

Meeting Minutes
09 July 2012
GSA Council Meeting

[Note: All materials referred to in these Minutes are stored in hard copy in the Official File, as well as electronically]

The meeting was called to order at 6:03 pm.

Refer to the official GSA Attendance record for attendance of Council Members.

Guests of Council:

- Lev Bukhman, Executive Director (Studentcare)
- Amanda Smytaniuk, Western Director (Studentcare)
- Frank Robinson, Dean of Students (University of Alberta)
- Robin Everall, Provost Fellow (University of Alberta)
- Rob Munro, Director of Environmental, Health and Safety (University of Alberta)
- Brian Scott (Communitas)

Approval of Agenda

1. Approval of the 09 July 2012 Agenda

Members had before them the 09 July 2012 Consolidated Agenda, which had been distributed on 06 July 2012.

The AGENDA was APPROVED.

Approval of Minutes

2. Minutes

i. Minutes from the 11 June 2012 GSA Council meeting

Members had before them the 11 June 2012 GSA Council Minutes, which had been distributed on 05 July 2012.

The MINUTES were APPROVED.

Changes in Council Membership

3. Changes in Council Membership

i. Introduction of new Councillors

This was S Travis' (Neuroscience), D Prins' (Biochemistry), and H Ramezani's (Chemistry) first meeting.

ii. Farewell to departing Councillors

This was T Onuzco's (Secondary Education), A Radomski's (Psychiatry) and V Kandalam's (Vice-chair of the GSA Nominating Committee) last meeting.

Presentations and Councillor Announcements

4. Presentations

i. **Health and Dental Plan (Lev Bukhman, Studentcare Executive Director, and Amanda Smytaniuk, Studentcare Western Director)**

A background document of Studentcare was distributed on 05 July 2012. A Smytaniuk (Studentcare), provided a presentation and noted the following:

- Student health and dental plans are commonplace at Canadian post-secondary institutions. They differ from employee plans in that students pay for the whole plan themselves.
- Plan cost reflects the levels of coverage; balance between the needs of the students and the cost of the plan is the goal.
- Provided a summary background of what the current plan covers: health, vision, dental, and travel. Students are encouraged to visit ihaveaplan.ca for specific details in regards to coverage but can also contact via phone (1-866-795-4430), email, or in-person (office lower level SUB).
- Gave a brief history of Studentcare (student-centered, 65 associations, over 550,000 students).
- Role of GSA Board and Council in terms of decision-making; dual role of Studentcare as consultant (plan set-up, negotiation, and reporting) and administrator (registration and claims).

After the presentation, the following questions were asked:

- H Ramezani (Chem) asked: As a negotiator, you are supposed to find the best deal for the GSA plan. Over the four years I have not been impressed with the level of service provided by Sunlife (current insurer) compared to other employer group plans offered by places like Walmart, Blue Cross, etc. What is the advantage to be with a group plan like Sunlife? Is the group plan really that different than an individual plan?
 - A Smytaniuk (Studentcare) answered: In terms of cost savings, yes. I can't compare the coverage without seeing it.
 - L Bukhman (Studentcare) answered: To be very clear, there is a very strong relationship between cost and coverage. The plan that you have is the coverage that the GSA has chosen to have over a long process. The coverage has evolved to reflect the needs of the students; it is not a question of a "Sunlife plan" or a "Studentcare plan" – it's the UofA GSA plan. That being said, the current decision is to change insurance companies which would resolve any issues you've had with Sunlife in particular. The GSA is free at any time to negotiate different coverage. Any analysis we've ever done shows why group plans have been put in

place by student groups. They offer two advantages: 1) group plans are always much cheaper than individual plans, and 2) group plans differ from individual plans in that they cover everyone without discrimination. There is no application procedure so if a student already has a health condition they will not be declined. The major goal of a group plan is to make it accessible for all GSA members at a reasonable cost.

- Q Li (CAL) asked: Could you explain more about the relationship between coverage and the fee we pay.
 - L Bukhman (Studentcare) answered: The relationship simply is that there are many plans with many options and all can be changed. The higher the coverage, the higher the cost. The less covered, the less the cost. It is up to the GSA to determine what balance to strike. Once that decision is made, it is our job to negotiate with insurance companies to get the lowest possible price.
 - C Li (CAL) asked a supplementary question: Could you provide some examples?
 - L Bukhman (Studentcare) answered: These aren't the types of numbers we can pull out of thin air. Our negotiations with the insurance providers are based on the actual use of that particular coverage. In the past, the GSAB has instructed us to look at pricing for various things, and then we negotiate with the insurance company and they will come back to the GSAB with numbers. It is not an "off the shelf" kind of pricing. It's all dependent on use.
 - C Li (CAL) asked a supplementary question: So if we just know the general trend on these fees, how do we make a decision?
 - L Bukhman (Studentcare) answered: A detailed report of all the claims is presented to the GSAB annually. All the costing is analyzed so for specific benefits there is a specific cost.
 - A Smytaniuk (Studentcare) answered: Coverage options weren't brought to the GSA this year because you were looking at a price increase. Now we are in a position, because the cost came back lower with the new insurance provider, where we can look at coverage increases.
- Z Li (CAL) asked: What guarantee do we have that after two years there will not be a price increase with Desjardins?
 - L Bukhman (Studentcare) answered: Normally the insurance policies are negotiated on an annual basis. We do the negotiation on behalf of the GSA to ensure the lowest possible cost. We do our own baseline analysis that we compare to insurance company costs i.e., to see what a plan

should cost, and see if the insurance providers' costs are higher. When we negotiate we do so with the purchasing power of 550,000 graduate students behind us. Finally, if the insurance company is unwilling to bring the price down to something reasonable then we can get other estimates from other companies; this is always a recourse if negotiations are not going well. One thing we cannot control is the actual use of the plan by the students. All insurance companies, based on size of the group, will always base their price on the actual cumulative use of the plan (i.e., claims) and use this as their base and adding margins on top of that base. No one can predict what the use of your plan will be two or more years from now because the GSA cannot control who the members are and it cannot control the cost of health care in the province nor things like the cost of drugs.

