

GSA Council Meeting MINUTES
Monday, May 16, 2016 at 6:00 pm
2-100 University Hall, Van Vliet Complex

IN ATTENDANCE:

Sarah Ficko (President)	Michael Woolley (Art & Design)	Ryan Kisslinger (Electrical & Computer Engineering)	Kelsey Peterson (Occupational Therapy)
Firouz Khodayari (VP Academic)	Cameron Smithers (Biochemistry)	Lorna Sutherland (Elementary Education)	Radim Barta (Oncology)
Sasha van der Klein (VP Labour)	Michele DuVal (Biological Sciences)	Shaina Humble (English & Film Studies)	Ashley Bahry (Paediatrics)
Masoud Khademi (VP External)	Graham Little (Biomedical Engineering)	Eve Robidoux (Faculte Saint-Jean)	Ines Zuna (Pharmacology)
Sulya Fenichel (Speaker)	Sarah Prendergast; Trent Nabe (Business MBA)	Neil Prather (History & Classics)	Kathy Tang (Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences)
Virginia Pimmett (CRO)	Yi Fang (Business PhD)	Evgeniya Kuznetsova (Humanities Computing)	Jay Worthy (Philosophy)
Alicia Cappello (Councillor-at-Large)	Avinash Sheshachalam (Cell Bio)	Mahalakshmi Kumaran (Lab Medicine & Pathology)	Will Giang (Physics)
Colin More (Councillor-at-Large)	Sahar Saadat (Chemical & Materials Engineering)	Carla Lewis (Library & Information Studies)	Michal Juhas (Psychiatry)
Alphonse Ndem Ahola (Councillor-at-Large)	Anis Fahandej-Sadi; Joseph Cheramy (Chemistry)	Michelle Michelle; Jude Kong (Math & Statistical Sciences)	Joshua Yong (Psychology)
Nicole Noel (Councillor-at-Large)	Darian Brennekamp (Communication Science & Disorders)	Hirad Soltani (Mech Eng)	Colin Reynolds (Public Health)
Phil Oel (Councillor-at-Large)	Roshan Shariff (Computing Science)	Vanessa Carias (Medical Genetics)	Owain Bamforth (Religious Studies)
Ned Onwugbufor (Councillor-at-Large)	Samira Diar-Bakirly (Dentistry)	Melissa Silva (Medicine)	Ryan Stanfield (Renewable Resources)
Robert Reklow (Councillor-at-Large)	Jane Traynor (East Asian Studies)	Jay Friesen (MLCS)	Tasha Jayatunge; Kelsi Barkway (Sociology)
Dasha Smirnow (Councillor-at-Large)	Atase Adjarho (Ed Policy Studies)	Grant Norman (Neuroscience)	Antonio Bruni (Surgery)
Sabrina Lopresti (AFNS)	Brittany Budzan (Ed Psych)	Upinder Singh (Nursing)	

GUESTS: Ian Reade (Director of Athletics); Cheryl Harwardt (Director of Campus and Community Recreation); Pooran Appadu (Senator Nominee); Faisal Hirji (incoming Lab Medicine & Pathology Councillor); Ruqayyah Almirzaq (incoming Lab Medicine & Pathology Alternate); Nisarg Tripathi (CME); Ahmed Najjar (Councillor-at-Large Nominee); Jessica Peck (Senator Nominee; Councillor-at-Large Nominee); Swai Mon Khaing (incoming Biochemistry Councillor).

Speaker Sulya Fenichel in the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 6:02 pm.

Roll Call

Prepared by J Tanguay and F Robertson for the Council Meeting of 16 May 2016
Macintosh HD:Users:gsaad:Google Drive:320 - Council:Meetings:2016-2017:May 2016:Transcript & Minutes:Amended Minutes
GSA Council 16 May 2016.docx

1. Roll Call of GSA Council Members in Attendance

Approval of Agenda

2. Approval of the 16 May 2016 Consolidated Agenda

Members had before them the 16 May 2016 Consolidated Agenda, which had been previously distributed on 13 May 2016. S Fenichel **MOVED**; N Prather **SECONDED**.

Motion **PASSED** unanimously.

