Gashi
Marketing and Communications Coordinator
With the GSA since 2019
adelina.gashi@ucalgary.ca
Manages the marketing and communication effort for the GSA and the LDL.

Megan Sawchuk
Events Coordinator
With the GSA since 2019
events.gsa@ucalgary.ca
Manages GSA events and discounted ticket program.

Nancy Wanye
Research and Advocacy Analyst
With the GSA since 2019
nancy.wanye@ucalgary.ca
Supports the GSA's strategic goal of engaging in meaningful consultation, research, and policy development to the University and all levels of government on behalf of GSA members.

Rachel Duchesne
Administrative Assistant
With the GSA since 2018
admin.gsa@ucalgary.ca
Manages the GSA front desk, provides guidance and support to the GSA members, staff, Board of Directors, and performs administrative tasks.
Last Defence Lounge (LDL) Staff

Chris Schneider  
**General Manager**  
*With the GSA since 2014*  
gsarest@ucalgary.ca  
Manages and provides strategic direction for the Last Defence Lounge

Matthew Broughton  
**Front of House Manager**  
*With the GSA since 2016*  
gsabar@ucalgary.ca  
Manages the drink menu, front of house staff, and operations

Chris Schneider  
**Kitchen Manager**  
*With the GSA since 2018*  
gsakitch@ucalgary.ca  
Manages the kitchen staff, food menu, and kitchen operations

Front of House Staff  
- Laura McManus  
- Kristen Hilchey  
- Quinn Long  
- Stephanie White  
- Raquel Van Ny  
- Megan Halowath  
- Drea Halpin

Kitchen Staff  
- Shane Richards  
- Kyle Henry  
- Ashley Gauthier  
- Chris Kelly  
- Jesse Gillette  
- Ben Daigle
Improving Student Representation and Advocacy

The GSA engages in meaningful consultation, research, and policy development in order to relentlessly advocate for the changing needs of UCalgary graduate students to the university and all levels of government.
In Alberta

In the past academic year, a big policy win of the Alberta Graduate Provincial Advocacy Council (ab-GPAC) was to have the tuition fees regulated for domestic students and predictable for international students through Bill 19 passed by the Alberta government in October 2018.

Another policy ab-GPAC is advocating on is to retain graduate students in Alberta through the provincial professional development fund for graduate students. ab-GPAC is also in the process of conducting research and consultations to remove barriers for Indigenous graduate students across the province.

Marcela Lopes, GSA VP External, was elected as Chair of ab-GPAC for the 2019-2020 academic year. She plans to start an ab-GPAC advocacy week, establish solid ad-hoc committees, and complete the research on Indigenous graduate students’ support. ab-GPAC’s research advocacy priorities for 2019-2020 are to secure scholarships for graduate students and streamline the permanent residence process for international graduate students.

About ab-GPAC: The Alberta Graduate Provincial Advocacy Council (ab-GPAC) is a student-led and non-partisan organization that advocates to the provincial government on behalf of over 16,000 graduate students that attend one of three comprehensive academic research-intensive universities in Alberta. As a member of ab-GPAC, the UCalgary’s GSA sends 3 Directors to ab-GPAC including the President, VP External, and the Chair of the External Advocacy Committee. The External Advocacy Committee provides input and feedback to the GSA’s municipal, provincial and federal advocacy efforts from its committee members in order to represent the UCalgary graduate students effectively. Learn more about ab-GPAC on their website: www.abgpac.net

In Canada

The GSA became an official member of the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations (CASA) in May 2019 after serving as an observer member for one year.

As a member of CASA, the UCalgary’s GSA sends 2 Directors to CASA: the President and the VP External. The GSA executives will participate in a few important committees representing the needs of the graduate student community including:
1. Federal Policy Committee: reviews and develops CASA’s advocacy policies;
2. Governance Committee: conducts review of bylaws and internal policies; and
3. Graduate Advisory Group: provides support to CASA’s Board of Directors by adding the graduate student perspective CASA’s policies, advocacy priorities, bylaws, etc.

As a member of the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations, the GSA can be involved in any other CASA committees such as the Advocacy and Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Committee.