- Z Li (CAL) asked a supplementary question: What do you foresee with Desjardins? Do you foresee large price increases after the two-year contract?
- L Bukhman (Studentcare) answered: We've encouraged the GSA to take some of the savings from going with the new provider and put them into the reserve fund to offset a possible increase. We don't think the increase will be radical but between normal inflation and other factors it is reasonable to anticipate an increase. We do not anticipate any increase will be more than what will be in the reserve fund.
- A Smytaniuk (Studentcare): However, if you increase coverage then you absolutely will see a fee increase. Conservatively (without increase in coverage) you'll see a 5% increase.
- C More (Physics) asked: It seems like a general pattern that vision coverage is not as high as others. What are the reasons that it is not covered as much?
 - A Smytaniuk (Studentcare) answered: Vision care is a costly benefit. More people use it but even though the cost is spread around it still costs more.
 - C More (Physics) supplementary: So if we raise it and we would have a disproportionately higher cost?
 - A Smytaniuk (Studentcare): We would need to determine how many students claim that benefit, and then price out based on a projection of anticipated use.
- S Bal (CAL): In the presentation we had last time, we were told one of the reasons Desjardins offered a good price was because they are hoping to expand

out west: a) do they have the infrastructure to support us as Sunlife does, and b) does their diversification (not just insurance) impact what they are offering?

- L Bukhman (Studentcare) answered: We have currently 6 plans with Desjardins. We have been working with them for 3 years. All are in Quebec but the systems used to administer those plans are the same across Canada. Sunlife does not have any particular benefit over Desjardins. Desjardins will be rolling out a new claim app that will allow students to submit their claims via smart phone. Approximately 75% of claims are transmitted electronically anyways so most students won't see any change.
- S Bal (CAL) asked a supplementary question: As you said that when you go to market, companies tend to underbid. Are you taking into account how this might affect where we are at two years from now?
- L Bukhman (Studentcare) answered: We noted in our report that we thought the quotes received were 5% lower than other insurers. If we take our baseline and the fee as is today, then take that difference and save it for the future, we think it is reasonable to take savings to bank in a future time. However, the GSA can also choose to go with another company with a higher fee. In our opinion no matter what the baseline is in two years, we should take any savings we can get today. Of course, if you take the savings and spend them on increased coverage then you will probably not be in a good situation two years from now. If you are thinking about adding coverage that should be priced separately, as a separate fee. We don't want the GSA to get caught short two, three, five years down the road. The reserve fund practice is reasonable to ensure against fluctuations in the plan. The reason why the GSA is in the good position it is today is because the decisions made in the past were conservative.
- A Smytaniuk (Studentcare) answered: You won't be blindsided by an increase in two years as we will be watching claims. Again if in two years they increase the cost too much then we can switch insurers again.
- B Sultani (Lab Med and Pathology): I have a question about the quality of service: will students see any difference in the amount of time it takes to get money back from a claim?
 - L Bukhman (Studentcare): We have not seen a material difference between our plans with Desjardins versus Sunlife. We are comfortable on that basis. Again over 75% of claims are electronic so we don't see that changing. For claims submitted in paper, the new thing Desjardins is

rolling out for September is a mobile app which will be even quicker than mailing a form in. So students can anticipate an improvement in service. Now there will be, as with any transition, a slight issue around people submitting a claim to the wrong place but our website will be updated before the transition so again we are not anticipating any problems.

- A Smytaniuk (Studentcare) answered: Exactly. The transition should largely go unnoticed.
- L Bukhman (Studentcare) answered: The SU is also changing to Desjardins for their plan so that will also minimize any issues by having both groups with same insurance provider.
- H Ramezani (Chemistry) asked: Is there any benchmark to which we can compare the quality of insurance providers (cost of plan versus benefits we get)?
 - L Bukhman (Studentcare) answered: At a later time, we can come back with that information. A student plan is much cheaper than an employee plan but we can certainly compare to individual plans.
 - H Ramezani (Chemistry) asked a supplementary question: Can you compare it to other group plans?
 - A Smytaniuk (Studentcare) answered: Again the problem with employer plans is that the employer often covers some of the cost. It is better to compare with other student group plans.
- A Siddiqui (CAL) asked: As someone who has lived in Quebec, I'm concerned about the language issue. What if they are not used to dealing with a lot of English claims? How can we ensure they will be timely, and how can we be sure that they will be interpreted in the same way?
 - L Bukhman (Studentcare) answered: Desjardins has many group insurance plans in western Canada and outside of Quebec. They are specifically looking to expand out west in regards to student group plans. They have billions invested in Ontario, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, British Columbia and Alberta. It is not an issue to service plans in English. For example, one of the schools with Desjardins in Quebec is Concordia, which is an Anglophone university. We haven't had a single complaint from those students.
 - A Smytaniuk (Studentcare) answered: And again you are not tied to them. The insurer has agreed to two years but that doesn't mean you have to stay with them.
 - L Bukhman (Studentcare) answered: We do not work for Desjardins. We work for you. We are trying to give you meaningful feedback. Frankly if the service isn't good I'm the one responsible to make sure you are happy

with the service. If this doesn't happen then we change providers. We consider graduate students high level users with high expectations and know you are particular about service so service issues are very important to us. We first began working with Desjardins with one plan. After one year, there were two more groups that joined, and we added three more after that. We had a progressive roll out to ensure their ability to maintain service, that they were able to meet the benchmarks we set for them were met. If they can't deliver then we change companies.

- A Bernier (President) added: If there are no further questions, I want to thank Lev and Amanda for addressing lingering concerns and questions from Council. I am also thrilled to have a Council that is engaged in this issue.

ii. HUB Mall Tragedy (Frank Robinson, Dean of Students; Robin Everall, Provost Fellow; Rob Munro, Director of Environmental, Health and Safety)

No material was distributed in advance. F Robinson spoke first. Some of the points included:

- Background as to the sequence of events on the day under discussion.
- Some of the issues & positives: lack of information (since it was an EPS crime scene, not University Police Services crime scene), concerns about students in HUB, dealing with larger campus issues (conference, daycare, LRT),
- Took note of contributions of various units on campus (Aramark feeding people, Campus Parking not issuing tickets) and of those who provide services on campuses (chaplains, UAI, members of Office of Dean of Students, the mental health unit, Safewalk, etc).