Approval of Minutes

3. Minutes from the 18 April 2016 GSA Council Meeting

Members had before them the 18 April 2016 GSA Council Minutes, which had been previously distributed on 6 May 2016. S Fenichel **MOVED**; G Norman **SECONDED**.

Motion **PASSED** unanimously.

Changes in GSA Council Membership

4. Changes in GSA Council Membership

i. Introduction of New Councillors

This was the first meeting for a number of Councillors: S Mon Khaing (Biochemistry); O Bamforth (Religious Studies); A Fahandej-Sadi (Chemistry); S Lopresti (AFNS); F Hirji (Laboratory Medicine & Pathology)

ii. Farewell to Departing Councillors

This was the last meeting for a number of Councillors: C Smithers (Biochemistry); M Kumaran (Laboratory Medicine & Pathology)

Councillor Announcements

5. Councillor Announcements

C Smithers suggested that a group of graduate students should get together to go to the Faculty Club (the GSA recently worked with the Faculty Club to grant graduate students free access from May 1 to August 31, with drink specials and discounts on other items, including the buffet). C Smithers noted that he had contacted the Faculty Club and they were willing to provide an additional discount to a group, provided it is of a significant size. He added that if you are interested in this, you could contact him at csmithers@ualberta.ca.

F Khodayari shared a link where interested parties could sign up to volunteer to help Fort McMurray evacuees. Additionally, F Robertson pointed out that Triffo Hall was set up to accept donations for the Edmonton Emergency Relief Services.

Action Items, Elections, Appointments, Special Business, Updates

6. Graduate Student Assistantship Collective Agreement

Sarah Ficko (GSA President) presented the item.

MOTION BEFORE COUNCIL: That GSA Council **RATIFY**, on the recommendation of the GSA Negotiating Committee, the attached Memoranda of Settlement related to the Graduate Student Assistantship Collective Agreement and the Graduate Student Support Fund, effective September 1, 2016 to August 31, 2018.

S Ficko noted that the process of the negotiations for the Collective Agreement started last summer with the GSA Labour Relations Committee (GSA LRC) meeting in August and that she was happy that negotiations had concluded. She added that other campus groups have had significant issues during their negotiations but the GSA's had gone relatively smoothly.

S Ficko noted that the GSA was established by the *Post-Secondary Learning Act* as a separate corporation from the University and that the GSA had a seat on the Board of Governors, was tasked with representing all graduate students, and had the sole right to negotiate with the University on behalf of academically employed graduate students. She also mentioned that the GSA was governed by GSA Council, was graduate student led, and professionally managed with the GSA management and Staff teams doing a lot of work behind the scenes to support the GSA. S Ficko then reviewed the structure of the University (headed by the Board of Governors), which directs the President and the Provost/Vice-President Academic; the other Vice-Presidents being under the President, while the Deans running the faculties and departments are under the Vice-President Academic; General Faculties Council (GFC) is the second highest decision-making body on campus and makes decisions concerning academic matters.

S Ficko then reviewed, noting that some of this information had been shared with GSA Council during the January meeting, her previous portfolio as the GSA VP Labour, including collective bargaining and assisting students employed as TA/RAs. She noted that a Collective Agreement is a legally binding written agreement, usually negotiated “collectively,” between two parties, that regulates the terms and conditions of the employment of represented employees in a workplace, their duties, and the duties of the employer. She also briefly described the GSA’s collective bargaining and added that it was outlined in the Collective Agreement.

S Ficko noted that the GSA LRC worked to develop the opening position with the GSA VP Labour and that the GSA Board sets the membership of the GSA Negotiating Committee (GSA NC). She noted that this past year the membership of the GSA NC consisted of the GSA VP Labour as Chair in addition to C More, D Smirnow, M Bal, and H Thaker. She then noted that the Board of Governors has its own negotiating committee. Last August, the GSA LRC began meeting to discuss issues facing graduate students and the GSA LRC and GSA NC met to finalize the GSA opening position before it was submitted to the University. She then reminded GSA Council that she and C More had previously presented to the Board Human Resources and Compensation Committee (BHRCC) about graduate students and the benefits they bring to the institution. BHRCC decides on the University negotiating team’s mandate. S Ficko explained that once a mandate was set, negotiations began in a closed procedure as per labour relations common practice.