About CASA: The Canadian Alliance of Student Association (CASA) is a national voice for Canada’s post-secondary students. At its core, CASA advocates on behalf of post-secondary students to the federal government. When Canada’s leaders make decisions affecting our post-secondary education system, they turn to CASA for solutions. Learn more about CASA on their website: www.casa-acae.com

About ab-GPAC: The Alberta Graduate Provincial Advocacy Council (ab-GPAC) is a student-led and non-partisan organization that advocates to the provincial government on behalf of over 16,000 graduate students that attend one of three comprehensive academic research-intensive universities in Alberta. As a member of ab-GPAC, the UCalgary’s GSA sends 3 Directors to ab-GPAC including the President, VP External, and the Chair of the External Advocacy Committee. The External Advocacy Committee provides input and feedback to the GSA’s municipal, provincial and federal advocacy efforts from its committee members in order to represent the UCalgary graduate students effectively. Learn more about ab-GPAC on their website: www.abgpac.net
At the University

The GSA Executives and delegates sit on various university committees and boards including UCalgary’s Board of Governors and its subcommittees, the Graduate Faculty Council (GFC) and its subcommittees, Tuition and Fees Consultation Committee, UCalgary Senate, Faculty of Graduate Studies Council and its subcommittees, Campus Mental Health Strategy Committee, administration search committees, and decanal searches committees, etc.

Within the GSA

Graduate Representative Council

The GSA hosted 7 GRC meetings this past academic year with an annual general meeting on September 27, 2018. During these meetings, the GRC voted on important matters including the GSA’s new strategic plan, operating budget, student fees, and health and dental plan contract and fees.

Notable motions passed at these GRC meetings were:

• The GSA membership fee change of 0 percent for the 2019-2020 academic year
• The 2019-2020 Health and Dental plan fee reduction of $10 to $590.67 for graduate students

About Graduate Representative Council (GRC):

GRC is the GSA’s policy-making body, comprised of graduate student representatives from all departments with active Departmental Graduate Association. It provides direction to the GSA Board of Directors on the political, financial and operational matters of the GSA. Learn more about GRC here:
gsa.ucalgary.ca/about-the-gsa/grc/

Collective Agreement & Labour Relations Committee

The Collective Agreement 2018-2020 has been renewed and signed by the GSA and the Board of Governors of the University of Calgary.

The Labour Relations Committee (LRC), chaired by the GSA’s Associate VP Labour, administers the labour relations of the GSA and its academically employed graduate student members. This includes but is not limited to negotiating the Collective Agreement, handling disputes with employers, and advocating for a high standard of graduate student employment. The LRC exists to represent and support Academically Employed Graduate Students (AEGS) at the University of Calgary through education and advocacy.

In 2018-2019, this included hosting the first elections and establishing the first LRC with members from 8 of the 10 eligible faculties. The Committee initiated a lunch and learn program in partnership with DGAs and visited Faculty Councils with the Deputy Provost to encourage contract compliance.

In the 2018-2019 school year, the University of Calgary departments provided over 3,500 Graduate Assistantship appointments, including Teaching, Non-Teaching, and Research Assistant positions. The GSA administration oversees the processing and compliance of the GAT, GANT, and GAR contracts of those appointments.

24% increase in compliance of contracts

Due to the GSA’s ongoing communication with all departments in the University, the compliance of contracts for the 2018-2019 school year has improved by 24% compared to the compliance of contracts for the 2017-2018 school year.
Health & Dental Plan Review

The GSA Health & Dental Plan serves over 8,000 students and is designed to provide all GSA members with accessible and affordable extended health and dental care. Over 200 students have also enrolled eligible dependents onto the plan. The Plan is one of the largest and most complex services provided and managed by the GSA and is professionally administered by Studentcare.

Studentcare was recently re-selected as the exclusive administrator and consultant of the GSA Health & Dental Plan, following a competitive review process conducted by the GSA. The review process took place from January to April of 2019, with participation from GSA executives, staff, and GRC representatives.