Rob Munro spoke next. Some of the points included:

- Described services of his unit/office including monthly and yearly exercises for Crisis Management Team.
- Recognized that always things that can be done better. Review of the investigation began on June 18th. Still in information phase. Will be some time before report.
- The report will have a heavy emphasis on communication. Aware of criticism regarding notification of students.
- With current notification protocol, two things have to be the case: 1) there has to be credible information, and 2) they want to be able to tell students who receive the message what to do (avoid this area, shelter here, etc.).
- Will look very carefully at timelines and if there should be a different protocol.

Robin Everall spoke next. Some of the points included:

- Job was to go to Lister hall where decision was made to take any students and anyone who wanted support. Set up system whereby students could register to Lister and transfer residence to there.
- Set up full support system including: counselors from Homewood Human Solutions, free food until Sunday, free phone calls home (most students impacted were international students) in a private place, full access for psychological services from psychologists, social workers, chaplains.
- Once physical and psychological needs of people on the ground were met then looked at deferred exams and other issues. Mitigate short term issues then look at long term strategy for supports to put into a place.
- Services provided in Lister and HUB (75 hours of non-stop psychological support in Lister, 15-18 in HUB over Fri - Sun). Learned that have really good support services across campus but don't always know they can support each other. This was an excellent example of how the various units can work together. Currently putting structures in place to ensure interaction between units remains in place.

After the presentation, the following questions were asked:

- R Agrawal (CRO): I wanted to thank you as one of students relocated as part of this event. I think people who provided services did an excellent job.
- V Kandam (CAL): I have a question for R Everall. In addition to the additional hours available, were there any specialists available in regards to emergency services?
 - R Everall: Absolutely. Everyone on site had experience in trauma. They were part of a provincial team that works with Homewood. The other thing is that people in the Mental Health Centre all have experience with trauma as well, and were there Saturday night and all day Sunday.
- Z Li (CAL): I have a question about notifications: it seems to be implied that there was no developed action plan to deal with a gunman on campus.
 - R Munro: We do have a specific scenario for a gunman on campus. The nature of emergency preparedness is that you put an action plan in place.
 - Z Li (CAL) supplementary: But did not include notification of students.
 - R Munro: It really depends on the action plan.
 - Z Li (CAL): So no?
 - R Munro: The notification was based on the information we had. We will review the notification process. If there needs to be a change we will make it.
- Z Li (CAL): Is there a difference (in terms of the scenarios) relating to the time of day, for example 1am versus 3pm when students would be in class?

- R Munro: Again we have to look at the scenario, but yes, the typical school yard shooter occurs in the afternoon.
- Z Li (CAL): What about concerns of crossfire injuries - is there a scenario that takes this into account?
- R Munro: We will look at all those what ifs in our scenarios.
- S Bal (CAL): I have a question about mental health services. What about students displaced when services are pulled? What are we going to do about students that can't get care under normal circumstances?
 - R Everall: We didn't initially know how many students were involved so I made the decision that people from the Mental Health Centre would continue their work day as usual and would not be pulled into Lister because they were fully booked (no interference with their regular access to services). I didn't communicate that well so that would be something that would change. As to mental health services on campus, it is definitely the case that the Mental Health Centre has been unable to deal with the demand. Mental health issues are becoming far more difficult, chronic, and complex, and the demand increases year by year. The statistics about our services on campus aren't quite accurate because they are only calculated on basis of services with bodies at SUB. Some faculties have advisors and counselors that they make available to students. Be that as it may, my job assigned January 31st is to take survey of all services on campus, note shortfalls, and make a report. Even though the report is not done, we already have new things in place. We now have social workers on campus, more counselors in the Mental Health Centre, and systems in place where help goes to students rather than expecting students to come to us. We have major support and funds by central admin to enhance the services provided. In the next two years we will see integrated infrastructure built around mental health services, recognizing that we'll only be able to do a better job, that demand will always increase.
- H Samuel (Computing Science): I have a comment related to Z Li's (CAL) comment: the day this happened I got the information through social media, through my friends. My question is, in the future, as protocols are being reviewed, will you consider using social media?
 - R Munro: Actually we already are using social media but will continue increasing its use. With any emergency notification system we know no one system will reach all students so try to use as many ways of sending out messages that we can.

- N Andrews (VPAC): I really appreciate all the help and services put in place. I am also looking at the after effect in terms of financial support. I know of some people moving out of HUB because they are no longer comfortable with living there. Is there some support for someone who cannot afford to move but must?
 - F Robinson: This is the first I have heard of this. Those students should talk with Residence Services; they are trying to make sure that people are comfortable. I know we are trying to accommodate those students who have trouble even going into the building. I want to follow up on this. Our office has spent 1/3rd of our time in the last year dealing with mental health services. A lot is happening.
- H Ramezani (Chemistry): Going back to the gunman scenario: do we have particular measures to deal with that?
 - R Munro: Yes, within our protocols we have that exact scenario where notifications to students would tell them what to do.
- A Courchesne (Speech Path and Audiology): How do you test how effective the text messaging system is?
 - R Munro: On a twice-yearly basis we issue the whole system. We then send a survey to a small sample of students in the system. To be honest we found a glitch in the system that we thought we would have found in testing. It is making us look at the testing process itself more closely. We will be reevaluating that system.

iii. Station Pointe Co-Op Housing Development (Andrew Rathbone, University Housing Coop, and Brian Scott, Communitas)

No material was distributed in advance.

A Rathbone (CAL) spoke first. Some of the points included:

- Trying since 2007 to develop a co-op housing option, and met Brian Scott through this process. He will give you details. Co-ops are great options because it puts control of housing and extra services into students' hands. Waterloo has 900 students in co-ops, and Toronto has a highrise co-op/hotel in the summer, and a number of other Universities do this as well.
- The ratio of student housing is low at the UofA, and when a housing crisis hits, it's too late to plan ahead. For Station Pointe, it is looking like a year's time before we start. Summer of 2013 is breaking ground.
- I would like to ask for the support of Council to ask the GSA Board to pursue this further, so at the end of this we will have a motion to that effect.