S Ficko then presented the Memoranda of Settlement (MoS) that were before GSA Council for ratification. She noted that they would also be presented to BHRCC. She explained that an MoS was a formal document executed by bargaining parties to set the terms of an agreement and required ratification (confirm by expressing consent). She indicated that, at this point, ratification was a yes or no question. S Ficko noted that the two signed MoS outlined a) the increase in funding to the Graduate Student Support Fund (GSSF), and b) the increased compensation rates and changes to the Collective Agreement. She specified that the GSSF funds GSA Academic Travel Awards (ATAs), GSA Child Care Grants (CCGs), GSA Emergency Bursaries (EBs), and GSA Recognition Awards and that the funding was increased by \$100 000 for 2016-2017, and will be increased by \$25 000 for 2017-2018. S Ficko indicated that the new Collective Agreement also includes an increase to the salary portion of stipend while the award portion was frozen as the freeze of tuition increases for domestic students by the provincial government also froze the award portion of the stipend (which increases by a rate equal to tuition increases).

S Ficko explained that the 2016-2018 Collective Agreement redefines graduate student research assistants into two categories: 1) those who work on research not related to their own research, up to 12 hours per week; and 2) those with funding for their own research related to their degree completion. She explained that this change provided needed clarification and further indicated that the new structure differentiates between Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs), Graduate Research Assistants (GRAs), and Graduate Research Assistant Fellowship (GRAF). She also specified that the award portion of the stipend was not taxed, whereas the salary portion was. S Ficko provided an overview of the GRAF category, defining it as a type of appointment whereby a graduate student is funded, with no specific work hours attached, to work on the graduate student’s own research or to complete thesis work. She specified that the GRAF appointment was not employment; it was non-taxable and holders would receive a T4A (“fellowship” meant funding but not a scholarship or bursary). S Ficko summarized the other changes to the 2016-2018 Collective Agreement including improved wording and definitions. For example, while the term Graduate Assistant serves as an umbrella term to include all three types of appointment (GTA, GRA, and GRAF) throughout the document, the consistent addition of the word “Graduate” before “Teaching Assistant” and “Research Assistant” was made so that GTA and GRA appointments can be clearly distinguished from other types of assistantships on campus. Among other changes, a better definition of graduate research and teaching assistants was added, clarification was made of the hours of work for GTAs and GRAs (the two can be combined for a total of up to 12 hours), and one week of Bereavement Leave was included.

S Ficko then described some of the appendices. For Appendix A, she noted that it dealt with letters of appointment. She specified that the 2016-2018 Collective Agreement included a list of mandatory expected items that must be covered in the letter and also provides a template including a list of “if applicable” statements, and a list of the funding package covered by the assistantship to help people understand how they were being paid over time. She noted that Appendix C outlined the Time Use Guideline in which a line for training hours was added (graduate students are entitled to training if needed), guidelines for supervisors to talk to their graduate students about their expectations with regards to their GRAF appointment, and a checkbox reminding the parties to discuss vacation dates. She noted that Appendix E described Short Term Academically-Related Employment (6 hours marking for a specific exam, for example) and was aimed at eliminating misuse of the term “casual” with respect to classifying employment.

R Barta thanked S Ficko for the presentation and asked what tied the award portion of the stipend to tuition increases. S Ficko turned to H Hogg who stated that the salary and award portions of the stipend were built into the Collective Agreement about 10-15 years ago and at the time it was a big win for the GSA. R Barta asked whether, if tuition increased, the award portion

would always increase and H Hogg responded yes and noted that removing this provision would be in the other side's interest, but not the GSA's.

J Kong stated his concern that the division of the RA into the GRAF and GRA might create problems for some departments. He added that most of his own work is as an RA and professors in his department are not obligated to pay students during the summer. S Ficko responded that the bigger issue was that there is no minimum funding on campus. She added that the GRAF appointment would not change minimum payments; it was just a name change. J Kong expressed concerns that most professors will choose not to sponsor students. S Ficko repeated that the category has not changed; only the name has changed. She added that if you are offered an amount of money in your funding letter, your supervisor must honour that. C More requested a Point of Information and asked for some background behind the decision of creating the GRAF category. S Ficko responded that the GRAF category was created due to concerns of not being compliant with Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) regulations. She added that in the 2014-2016 Collective Agreement supervisors were not able to base the pay of students working on their own research on hours worked and that this has not changed. J Kong asked for clarification and S Ficko explained that the GRAF category is not employment, as a consequence there are no hours attached to the stipend. She added that the 2016-2018 Collective Agreement specified that the GRAF appointment was to be used to fund graduate students working on their own research. She then mentioned that the GTA and GRA categories were employment as holders were being paid to work on something other than their own research. S Ficko also asked that graduate students be encouraged to bring issues forward if they arose. She added that the GSA planned to work with the Provost and the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research (FGSR) to educate staff and faculty on the Collective Agreement and its implementation.