Through continued effective plan management, and following the competitive review process, the GSA was in a position to reduce the plan fee by $10 and make the following benefit enhancements for the upcoming policy year:

- Increase the psychologist maximum from $400 to $500
- Expand the psychologist maximum to include registered clinical counsellors and masters of social work
- Increase the medical equipment maximum from $3,000 to $10,000
- Increase the drug maximum from $4,000 to $10,000
- Increase the annual dental maximum from $800 to $850

$10 reduction in Health and Dental Plan Fee
Improving Student Engagement and Services

Volunteer Recruitment Program (VRP)

Over 200 committee members and 30 event volunteers participated in various initiatives, events, and activities in the 2018-2019 academic year. In total, the GSA operates 13 committees, sub-committees, ad-hoc committees, and many events that made a tremendous stride in the GSA’s mission of improving graduate student experience and engagement. In March 2019, the GSA hosted the Volunteer Appreciation Night to celebrate the volunteer contributions and achievements.

In the 2018-2019 academic year and as of June 19, 2019:

- 95 graduate students have joined the VRP
- 18 graduate students returning to the VRP from the 2017-2018 academic year
- 73 graduate students were recruited for 29 internal volunteer positions including Committee Chair/Vice Chair, Committee Member, and Event Volunteer through the VRP
- 60 GSA members were connected to external organizations for 30 external volunteer opportunities

Departmental Graduate Associations (DGAs) and Graduate Student Groups (GSGs)

During the 2018-2019 academic year:

- 48 active DGAs (with 2 Consortiums)
- $20,000 funding was provided to DGAs for their Operational Bursaries and Event Grants
- 400+ events were held by the DGAs
- 10 active GSGs out of 16 registered GSGs

Committees

Awards Committee
Chair: Haley Vecchiarelli, Vice Chair: Natalie Scime, and 41 members
- Reviewed 410 applications in total
- Updated all Awards documents and applications
- Piloted a feedback process
- Maintained weekly office hours

Finance Standing Committee
Chair: Annie Hoang and 11 members
- Reviewed GSA budget
- Reviewed GSA financial statements monthly

Labour Relations Committee
Chair: Neil Christensen and 12 members
- Raised awareness of the existence of the committee, its role and purpose
- Provided a source for student inquiries, information, and assistance related to labour issues and the Collective Agreement

Governance Committee
Chair: Harrison Campbell, Vice Chair: Jaclyn Carter, and 17 members
- Reviewed Governance Committee Terms of Reference
- Reviewed 31 DGA Bylaws
- Reviewed GSA Policies
- Increased GSA governance transparency

Student Engagement and Events Committee (SEEC)
Chair: Alejandra Enriquez Garcia, Vice Chair: Myra Chen, and 14 members
- Implemented a new structure of the SEEC
- Enhanced student life of grad students and volunteer appreciation with the allotted budget
Committees (cont.)

**GSA Gender and Sexuality Subcommittee (or [GSA]^2)**

**Chair:** Jen Sidorova, **Vice Chair:** Kaylee Rich, and 11 members

- Organized 10 events
- Enhanced internal structure and communication
- Contributed to many UCalgary activities such as Women’s Resource Centre Sex Week and gender-neutral washrooms
- Collaborated with university facilities and external organizations

**Community Engagement and Events Subcommittee**

**Chair:** Basem Halawa, **Vice Chair:** Maryam Hajizarghani, and 18 members

- Hosted 6 events and 7 Building Bridges booths

**Newcomers and International Students Subcommittee**

**Chair:** Simon Barrick, **Vice Chair:** Mohamed Abdelsamie, and 16 members

- Restructured the subcommittee’s event series including financial literacy, Welcome to Canada, and NISS Goes to the Game
- Created a white paper for newcomers and international graduate students’ financial distress
- Strengthened partnership with UCalgary Wellness Centre

**Mental Health and Wellness Subcommittee**

**Chair:** Suzanne Chew, **Vice Chair:** Alexander Choy and Kim Corrigan, and 15 members

- Held regular wellness events including paint parties, cooking class, Out-climb the Stigma, and pet therapy
- Destress Weeks in December and April
- Held 2 wellness workshops and mental health training
- Built a supporting online community on Facebook and #LetsTalkMentalHealth
- Brought fun and humor to eradicate the stigma around mental health through postcards and handout items

The GSA is committed to maximizing the impact of our services with the available resources through collaboration and consultation to support the successes of all
Events & Discounted Tickets

The GSA is committed to building a robust graduate student community through our social events and discounted ticket program.