B Scott (Communitas) spoke next. The power point that was used is available upon request. Some of the points included:

- Station Pointe will have 4 apartment highrises, 10 townhomes, and commercial space
- The tower C is being pursued by the University of Alberta co-op group
- A forested wall separates the LRT from the site for sound and sight insulation
- Communitas are development consultants, not developers
- Communitas has done most of its work in Northern Alberta
- Building commercial and common areas, daycare, grocery, bike storage, onsite water treatment
- All suites face south, fulfill Passive House standard, and have south-facing balconies
- 3 bedroom units were added because grad students have need for family units as we saw in our surveys
- Isolated air conditioning and ventilation
- Vegetated roof and amenity space
- No gas needed because of our low energy footprint
- University Co-op – wants to create this tower for student, staff, and faculty of educational institutions. Targeted toward this clientele, but not exclusive. If other people want, they can get in too
- Pets permitted; with our good sound insulation and air isolation pets become a non-issue
- There will be equity, limited equity, and market suites
- Co-ops are businesses with a social purpose: voluntary and open, democratic control, at cost, autonomous and independent, provide education to members and public, co-ops work with other co-ops, concern for community
- Could be the first Passive House Development in the world on this scale.

After the presentation, the following questions were asked:

- A Siddiqui (CAL): I lived in a coop in LA and it was a lot cheaper - will students be able to afford this?
 - B Scott - when we did our survey, a high proportion of students indicated that they wanted to buy. These were the kind of numbers that they wanted to get.
 - We are limited to a minimum charge of 85% of market for an extended period of time. After a while it will be even more affordable.
- H Ramezani (Chemistry): How many students would this accommodate?
 - B Scott: 85 units in tower C. There are 3 other towers, and in two of the other towers students can move in as well. However, in student tower we could customize for student population with such things as study areas.

- H Ramezani asked a supplementary question: What is the situation regarding safety around there?
- B Scott: You can look at the EPS Neighbourhood Crime Map online. The neighbourhood doesn't stand out – its reputation isn't deserved, and in addition, the neighbourhood is in transition. Evidence also shows that when you create upscale developments, the character of the area changes. The ideas of “eyes on the street” is a factor - highrises with windows are a big factor. Also, this isn't just a rental property. Typically responsibility is higher in owned buildings, and people are more likely to report crime and contribute to a safe environment.
- R Agrawal (CRO): For the non-equity suites - won't students move out and closer to campus after one term or two? How does it compare to prices on campus?
 - A Rathbone (CAL): It is cheaper because of much lower utilities. In addition, over time this will become cheaper. When the market gets squeezed, rents go up, but in a co-op you do not get that effect.
 - B Scott: A few other advantages: 85% is a cap on our minimum charge. Heating, cooling and such are only 10% of their usual cost. Plus, you can convert your non-equity unit into an equity unit and get partial credit for your rent. As places become available, they will be made available on a preferential basis to students.
 - R Agrawal: Your figures are based on projected inflation - what if it doesn't go that high?
 - B Scott: rents rise faster than costs. For example, I live in a co-op in Riverdale. For a 2 br townhouse, I pay \$700/month. Normally that would be \$1200/month market. Rents normally go up based on demand, not cost. This has no effect on co-op prices.

MOTION by A Rathbone (CAL), seconded by A Siddiqui (CAL): That the GSA Board look further into the possibility of co-ops in general and Station Pointe in specific.

The following is a summary of the debate on the Motion:

- A Rathbone (CAL) introduced the Motion: There are many advantages of co-ops in general and this one specifically. It is state-of-the-art in terms of sustainability and future affordability. There is every possibility for a future development in the South Campus area, because the startup funds for a new development can be created by people who purchase units in this one.

- H Sparkes (CAL): Point of Information - What do you want the GSA to look into? What are you looking for?
 - A Rathbone: For example, we would like the GSAB to advise what leeway we would have in promoting this project. There was a student group that was focused on co-op housing, but because liability issues arose, it had to change its focus. How can we communicate with students?
 - H Sparkes: I'm not sure this is the best forum for this. The GSA is already looking at other avenues on campus to deal with housing.
- N Adnan (VPSS): The Motion is merely to start a discussion at the GSA Board to figure out what to do.
- F Wu (Speaker) clarified: There is nothing in this motion that constitutes an endorsement.
- **A Bernier (Pres): Your elected officials have spoken with the presenters and advised A Rathbone on this Motion. We are not taking on responsibility or endorsement. We just want to know if you want us to invest a small amount of time looking into this topic.**
- A Rathbone: Of course, financial support would be nice, but this project does not depend on it.
- Z Li (CAL). I am opposed. The price for this is not dramatically lower than traditional avenues.
- N Andrews (VPA): In favour of looking into it. This project could benefit students greatly.
- Q Li: The GSA Board should into this. It was hard to find a room for me when I first came.
- H Ramezani (Chem): We should look into the option, and if it's good then we should go for it.
- A Rathbone (CAL): In favour. Keep in mind these prices are projected for 3-4 years down the road - you can't compare that to today's cost. Also this is a way for grad students to gain control. Students are the first to lose housing in a tight market.
- R Agrawal (CRO): I am in favour. The Board should consider it.
- H Samuel (Comp Sci): in favour. We could potentially be a part of a state-of-the-art development opportunity.
- C More (Physics): I am also in favour.
- There was no further debate. Speaker F Wu called a vote.

The MOTION was APPROVED.

Z Li (CAL) and H Sparkes (CAL) opposed.

5. Councillor Announcements

There was no material before members. There were no Councillor announcements.

Reports

6. President

i. President's Report

Members had before them a written report, which had been distributed on 06 July 2012. In addition, A Bernier (Pres) noted that

- It is important to recognize the value of graduate degrees, to take advantage of professional development opportunities (including networking events).
- Strategic planning retreat occurred on July 6.
- Visited with the Minister of Health Hon. Fred Horne to talk about mental health issues on campus.

ii. GSA Board

Members had before them a written report, which had been distributed on 05 July 2012. The report stands as submitted.

iii. Budget and Finance Committee

It was noted on the Agenda that BFC would be meeting in August to review quarterly financial reports.

iv. Governance Committee

It was noted on the Agenda that editorial changes to Bylaw and Policy would be sent to the GC in July/August.

v. Nominating Committee

Members had before them a written report, which had been distributed on 06 July 2012. In addition, A Bernier (Pres) deferred to V Kandalam (Vice-chair of the Nominating Committee), who noted the following:

- There are a few pending NoC items – we are either having difficulty finding people or are seeking clarity from organizing groups.
- We still need reps from Health Sciences for the Animal Care and Use Committees.