A Adjarho stated this is the first time she had heard of GRAF and asked if it was applicable to all departments? S Ficko responded that it was new and would be applicable to all graduate students offered funding to work on their own research should council choose to ratify.

R Barta followed up on J Kong's previously noted concerns. He stated that his understanding was that in the 2014-2016 Collective Agreement it was confusing when a graduate student was being paid to work on some else's project or to work on their own research. He noted that the 2016-2018 Collective Agreement was clearer as a GRA appointment is for other research and a GRAF appointment is clearly designed to fund graduate students to work on their own research. He added that this can be a benefit to graduate students since the GRAF stipend was non-taxable.

J Kong asked if there was a way to increase the award portion of the stipend as it could help a lot of graduate students and it was noted that in the big scheme that was risky as it also meant that the award portion would no longer automatically increase commensurate with tuition increases.

J Kong noted that by creating the GRAF category international students were losing work hours that were counted in applications for Permanent Residency. S Ficko replied that even under the 2014-2016 Collective Agreement funding received to work on your own thesis were not attached to hours and not considered as employment and hence could not be used to apply for Permanent Residency. S Ficko also noted that the GSA met with Tony Santiago from University of Alberta International extensively about this issue; if a graduate student was here on a study permit they should be studying, not working. D Smirnow added that if the CRA audited a graduate student claiming it as work hours, they could face consequences.

A Adjarho asked for clarification as to why there was competition for GRA and GTA positions and S Ficko stated that the University's funding structure was very complicated and every department was different, the process and number of positions available was different in different departments. She noted that some faculties, such as Science and Engineering, offer more positions due to additional industry funding; supervisors receiving large grants are also able to fund more graduate students. C More added that, in the past, through some formula now unknown, it was determined how many TA positions were needed in each department and that decided the percentage of funding received from the Provost's Office. He added that the percentage of funding received by faculties had not changed in a long time. He also noted that once a faculty received their part of funding, Deans were in charge of distributing it to departments how they saw fit. He added that GRA funding was part of faculty budgets but did not come from the Provost's Office.

A Capello asked if the \$100,000 increase in the GSSF will change the amount of grants allowed per graduate student or just allow for more graduate students to receive grants. S Ficko responded that the amount per student would not change as the amount is prescribed in GSA Policy.

C Reynolds stated, in a follow-up to J Kong's earlier concerns about Permanent Residency applications, that if graduate students were currently using their RA hours to apply for Permanent Residency, this information needed to be shared as it is highly problematic. He raised concerns about research work being considered "work" at all. He then asked if it was the plan to have

guaranteed funding worked into the Collective Agreement. S Ficko responded that if the 2016-2018 Collective Agreement was ratified, the 2016-2017 DEOs would work over the summer, with the Provost and FGSR, to educate faculties, departments, and graduate students on its implementation. She noted that graduate students do not fit well into boxes, as they are not fully students and not fully staff. She added that receiving funding for work on one's research was a win. She also thanked C Reynolds for his point and indicated that graduate students received a degree for their work on their own projects but not for their work on other's projects and contributions should be compensated. She added that the 2016-2017 DEOs would work to address the minimum funding issue but this work will take time. C More explained that two or three years ago there was an Interim Provost who was asked by the then President to look into minimum funding as it was seen as a key factor in strong graduate student work and communities. They discovered that it was just not an easy thing to implement. He added that minimum funding had been looked at and would continue to be looked at but nothing would move fast. C Reynolds asked to be contacted because his faculty had some "interesting" ways of doing things that should be discussed. S Ficko encouraged him to email her or S van der Klein.

Speaker reminded GSA Council that this discussion was for the purpose of a yes or no vote; changes could not be made to the document.