The GSA hosted many small, medium, and large events throughout the academic year and received amazing reception from the student body.

Event highlights:
• Event Series: Monday trivia nights, board game nights, paint parties, Wine Wednesdays, yoga, self-defense, Dance Crew, Ski 101, and Free Coffee Morning
• Lake Louise Trip: 130 attendees
• Soccer Tournament: 10 teams
• Volleyball Tournament: 10 teams
• GradFest 8.0: 300 attendees

The GSA offers discounted tickets to various attractions in and around Calgary including: Calgary Zoo, TELUS Sparks, Heritage Park, Glenbow Museum, Calgary Tower, Royal Tyrrell Museum, West Edmonton Mall, Cirque de Soleil, and more. This discounted ticket program saved graduate students $26,269 this past year.

Hot Wing Eating Contest - GradFest 8.0 (April 2019)
That Grad Space Opening

In November 2018, the GSA officially opened That Grad Space, a brand-new and modern graduate student space located in the lobby of the Crowsnest Hall. This space serves as the home for graduate student related events, socials, meetings, workshops, and more! That Grad Space is accessible between 8:00 am and 8:00 pm from Monday to Friday. All graduate students have access to That Grad Space via Unicard.

$262,612
Quality Money distributed

48
approved projects

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

$77,010.13
Professional Development Grant
108 successful applications

$57,822
Bursaries
41 successful applications

$37,000
Emergency Bursaries
28 recipients

For the 2018-2019 academic year, the GSA received 69 Quality Money applications ranging from $200 to $44,200 totaling over $320,000. The GSA Board of Directors approved 48 projects for a total of $262,612. This amount is greater than the total budget allocated as there was returned unused fund from prior year’s projects. For a list of projects, please visit: gsa.ucalgary.ca/financial-support/quality-money-program/
Awards Gala

The Graduate Students’ Association (GSA) celebrated UCalgary graduate students and supporters at the annual Awards Gala on April 4 at the Energy Environment Experiential Learning Building.

During the gala, 14 award categories were presented by GSA executives, including VP Academic, Elena Favaro, Vice President External, Marcela Lopes, and Vice President Student Life, Mina Iskander, recognizing the excellence of our volunteers, graduate students, research associates, support staff, and administrators. These efforts have furthered the vision and mission of the GSA and enhanced the graduate student experience at the university during the past year. The GSA extends our gratitude to the entire university community for another successful academic year, due in large part to those who took the time to nominate outstanding graduate students and community supporters, those who were nominated, and award recipients.

The following are the 2018–2019 award winners:

**GSA Champion Awards**
- **Shane Royal**, UCalgary’s Director of Ancillary Services
- **Dr. Linda Dalgetty**, UCalgary Vice President Finance and Services

**Lifetime Achievement Award**
- **Alejandra Enriquez Garcia**, Department of Chemistry

**Emerging Leader Award**
- **Sicheng Lee**, Department of Pathology & Laboratory Medicine

**Leadership Award**
- **Haley Vecchiarelli**, Department of Neuroscience

**Excellence in Administrative Support Award** (Support Staff)
- **Leda Stawnychko**, Department of Nursing

**Excellence in Research Award** (Graduate Students)
- **Robert Mayall**, Department of Chemistry

**Research Excellence Award** (Senior Research Affiliates)
- **Thomas Barchyn**, Department of Geography

**Excellence in Teaching Award** (Graduate Student)
- **Jessalyn Holodinsky**, Department of Community Health Sciences

**Excellence in Supervision Award**
- **Dr. Ryan Burns**, Department of Geography
- **Dr. Adam Kirton**, Department of Pediatrics and Clinical Neuroscience

**Volunteer Excellence Award**
- **Jaclyn Carter**, Department of English
- **Hormoz Izadi**, Department of Geoscience
- **Suzanne Chew**, Department of Geography
- **Basem Halawa**, Department of Civil Engineering
- **Jen Sidorova**, Department of Political Science