7. Vice-President Academic

i. Vice-President Academic's Report

Members had before them a written report, which had been distributed on 06 July 2012. In addition, VPA N Andrews noted that

- A milestone was reached with CLE Sub-Committee on Attributes and Competencies - finalized a list of 10 attributes identified for both grads and undergrad; important because relates to UofAs Academic Plan, *Dare to Deliver*.
- SACIE Education Abroad Subcommittee looking at graduate student involvement in Education Abroad opportunities; wondering about "fairness" of adjudication process comparing grads to undergrads, and looking for feedback from Councillors who have tried to take advantage of these opportunities.
- Encourages Councillors to subscribe to University World News, University Affairs, and the Chronicle of Higher Education.

8. Vice-President Student Services

i. Vice-President Student Services' Report

Members had before them a written report, which had been distributed on 06 July 2012. In addition, VPSS N Adnan noted that

- An update on PAW GSA lounge includes the design (includes a patio).
- Negotiation for new UPass contract is at preliminary stage (discussion with SU, admin).
- MOU revision of Bears and Pandas Legacy Fund (MBAC).
- Call for volunteers for Fall Orientation; email request expected in a few days.

ii. Student Affairs Advisory Committee (joint chair: Vice-President Student Life)

It was noted on the Agenda that GSAB sought SAAC's input by email regarding the University Bookstore.

9. Vice-President Student Life

i. Vice President Student Life's Report

Members had before them a written report, which had been distributed on 06 July 2012. The report stands as submitted.

ii. Awards Selection Committee

It was noted on the Agenda that there had been no need to meet, and that a review of the awards process was currently in progress.

10. Vice-President Labour

i. Vice-President Labour's Report

Members had before them a written report, which had been distributed on 06 July 2012. The report stands as submitted.

ii. Negotiation Committee

It was noted on the Agenda that here was currently no need for meetings.

iii. Labour Relations Committee

Members had before them a written report, which had been distributed on July 05. The report stands as submitted.

11. Senator

i. Senator's Report

It was noted on the Agenda that a new Senator had been elected on 29 June 2012.

12. Speaker

i. Speaker's Report

None required.

13. Chief Returning Officer

i. Chief Returning Officer's Report

Members had before them a written report, which had been distributed on 05 July 2012. The report stands as submitted.

ii. Elections and Referenda Committee

It was noted on the Agenda that the ERC would meet in late summer to review elections Bylaws and Policies.

14. GSA Management

i. Executive Director's Report

Members had before them a written report, which had been distributed on June 28 (updated version 05 July 2012). In addition, E Schoeck (ED) noted the following:

- Very happy day for GSA as corporation - had a successful audit and were able to lay our hands instantly on any documents auditor requested. Auditor in and out in record time. Attributed to hire of part-time accountant. Will sit with accountant, auditor, and president to review audit documents. Will present to September Council. Will invite auditor to Sept Council.

Action Items, Elections, Appointments, Special Business

15. Action Items

There were no action items.

16. Elections

i. Slate for the GSA Labour Relations Committee

Members had before them a slate for the GSA Labour Relations Committee, which had been distributed on June 28. Members were advised that GSA Policy concerning NoC requires that a slate of nominees be brought forward to Council and, further, that any Councillor may make additional nominations, for which the

deadline was 12 noon on Friday July 6, 2012. Members were advised that nominations were not accepted from the floor at the Council meeting. Since there were no additional nominations, the candidate(s) presented in the report were be declared elected as of this 09 July 2012 GSA Council meeting.

[New Members Elected at the 11 June 2012 GSA Council Meeting: Daniel Prins (Biochemistry; Biochemistry Alternate Councillor), Alexa DeGagne (Political Science), Andrés Torres Scott (Political Science; Councillor-at-Large), Simarjit S. Bal (Political Science; Councillor-at-Large)]

Slate of Nominees, elected at the 09 July 2012 GSA Council meeting:

1. Colin More (Geophysics; Physics Councillor)
2. Amir Reshef (MBA)
3. Ahmad Billal Sultani (Chemical and Materials Engineering and Laboratory Medicine and Pathology; Laboratory Medicine and Pathology Alternate Councillor)
4. Md Shirajum Munir (Electrical and Computer Engineering; Councillor-at-Large)

MOTION by N Sinkov (Chemistry), seconded by Z Li (CAL) to receive slate as presented.

The MOTION was APPROVED.

17. Discussion Items

There were no discussion items.

Question Period

18. Written Questions

There were no written questions.

19. Oral Questions

- H Sparkes (CAL): I have a quick question for VPA re: Competencies and Attributes - are the 10 attributes identified for both undergrads and grads?
 - N Andrews (VPA): Sub-committee divided into sub-sub-groups (undergrad and grad). Will discuss those 10 at each sub-sub-committee level. Want to have some consensus but do understand that what applies to grads is different than that of undergrads.
- H Sparkes (CAL): I have a second question: what is MBAC?
 - N Adnan (VPSS): Mandatory Non-Instructional Fees Budgetary Advisory Committee.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:05 pm.

President

Report to Council

To: Council colleagues

From: Ashlyn Bernier, President

Date: August 13, 2012

Dear Colleagues,

On Sunday evening I returned from a **conference held in China**, where I presented a talk --- I will report on this orally at the September meeting.

STRATEGIC PLANNING

The elected officials and management have been deeply engaged in drafting a Strategic Work Plan for the year. We have had day-long and half-day sessions at Saint Joseph's College here on campus and should have a draft by mid-September. There are a number of matters outlined in the last Strategic Work Plan that we will continue to work on, plus a few new initiatives. As we discuss new initiatives, we are cautious not to over-tax our infrastructure at a time when the GSA is still rebuilding after a difficult 2008-11.

AUDIT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

The Board and BFC will meet with our auditor on September 5, and the audit will be presented to Council, along with the first-ever quarterly financial report, to the September Council. I met with our auditor on July 11.