J Kong asked about the listed duties of GRAs and pointed out that all graduate students do these things. S Ficko clarified that the distinction was that if the work was related to a graduate student's own research or not, for example, in Humanities Computing, students do not receive funding for their own research (GRAF) so they are hired to do research unrelated to their own work (GRA). R Barta asked, if a grant covered more than one student, could it be a GRA and S Ficko responded that this might qualify as a Short Term Employment category.

M Kumaran offered a Point of Interest regarding Permanent Residency concerns, specifying that whether or not it was named "employment" =in the 2016-2018 Collective Agreement, the CRA did not recognize experience gained during study permits as "work". He added that this was a recent change and the CRA now expected graduate students to graduate and then work.

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Motion **PASSED**; 1 opposed.

Presentations

7. Athletic and Recreation Fee Advisory Committee Presentation

Sarah Ficko (GSA President) introduced the guests, Ian Reade (Director of Athletics) and Cheryl Harwardt (Director of Campus and Community Recreation).

I Reade noted that last year Athletics and Recreation decided that they wanted to come at least once a year to present on what they do to both the GSA and the SU. I Reade outlined the five principles governing the administration of the Athletics and Recreation Fee: transparency, accountability, partnership, collaboration, and consultation. It was specified that the responsibility for the allocation of funds and provision of services was delegated by the Dean of the Faculty of the Physical Education and Recreation to the Director of Athletics and the Director of Campus and Community Recreation. I Reade highlighted funding partners, including the University of Alberta, alumni, and students and emphasised that the Athletic and Recreation fee was not the only source of revenue. He noted that University of Alberta teams did not pay to use facilities. I Reade also noted that a big part of revenues went to paying staff but also to travel cost for teams. He also mentioned that scholarships for athletes were funded externally. I Reade specified that the Athletic and Recreation Fees Policy Advisory Committee facilitated collaboration and consultation with partners. This committee was chaired by the Dean of the Faculty of Physical Education and Recreation and there were student representatives from both the SU and the GSA on it. I Reade then showed some statistics of the attendance at on-campus sports events and noted that they showed a high-student engagement level.

C Harwardt then explained that her role was to offer services to students and the external population and manage those services. She reviewed the budget of Campus and Community Recreation and explained that revenue was raised from membership fees space rentals. She noted that all the facilities on North Campus were available for student use.

G Norman stated that many universities have their facilities open all year, he then asked why at the University of Alberta the facilities were closed on most holidays. C Harwardt replied that they were constantly exploring how to increase services but staffing costs and availabilities was an issue.

C Reynolds asked if there were any way to avoid paying a fee associated with forgetting their ONEcard. C Harwardt responded that someone forgiving the fee on a one-time basis could become a cascading problem.

J Kong raised questions about Spring and Summer the Athletic and Recreation Fee (including as assessed at the desk, as assessed on BearTracks, and the amount of the fee (same fee as the community membership fee)). C Harwardt replied that she would make some inquiries about the fee and its assessment and would follow-up with the GSA President.

F Khodayari thanked C Harwardt for her presentation and asked about the fee that needs to be paid by participants in outdoor clubs when no facilities or staff were used. C Harwardt indicated that this was an insurance fee. F Khodayari also asked why some of the facilities were rented by teams when students would like to use the facilities. C Harwardt replied that that was a controversial issue and that there were many aspects to consider and it was impossible to satisfy everyone.

M Khademi asked about services offered to students living in residences. C Harwardt replied that they were assisting residences to develop small fitness centres and that some programs were offered in residences.

C Smithers asked if the procedure to opt-in to the Athletic and Recreation fee online could be simplified. C Harwardt replied that she was not aware it was problematic but that she would consult with the Office of the Registrar, which managed this.

V Pimmett asked as to why the facilities on South Campus were not included in the Athletics and Recreation Fee. C Harwardt explained that these facilities were built as revenue generating and added that it would be possible to propose an increase in the fee to facilitate access.

There were some more questions about the cost of the Athletic and Recreation fee for the Spring and Summer term and the concerns that it was sometimes doubly assessed. S Fenichel summarized the questions raised by Councillors regarding the Spring/Summer fee and C Harwardt reiterated that she would follow-up on this matter.

