



NOOR DARWISH

FOR GSA PRESIDENT

ABOUT ME

I am a PhD Candidate in Security and Strategic Studies at the Center for Military, Security and Strategic Studies (CMSS). My doctoral research examines Afghanistan, China, and regional geopolitical and economic networks, focusing on how great-power competition shapes institutional development and economic integration in fragile states. I hold master's degrees in public policy and administration and international education management, along with postgraduate qualifications in Strategic Management and Leadership.

With over a decade of experience in higher education reform and institutional governance, I have worked on large-scale, donor-funded development programs in collaboration with international partners, including the World Bank, UNESCO, USAID, GIZ, and the British Council. My work has focused on institutional reform, quality assurance, faculty development, women's access to higher education, strategic planning, and university infrastructure development. I have facilitated 11 international partnerships with renowned universities in India, Germany, Malaysia, and Thailand to support faculty development and scholarship opportunities. In addition, I have chaired and moderated international academic and policy forums, contributing to high-level discussions on institutional reform and higher education development.

LEADERSHIP AND PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- **Expert Consultant** 2022
UNESCO: Right to Higher Education
- **Deputy Minister** 2020/2021
Ministry of Higher Education AFG
- **Program Director** 2014/2019
The World Bank funded USD 55 Million, Higher Education Development Program (HEDP) AFG
- **Deputy Director** 2013/2014
The World Bank funded USD 20 Million, Higher Education System Improvement Program (HESIP) AFG
- **Operations Management Experience** 2006/2013
Progressive roles in financial and operational management within large-scale development programs.



VISION

To position the GSA as a strong, transparent, and strategic voice that advances sustainable funding, effective representation, and meaningful academic and professional support, including stronger connections to career and industry for graduate students.

KEY POLICY PRIORITIES

Sustainable and Responsible Graduate Funding

While minimum guaranteed funding has increased in recent years, rising living costs continue to create financial pressure for many graduate students. I will work collaboratively with the Faculty of Graduate Studies and university leadership to support continued review of funding levels and promote predictable, sustainable frameworks aligned with the realities of living in Calgary.

Strengthening Career and Industry Integration

Many graduate students face challenges securing internships, paid research roles, and meaningful industry exposure during their programs. I will advocate for stronger collaboration between faculties, Career Services, and external partners to expand structured internship pathways, paid experiential opportunities, and early industry engagement. The goal is to improve career readiness, support clearer post-graduation pathways — including awareness of provincial and federal immigration streams — and reduce employment uncertainty for graduate students.

Enhancing Graduate Student Support and Supervisory Accountability

Graduate students may experience academic or supervisory challenges that create stress and uncertainty, particularly when clear communication channels or resolution pathways are lacking. I will work with the GSA team to promote transparent supervisory guidelines, strengthen awareness of formal support mechanisms, and ensure graduate students feel safe and informed when raising concerns. The goal is to support healthy academic environments grounded in respect, clarity, and accountability.

Expanding Professional Development and Academic Engagement

Professional development opportunities are essential to academic growth and career progression. I will advocate for strengthened and more accessible funding for conferences, regional and national academic exposure, and skill-development initiatives. I will also support the promotion of interdisciplinary seminars and internal academic forums that encourage collaboration, knowledge exchange, and broader scholarly engagement among graduate students.

IF ELECTED, TOGETHER WE WILL STRENGTHEN OUR VOICE, EXPAND OUR OPPORTUNITIES, AND SHAPE A BETTER FUTURE IN 2026-2027.