LISTER HALL

The GSA Board will meet with the SU elected officials and management on August 15 to discuss the Lister situation *in camera*.

PAW and POWER PLANT

I am learning about PAW and attend the Steering Committee meetings. Naseeb will report more fully on PAW in his report. I had a get-to-know meeting with Associate VP Bart Becker, with whom we will work closely on PAW and the Power Plant.

PRESIDENT and CHANCELLOR

Elected officials had a get-to-know meeting with the President, and we have been invited for dinner with the Chancellor at his home, also for a get-to-know. I've had coffee with Dr Skidmore, and I think that maintaining these relationships will help as we go into a bargaining year and as there are so many changes within central administration.

GOVERNMENT OF ALBERTA ORIENTATION DAY

This day-long event put me in touch with many high-level government officials and I will report more fully at the September Council meeting.

OTHER

You will see in my attached list of meetings that (among other things), AGC policy work is proceeding, and I would be happy to answer any questions at Council.

The following is a list of meetings I attended between July 9 – August 15 :

July 9	Teleconference meeting of Board of Governors
July 9	Meeting with Lev and Amanda from Studentcare.net/works
July 9	GSA Council
July 10	PAW Steering Committee
July 10	University Wellness Services
July 10	Meeting with President Samarasekera
July 11	Meeting with Auditor Tom Gee
July 11	GSA Board
July 12	AGC Policy Meeting
July 17	Meeting with AVP Facilities and Operations
July 19	GSA Board
July 23	Meeting with Acting Dean of Students
July 24	Meeting with Vice-Provost Academic
July 25	Government of Alberta Orientation Day
July 31	GSA Staff Meeting
August 15	Strategic Planning Session
August 15	GSA Board
August 15	GSA/SU Joint Meeting

**GSA Vice-President Academic
Report to Council**

To: GSA Council
From: Nathan Andrews
Date: August 13, 2012

Dear Councillors,

I hope everyone is enjoying the last days of summer. Well, it probably hasn't been the summer we expected but with all the festivals and fun activities around the city, it seems pretty worthwhile still. On the GSA business side of things, my portfolio witnessed a less-busy mid-July till now. Apart from the regular Board meetings and a few meetings with certain individuals, I didn't have a great deal of meetings since the last Council plus some of the pre-scheduled meetings got cancelled. However, here is one development I'll like to bring to your attention:

Joint SU-GSA Letter re: Professional Development (PD) for Faculty Members

Both student groups consider great supervision, teaching and mentoring as key to the success of every student – graduate or undergraduate. However, we feel most faculty members are not making use of resources (if any) that are provided by the University - perhaps out of work overload or mere contentment with their current performance. During one of our recent bi-weekly meetings, the action Dustin (SU VPA) and I agreed on is that we'll write a joint letter to GPAC (Graduate Programs Administrators Committee), the ASC (Academic Standards Committee), CLE (Committee on the Learning Environment), and the Chairs Council to emphasise the need for faculty to be encouraged to make use of available resources. We may also suggest a positive reinforcement mechanism where those that attend PD sessions can accumulate some points which will go towards their annual reviews. Ahead of this, Dustin and I planned to talk with CTL (Heather Kanuka) and FGSR (Renee Polziehn) to ascertain what is available for faculty and its current usage. This will help us draft a more targeted letter. Dustin already met with Heather and we'll both be meeting with Renee tomorrow after which we'll have a first draft of this letter.

I anticipate that this step we're taking will form part of recommendations from the Graduate Supervision Taskforce for which Dr. Naomi Krogman has started working since July 1 as the Provost Fellow, but I thought we could be more proactive in making our position on this issue consolidated through an official letter ahead of the taskforce's report sometime next year. The letter will be ready for the September Council but please feel free to send me any comments/suggestions you have regarding this matter, particularly regarding places you think

we can send the letter so as to have the most optimal impact. Please send feedback to gsa.vpacademic@ualberta.ca.

I look forward to seeing everyone in September!

Cheers,

Nathan Andrews

The following is a list of meetings I attended between July 9 – August 15 :

July 9	GSA Council
July 10	Student Meeting
July 10	Meeting with President Samarasekera
July 11	GSA Board
July 17	Community Standards Review Committee Meeting
July 18	Meeting with SU VPAC
July 18	GSA Board
July 18	Grant Appeal Meeting
July 24	Meeting with SU VPAC
July 25	Meeting with Vice-Provost Academic
August 1	GSA Board
August 8	GSA Board
August 14	Professional Development Meeting
August 14	Meeting with SU VPAC
August 15	Strategic Planning Session
August 15	GSA Board
August 15	GSA/SU Joint Meeting

Vice-President Labour

Report to Council

To: Council colleagues

From: Brent Epperson, VP Labour

Date: August 13, 2012

Dear Councillors,

I attended several committee meetings in July and August.

(1) LRC Meeting, July 4:

1. Approval of Agenda
2. Opening comments from the Chair (Brent Epperson, GSA VP Labour)
 - Welcome note from Chair
 - Mandate and Role of LRC: new Bylaw and Policy
 - Background concerning LRC
3. Negotiations: General Discussion (Collective Agreement and Summary of Tamara Korassa's final report)
4. Labour Liaison Program: Brief Update (Labour Relations Handbook)
 - Background from Heather Hogg, Labour Professional: the Labour Relations Manual is in its 9th draft. The Labour Liaison Pilot Program resulted in appointment of Labour Relation Liaisons in the department of Political Science and in the Neuroscience unit. The VP Labour will report orally on plans for a staged expansion of the program.
5. Other Business
6. Adjournment

(2) Strategic Planning on July 6

The VPL stated the following strategic planning goals:

1. Collective bargaining: prepare for best possible agreement; build from LRC and Tamara's report
 - Provide an early package for appointees with welcome letter, information
2. a. Turn Labour Relations Committee into think tank on labour negotiations
 - Students from multiple faculties with interest in collective agreement to weigh in and advise on changes to the agreement; LRC advises negotiating committee, who then finalizes the decisions going into committee; 'think tank' should comprise half of the LRC's function
- b. Advance Labour Liaison program: add six more departments into pilot LLP by December ; transform Labour Liaison into Department Liaison program.
3. Vision statement: university and government are going through transitional period; GSA must strongly consider political framing, as there is a great opportunity to advance grad students' interests and articulate our narrative;
 - Where do the university and the government overlap with GSA issues?
Maximize these opportunities for mutual self-interest
 - Where are there strategic differences in various university and/ or stakeholder goals? In these areas, how does the GSA frame that narrative in graduate students' favour, and build relationships in context of sometimes-competing (or conflicting) interests?
 - How can the GSA work with AGC in particular to support these political objectives?