**Graduate Representative Council Distinguished Service Award**
- **Shawn Brackett**, Department of History

**Graduate Student Sustainability Award**
- **Asha Hollis**, Department of Neuroscience

**Graduate Representative Council Initiative Awards**

- **Rapid Initiative**: Faizan Malik, Aaron Lanz, Govind Peringod, Brooke Belanger, Pauline de Jesus, Trevor Low, Douglas Kondro, Sascha Gill, Joel Glover, Sam Dorosz, and Thomas Lijnse

- **Zen Den**: Catherine Greene, Rachel Kratofil, and Nancy Adam

- **Method’s Day**: Charlene Watterston, Rasha Sabouny, and Sophie Briggs

- **Workshop Fridays**: Hiva Jalilzadeh, Lauretta Pearse, and Mohammadmahdi Ershad

**Award Prizes**

$12,500
FGS/GSA Graduate Research Photo Competition

The University of Calgary – Faculty of Graduate Studies and Graduate Students’ Association hosted the FGS/GSA Graduate Research Photo Competition Reception on March 4, 2019. Special thanks to all 18 thoughtful photo submissions this year that we received. We are honoured to announce the top winners of this year’s competition chosen by our panel of judges:
First Place

More Than a Mirror Reflection
by Julia Daun

Second Place

Interconnected Space
by Alexandre Mayhew

Third Place

Caught in Action
by Lisa Sims

Third Place

Two Clusters of Court Decisions
by Joseph Hickey

Honourable Mention

Personal Identity Over Time
by Rachel Taylor-Fergusson

People’s Choice Award

Shock wave propagation in a shock tube with a partially opened diaphragm
by Marcel Alves
Organizational Sustainability

Last Defence Lounge

Profit
During the last fiscal year of 2018-2019, the LDL bottom line was $24,597 below budget and within $1,583 of last year’s best-ever-recorded numbers despite incurring high repair and maintenance costs. The LDL replaced some key equipment including a new walk-in cooler refrigeration system and a new ice machine.

Best Bar None
The LDL was accredited with Best Bar None for the 6th year in a row, a program put on by the Alberta Gaming Liquor and Cannabis to support and recognize excellence in Alberta’s restaurant/bar industry.

Events
The LDL hosted the retirement party for Dan Tilleman, a long-term regular guest of the LDL for 30 years from the Schulich School of Engineering. Dan was a pleasure to serve over the years and the LDL was honoured to throw him a grand party.

The LDL also hosted a wide variety of successful activities for graduate students such as Grad Orientation Social, GradFest, paint parties, Wine Wednesday tastings, and many more.

New Staff and Initiatives
The LDL welcomed our new chef, Carl Stephenson, at the beginning of the academic year. Carl has been a fantastic addition to the team and has created two new menus with some delicious new menu items and lower carbon footprint.

With the guidance of our Front of House Manager, Matthew Broughton, the LDL has achieved our goal of serving 100% locally brewed beer in the lounge.

2019-2022 Strategic Plan

After three months of intensive strategic research and development, the GSA Board of Directors approved the new strategic plan for 2019-2022 and presented it to the GSA’s Graduate Representative Council at the end of April. The Strategic Planning Committee gathered feedback from over 800 graduate students, GSA staff, departmental representatives, and GSA Board of Directors to craft a refreshed mission and goals in order to reach our new vision:

“To be recognized as the leader in graduate student advocacy and service delivery by our members, stakeholders, and external organizations across Canada.”

The new strategic plan focuses on sustaining the internal organization while maximizing the impact of the programs and services to support the success of all graduate students. The GSA recognizes the changing needs of UCalgary graduate students, therefore, is committed to enhancing meaningful communications, providing responsive and quality services, and promoting trust, inclusion, and transparency among the graduate student body. Advocacy remains one of the most important focuses of this plan in order to ensure UCalgary graduate students’ voice be heard loud and clear at the University and at all levels of government.

