



The Graduate Students' Association
University of Calgary
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Dr. Jack M. Mintz
President's Fellow, University of Calgary School of Public Policy
906 8 Ave SW 5th floor, Calgary, AB T2P 1H9

Appointing a Graduate Student to the Expert Panel on Alberta's Post-Secondary System

Dear Professor Mintz,

On behalf of the University of Calgary Graduate Students' Association (UCGSA) and our 7,900 members, I would like to congratulate you on your appointment to chair an expert panel on Alberta's post-secondary system.

Post-secondary education is, indeed, critical to Alberta's prosperity. The sector's contributions to human capital accumulation, product and process innovation, and creative destruction are well-documented by economists, business leaders, and entrepreneurs of all stripes. The necessity of a good post-secondary system is all the more important given Canada's lackluster productivity growth relative to competitor nations.

What is less publicly known, though you may be aware of, is the contribution of graduate students to both the functioning of post-secondary institutions and the innovation ecosystem more broadly. [Business testimony](#) in the House of Commons has noted that recent graduates are a key source of technology transfers between universities and private business. Studies from the [United States](#), [United Kingdom](#), and [Portugal](#) have also found that graduate students are essential for commercializing research and connecting academics with entrepreneurs. And in addition to their research, graduate students perform a large amount of the teaching at universities, meaning that an outsized component of the core missions of a university — teaching and research — are performed by our members.

It's in that vein that we share your desire to ensure that Alberta's post-secondary system is globally competitive and the envy of other jurisdictions in Canada. As such, we formally request that a member of the graduate students community be included on the expert panel. We would be happy to work with you on choosing a suitable candidate to sit on the panel to assist you in fulfilling your mandate. We thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Saaka Sulemana Saaka
UCGSA President
PhD Candidate in Political Science