(3) U-Pass Meeting on July 18

- No update on communications, planning regular ETS advertising in student newspapers;
- U of A medical student opt-outs, from the perspective of ETS, would best be handled individually instead of as a group. ETS requested something in writing on the matter from the SU. The SU agreed to bring something in writing in mid-late August;
- ETS reps expressed concerns about the expansion of exclusions contradicting the "spirit of universality of the U-Pass;"
- Based on current policy, U-Pass rate calculation is based on 30% ETS cash fare (\$3) x U-Pass trip multiplier (47 trips per month) x 4 month U-Pass term = \$170/term;
- New documents were provided, including the 2011 Edmonton Capital Region U-Pass Tracking Survey and tables illustrating U-Pass Pricing;
- NAIT representatives questioned the ETS calculated average of 47 trips per month per student;
- Naseeb and I and the reps from Grant Mac agreed with the NAIT reps' concerns with using a 47 trip weekly average, the students reps see the 47 average as too high;
- ETS agreed to clarify calculation of the 47 student trip average;

- Aiming for next meeting on August 15, 10:00-12:00, to be confirmed;

(4) Festival Of Ideas (FOI) Planning Meeting on July 18

- Agenda approved;
- Flags and pop-up banners are being prepared to decorate campus and the stages for the FOI;
- Posters are being sent to Calgary and Camrose;
- West Edmonton Mall may be a future sponsor, awaiting confirmation, and some comp tickets may be set aside for them, although there has not been a decision yet;
- There is a renewed emphasis to focus on individual philanthropic contributions as opposed to corporate sponsorship;
- Word Fest of Calgary partnership is advancing nicely;
- Hoping for non-exclusive partnership with Edmonton Journal, but Edmonton Journal insisted on exclusive partnership;
- Vue Weekly will only be used to insert FOI programme;
- No updates on government-corporate relations;
- Capital Power will be the opening night sponsor;
- Discussion about costs of “adopting an event” for a fee as opposed to sponsorship, considered a delicate matter. Those who sponsor benefit with advertising, whereas those to adopt an event are taking a philanthropic action that entails bragging rights (long discussion);
- No programme updates;
- Nothing new on kids festival;
- Next meeting August 1.

(5) Rally against LGBT bullying on August 2

I attended the rally and march to the legislature against LGBT bullying with VP Academic Nathan Andrews on behalf of the GSA.

(6) LRC on August 8

- Committee members AGREED to look through recommendations from VP Labour 2011-12 Tamara Korassa’s bargaining recommendations and to bring thoughts, additions, and feedback to the next LRC meeting.
- Brent Epperson AGREED to ask AGC members for their collective agreement documents to compare notes and “asks.”
- Janelle Morin was tasked with setting up a second Collective Agreement and Governance training session after 5 pm, given challenges with the 4 pm timeslot.

- Heather Hogg was asked to provide Ellen Schoeck with information from previous bargaining session for review; it was noted that this information could be made available to LRC as well.
- Committee members AGREED to put Labour Liaison training on hold because of possible merger with Departmental Liaison program.

(7) Labour issues

Several students contacted Heather Hogg, Director of Operations and Labour Professional, and me regarding what they believed to be labour concerns. After initial consultation, we contacted the relevant departmental authorities to address their labour-related issues. Two of these cases have already been resolved favourably for the graduate students. For the remaining cases, we will continue to assist these students as appropriate vis-à-vis any supervisory disputes, contract, and collective bargaining questions that arise.

I look forward to working with all of you in the 2012-2013 academic year.

Best regards,

Brent Epperson

The following is a list of meetings I attended between July 9 – August 15 :

July 9	GSA Council
July 10	Meeting with President Samarasekera
July 11	GSA Board
July 18	U-Pass Committee Meeting
July 18	GSA Board
July 18	Festival of Ideas Planning Meeting
July 19	U-Pass Committee Meeting
August 1	GSA Board
August 1	Student Meeting (Labour)
August 8	GSA Board
August 8	Student Meeting (Labour)
August 8	GSA Labour Relations Committee Meeting
August 15	Strategic Planning Session
August 15	GSA Board
August 15	GSA/SU Joint Meeting

Vice-President Student Services

Report to Council

To: Council colleagues

From: Naseeb Adnan, VP Student Services

Date: August 13, 2012

Dear Colleagues,

There are quite a few things that I have worked on in last one month. Some of them are of high interest to grad students, specially, U-Pass negotiation, 89th Ave student housing and the Physical Activity and Wellness (PAW) centre.

For the **U-Pass** primarily ETS, St. Albert Transit and Strathcona Transit proposed a fee of \$170 per term as a starting point of new negotiation. However, GSA, SU and student leaders from other institutions agreed that this is a really high proposal from transit partners. Unfortunately, the survey being used by them for fees calculation only considered high transit users and did not include students who occasionally use or do not use the U-Pass at all. I met with Saadiq, the VPSL of the SU, to work on a strategy for U-Pass fees. Later Saadiq and I had a detailed meeting with student leaders from NAIT and Grant MacEwan. We agreed to work together for a unified stand and are currently working to prepare a joint proposal. We are also planning for extensive lobbying to city councillors to favor our proposal in the next few weeks.

89th Ave student housing (East Campus Village phase-2) will be a design and build project. Two shortlisted contractors have submitted their final bids. Considering several factors, the selection committee sent its recommendation for contractor for the project. Once work is awarded there will be an opportunity for the GSA to provide feedback on their design for possible inclusion and changes before commencement of work. The selected contractor will also be invited to GSA Board for a presentation.