Learn more about the GSA Strategic Plan here:
gsa.ucalgary.ca/about-the-gsa/
Introduced the new Executive Director

Danielle Abbott became the Executive Director of the UCalgary Graduate Students' Association, effective April 15, 2019. Danielle joined the GSA as the Accounting Manager in 2014 and moved into the role of the Director of Finance and Operations in 2017. During the past five years, Danielle has developed a strong understanding of the GSA’s operations, overseeing finances, human resources, and the Last Defence Lounge (LDL). She also served as the Interim Executive Director while the GSA conducted a thorough Executive Director search process. Prior to her work with the GSA, Danielle had made significant contributions to Shelter Nova Scotia as the Director of Finance.

Danielle earned a Bachelor of Commerce degree from Dalhousie University and is currently pursuing a Master of Public Administration Management through Dalhousie University’s Centre for Advanced Management Education. As a master’s student, Danielle is in tune with the unique needs of our graduate student members. Danielle looks forward to building meaningful relationships with our members and stakeholders and improving the GSA’s organizational sustainability.

This appointment coincides with another important milestone for the organization as we introduced the 2019-2022 Strategic Plan at the end of April 2019. As an active participant in the strategic planning process, Danielle is well-prepared to champion our strategic goals and guide the organization to excellence.

The GSA strives to foster a nurturing, professional, and productive environment that empowers innovation and risk taking, while maximizing efficiency and
Please see below the GSA’s audited financial statements with year ending March 31, 2019, and comparative information for 2018.

For more information, please email the GSA VP Finance and Services at vpfs.gsa@ucalgary.ca

**STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION**

March 31, 2019, with comparative information for 2018

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assets</th>
<th>2019</th>
<th>2018</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Current assets:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cash and cash equivalents</td>
<td>$2,294,100</td>
<td>$2,006,875</td>
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<tr>
<td>Accounts receivable</td>
<td>$24,773</td>
<td>$22,184</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inventory</td>
<td>$16,854</td>
<td>$22,245</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prepaid expenses and deposits</td>
<td>$314,634</td>
<td>$326,945</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>$2,650,361</strong></td>
<td><strong>$2,378,249</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Investments</td>
<td>$1,575,625</td>
<td>$1,501,088</td>
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<tr>
<td>Property and equipment</td>
<td>$678,454</td>
<td>$730,364</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>$4,904,440</strong></td>
<td><strong>$4,609,701</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Liabilities and Net Assets</th>
<th>2019</th>
<th>2018</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Current liabilities:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accounts payable and accrued liabilities</td>
<td>$281,085</td>
<td>$284,836</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deferred revenue (health and dental premiums)</td>
<td>$1,009,702</td>
<td>$1,014,795</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>$1,290,787</strong></td>
<td><strong>$1,299,631</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Net assets:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unrestricted</td>
<td>$2,098,924</td>
<td>$2,138,977</td>
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<tr>
<td>Internally restricted</td>
<td>$1,514,729</td>
<td>$1,171,093</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>$3,613,653</strong></td>
<td><strong>$3,310,070</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Commitments</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>$4,904,440</strong></td>
<td><strong>$4,609,701</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Statement of Operations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2019</th>
<th>2018</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Revenues:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Students’ Centre Lounge</td>
<td>$836,847</td>
<td>$869,065</td>
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<tr>
<td>Graduate Students’ Association</td>
<td>$4,052,138</td>
<td>$3,819,836</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Revenues:</strong></td>
<td>$4,888,985</td>
<td>$4,688,901</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Cost of sales:</strong></td>
<td>$295,272</td>
<td>$309,971</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>General and administrative:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Students’ Centre Lounge</td>
<td>$567,215</td>
<td>$579,343</td>
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<tr>
<td>Graduate Students’ Association</td>
<td>$3,763,754</td>
<td>$3,584,073</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total General and administrative:</strong></td>
<td>$4,330,969</td>
<td>$4,163,416</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Loss on disposal of property and equipment:</strong></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>($74,083)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Realized gain on disposal of investments:</strong></td>
<td>$6,917</td>
<td>$4,899</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Unrealized gain (loss) on investments:</strong></td>
<td>$33,922</td>
<td>($7,311)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Excess of revenues over expenses:</strong></td>
<td>$303,583</td>
<td>$139,019</td>
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</tbody>
</table>