



GRADUATE
STUDENTS'
ASSOCIATION

UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY

GRADUATE STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION 2026-2030

STRATEGIC PLAN

ABOUT THE GRADUATE STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION

Established by an Order and Council in 1971, Graduate Students' Association of the University of Calgary represents over 7,500 Master's and PhD students. As a not-for-profit organization, the GSA aims to promote the holistic well-being of all graduate students.

The GSA core services include labour relations as the bargaining agent for all academically employed students and the facilitation of comprehensive health and dental plan. The GSA also supports its members with its key pillars including advocacy, financial supports, campus dispute resolution and community building.

MISSION

To ensure needed services, communities, advocacy, and growth opportunities are available and accessible for all UCalgary graduate students.

VISION

A community of highly engaged and thriving UCalgary graduate students.

THE FOUR CORE GOALS

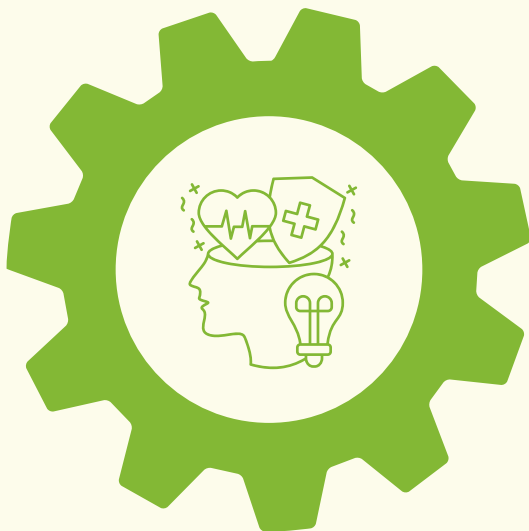
Together, these goals represent the main areas the GSA is focusing on to better support and represent graduate students.



**ENHANCE
COMMUNICATIONS**



**INCREASE FINANCIAL
SUPPORT**



**STRENGTHEN HEALTH
AND WELLNESS**



**STRONGER, TAILORED
ADVOCACY**

01

ENHANCE COMMUNICATIONS

To enhance communication and better engage graduate students and stakeholders, the GSA will:

Update GSA email newsletter

- Revise newsletter production software options that align with graduate contacts from the university.
- Include a key subject line.
- Post newsletter and board summary online to improve accountability.
- Include an executive summary of work completed (weekly individual executive reports).
- Focus on quality over quantity, with tightened timelines for content.

Enhance social media presence

- Develop a social media strategy that aligns with the platforms and tools most commonly used by graduate students.
- Solicit platform preferences from members, while remaining flexible and prepared to adapt to evolving trends and user behaviors.
- Leverage interns to create social media and communications opportunities for graduate students.

Increase online events

- Host or co-sponsor events through the GSA, ensuring they are tailored to the priorities and needs of graduate students.
- Explore more ways in which in person events can be hosted in a hybrid format.

Update the GSA website

- Commence an internal review.
- Hire a communications intern to support an extensive overhaul.
- Develop an organizational workflow that ensures students receive the content they need.
- Include revised governing documents and an approved budget.
- Develop and maintain a calendar of events.
- Update the FAQ and "About Us" sections.
- Information on GSA advocacy and initiatives should regularly be updated on the GSA website.
- Internal GSA meeting minutes and budget information should be regularly updated on the GSA website.
- Conduct a comprehensive website audit at least twice a year.

Commence regular member townhall

- Incorporate these practices into the bylaws to ensure regular occurrence.
- Include reports from executives.
- Use as the key pillar to all communication notices and announcements to membership.

02

INCREASED FINANCIAL SUPPORT

To support graduate students and address financial barriers, the GSA will:

Focus investment returns on grants and bursaries

- Leverage excess income, interest income, and “legacy” reserves to support grants and bursaries for graduate students.
- Direct potential surpluses toward these funding opportunities.

Ensure TFCC consultation includes conversations around bursaries

- Prioritize bursary opportunities in negotiations with the university and forward provost/dean discussion.
- Advocate for increased support for course-based graduate students.
- Encourage membership engagement with the TFCC process to ensure that there is a large pool of allies.

Enhance communications on fees

- Provide ongoing updates on TFCC and award opportunities.
- Improve transparency in grant opportunities.
- Include dedicated pages outlining fees, both within the GSA and from the university.

Curate events that focus on career opportunities

- Ensure job fairs provide tangible financial and career opportunities for graduate students.
- Advocate for increased internal hiring opportunities within the university, along with clearer metrics for the TTI program.
- Curate targeted employment and networking events for graduate students.
- Ensure funding is prioritized toward initiatives that drive measurable outcomes.

Increase satisfaction with GSA fees among graduate students

- Provide a clear fee summary showing how student fees are allocated.
- Include a detailed breakdown of budget line items.
- Use visual tools (e.g., flowcharts or Sankey diagrams) to illustrate financial flows.
- Clearly communicate GSA services to all students, including online/off-campus students, students across all campuses and faculties, and international students.

03

STRENGTHENED HEALTH AND WELLNESS

To support the health and wellness of graduate students, the GSA will:

Increase supports for an affordable health and dental insurance program

- Conduct biannual reviews of the health and dental plan for graduate students to ensure the best value.
- Consult membership on what the plans should and should not cover.

Enhance communication on health and wellness services

- Revise the GSA website to include a centralized portal of available health and wellness services.
- Update the website with clear, accessible information on the health and dental insurance program, including fees, coverage, opportunities, and limitations.
- Ensure GSA social media and email newsletters clearly communicate information about health and wellness services, as well as the health and dental insurance program, with accurate and up-to-date links.

Embrace a holistic understanding of health and wellness

- Advocate to university administration and government for increased funding for mental health supports.
- Clearly communicate both internal and external services available to support graduate student mental health.
- Build third-party partnerships to strengthen and expand mental health supports within the GSA health and benefits plan.

Inclusion of health & wellness in townhall agendas

- Collaborate with committees and internal and external partners to identify and implement effective approaches that promote positive mental health supports.
- Revise catering options for GSA functions.
- Focus on healthier food options at events.
- Revisit and enhance the GSA website to expand and promote catering options for member-based functions and events.

04

STRONGER, TAILORED ADVOCACY

To enhance their advocacy to represent better and support graduate students, the GSA will:

Maintain transparency and engagement with graduate students

- Strengthen DGA and faculty engagement through Officers-at-Large.
- Establish recurring town halls, as enshrined in updated bylaws.
- Implement regular “public reoccurring open office hours” to improve accessibility to the leadership team.
- Encourage departments and faculties to appoint representatives to attend meetings and report back to their DGAs or faculties.

Continue and build on advocacy for international students

- Collaborate with international students and international student organizations to advocate for their needs and interests.
- Collaborate with partners to develop a comprehensive checklist to help international students better understand their requirements, responsibilities and resources.

Maintain report back to membership on advocacy efforts

- Develop recurring labour updates via email to keep members informed on collective agreement progress.
- Post town hall summary for membership.
- In accordance with the bylaws, ensure executive members report to membership through regular town halls.