Clark Builders recently presented their updated budget for the Physical Activity and Wellness (**PAW**) Centre. According to the updated budget there is a shortfall of more than \$2 million. They presented several options by making changes in design to avoid this shortfall. However, I feel that some of the proposed changes are major and may deviate significantly from what was presented and approved by the GSA Council. Soon we'll meet to explore fundraising opportunities to address the problem. I may also invite them to present in GSA Board/Council about their proposed changes later.

Sincerely,

Naseeb Adnan

Please find below a list of meetings I attended between July 10, 2012 and August 13, 2012:

July 10	PAW steering committee meeting Pre-meeting: Indira Samarasekara Meeting with Indira Samarasekata
July 11	GSA Board
July 12	RFP 2012-0097 ECV: Phase 2 Meeting with potential contractors Meeting with Heather on GSA PDG
July 13	89 th Ave student housing steering committee
July 18	U-Pass advisory meeting GSA Board Emergency bursary and PDG appeal
July 19	U Pass admin meeting
July 26	GFC Facilities and Development Committee
July 27	PAW steering update meeting
August 1	BSA Board
August 2	Meeting with Saadiq on U-Pass timeline
August 8	Meeting with SU, NAIT and Grand MacEwan on U-Pass fees GSA Board
August 10	89 th Ave student housing steering committee
August 13	Contractor 1: Presentation of Concept and Document Review Lunch: Evaluation Committee Contractor 2: Presentation of Concept and Document Review Individual Submission of Final Scoring to SMS & Award Review

**GSA Vice-President Student Life
Report to Council**

To: GSA Council
From: Huimin Zhong
Date: August 13, 2012

Dear Council Members,

After the summer vacation in China, I came back and started the GSA work again with full energy. This month has been a busy month for me. Some of the committees are at the stage of heading for final decisions and reports, while others are busy preparing for the new academic year. I do have some items to bring to your attention.

The **Community Standard Review Committee (CSRC)** has already finished the review of the implementation process of Restorative Justice and come up with a final report, which will be submitted to Campus Law Review Committee (CLRC) later. The CSRC began to meet once a week from late April, and the discussion covers a wide range, including staff training, investigation process, implementation of RJ, report system, statistics and etc. Although the change is not perfect at the moment, at least it is a great start. The CSRC plans to do the review once a year in the summer. Thus we can expect a new review report this time next year. If you are interested in reading the final report, please let me know.

The **Student Group Granting Committee and the Student Engagement Grants** – Individual met this month to review the applications for the grants. Since it is summer, the application volume is not that high. But one thing is that of all the applications for this period, those from graduate students are very few. Graduate students are highly encouraged to pay more attention to the grants available and apply for those they are qualified for. If you would like to know more about these, please email me at gsa.vpstudentlife@ualberta.ca.

The **New Student Experience Working Group** aims to provide new students with various bridging programs and activities to help them begin their life at the U of A. These programs and activities are from various departments and student organizations and are scheduled from late August to early September. You can always check online for the details of these programs.

The **Festival of Ideas** has already begun to sell tickets from early August and the organization committee is working for promotion right now. They offer many great presentations and shows this year. If you're interested in these presentations, you can find detailed information online at www.festivalofideas.ca.

Lastly, there has been some change of the rules for breaking contract in several residencies. We are still in the process of communicating with residence services about this. I will keep

you informed if there is any update.

If you have any concerns or questions regarding any of the issues above, you're very welcome to contact me.

Sincerely,
Huimin Zhong

The following is a list of meetings I attended between July 9 – August 15 :

July 23	Meeting with Acting Dean of Students
July 24	New Student Experience Working Group
July 27	Student Engagement Grants
July 31	Residence Budget Advisory Committee
August 1	Meeting with CAPS Undergraduate Research Coordinator
August 1	GSA Board
August 1	Festival of Ideas Planning Meeting
August 7	Phone call meeting with Terry Fox Foundation
August 8	GSA Board
August 15	Strategic Planning Session
August 15	GSA Board
August 15	GSA/SU Joint Meeting

GSA Chief Returning Officer

Report to Council

To: Council Colleagues

From: Rahul Agrawal

Date: August 13, 2012

Dear Council Colleagues,

After the replenishment of ERC, the first committee meeting for the new term will be scheduled after the transition of the incoming CRO. The transition meeting is scheduled for later in August. This meeting is going to be held between the outgoing CRO and the incoming CRO of 2012-2013, as well as the new DRO. After the transition, the new CRO will chair ERC.

We welcome the new CRO and DRO and expect to see some good interaction with them in the coming year.

Best,

Rahul Agrawal

Chief Returning Officer

Executive Director

Report to Council

To: Council colleagues

From: Ellen Schoeck, Executive Director

Date: August 13, 2012

Dear All,

The detailed management reports attached will give you a good snapshot of GSA work the past month, but in this report I would like to describe one new initiative as supported by the Board: **a program whereby the GSA will be proactive in getting out to departments** for the purposes described below.

Since November 2010 the GSA has deemed graduate student groups a key organizational asset/liability, and has shifted policy and resources to begin reflecting their strategic importance. To this end, a departmental liaison program is being developed. Six purposes of this project have been identified:

Compliance with the *Post-secondary Learning Act* in electing members to the GSA Council.

(There are 32 registered graduate student groups that should be electing a representative to Council: half have no process in their constitutions for electing a Councillor. We are drafting a simple process for departmental groups to consider).

Risk assessment and reduction. (Student groups registered with the GSA have self-identified that they serve/use alcohol – the GSA’s general liability policy has an alcohol exclusion. We are working with both our broker and the University’s insurance expert on this matter.)

Labour/departmental liaison linkage. (We will explore with departmental GSAs how best to let graduate students know their rights under the Collective Agreement.)

Orientation needs. (We will explore with departmental GSAs ways in which the GSA can provide information and orientations, in person, throughout the year and not just during the September rush).

Representation on Faculty Councils. (The Nominating Committee has been working on this matter for some time. The goal is to ensure graduate student representation on all Faculty Councils by a method the GSA feels is fair/democratic.)

Seeking graduate student “talent” for committees and elected positions. (This is part of the Nominating Committee’s approved mandate).

Letters inviting the Presidents of departmental associations to meet with Ashlyn will be distributed shortly. Departments with non-registered groups will be approached first. We hope to personally connect with associations from all departments during the next year or so.

Your elected officials and I would be happy to answer any questions from Council.