8. GSA Council Elections

M DuVal (Administrative Chair of the GSA Nominating Committee) presented the item.

a) Nominees for GSA Senator:

There was one GSA Senator position to be filled; four nominations were received.

Nominees for GSA Senator:

1. Pooran Appadu (AFNS)
2. Alicia Cappello (Humanities Computing/Library and Information Studies)
3. Jessica Peck (Library and Information Studies)
4. Jane Traynor (East Asian Studies)

M DuVal outlined that the GSA Senator sat on the University of Alberta Senate as the GSA representative and that the GSA Senator should have prior experience acting as a representative of the GSA. To determine the order in which candidates would address GSA Council their names was drawn out of a cup. Candidates were asked to wait outside until it was their turn to address GSA Council.

Candidates were asked two questions and had 45 seconds to respond to each. Questions were provided in advance.

1. According to GSA Policy, Officers Portfolios, Section 9.2, "The Senator should have prior experience acting as a representative for the GSA and/or as a liaison with bodies external to the University." What experience do you have as a representative for the GSA and/or as a liaison with bodies external to the University?
2. As the GSA Senator, your role is to represent the GSA on Senate, which represents the University to the outside community. Keeping this in mind, what, in your opinion, is the role of the University in the community?

J Peck answered the first question by stating that she had been the GSA Councillor for Library and Information Studies for the last two years, she was the GSA representative on the Student Library Council and she had been the co-chair of her departmental GSA. She replied to the second question by saying that she believed that the University played a unique role in the community as it acted as a source of knowledge and further perpetuated its own community.

J Traynor, who spoke next, answered the first question by stating that in this past academic year she has acted as a GSA representative on the committee working on the University's Institutional Strategic Plan. She added that this experience allowed her to work with various members of the University Administration. She noted that she had a good time representing the GSA on that committee and that she would gladly do it again in a different setting. J Traynor replied to the second question by saying that the University was a great hub for critical thinking and was composed of people from very different backgrounds and that it delivered essential things to the community.

A Cappello, who spoke third, answered the first question by stating that last year she represented the GSA on GFC, on FGSR Council, on the Faculty of Arts Academic Affairs Committee, on the Faculty of Arts Council, and on the Protective Services Commission. She added that she was also the VP External for the Humanities Computing Association. A Cappello replied to the second question by saying that she attended a session last September with the Senate and GFC on a similar question and there was a lot of debate. She noted her belief that the University should to be a role model for the community.

P Appadu, who spoke last, answered the first question by stating that he served on FGSR Academic Appeals Committee and on GSA Council. He added that as GSA Senator he would foster a collegial environment in the Senate and encourage collaboration with the GSA, the University, and the community. P Appadu replied to the second question by saying the University was a role model and worked to inspire the community and help it flourish.

- b) Nominees for GSA Board
Alicia Cappello (Humanities Computing/Library and Information Studies)

MOTION BEFORE COUNCIL: That GSA Council, acting on the unanimous recommendation of the GSA Nominating Committee, **RECEIVE FOR INFORMATION** the newly-elected GSA Council member for the position on the GSA Board, as noted below.

MOTION: That GSA Council, acting on the unanimous recommendation of the GSA Nominating Committee, **RECEIVE FOR INFORMATION** the newly-elected GSA Council member for the position on the GSA Board, as noted below. M DuVal **MOVED**. S Ficko **SECONDED**.

Motion **PASSED** unanimously

- c) Nominees for GSA Councillor-at-Large:

There was one GSA Councillor-at-Large position to be filled due to the resignation of one Councillor-at-Large elected during the GSA General Election; two nominations were received.

Nominees for GSA Councillor-at-Large:

1. Ahmed Najar (Renewable Resources)
2. Jessica Peck (Library and Information Studies)

To determine the order in which candidates would address GSA Council there was a coin tossed. Candidates were asked to wait outside until it was their turn to address GSA Council.

The candidates were asked two questions and had 45 seconds to respond to each. Questions were provided in advance.

1. Taking **45 seconds**, please introduce yourself and tell Council what motivated you to run for this position?
2. Taking **45 seconds**, please tell Council how would you be an effective additional voice on GSA Council?

For the first question, J Peck, who spoke first, stated that she had finished her second year of her Master in Library and Information Studies and had been the GSA Councillor for Library and Information Studies and served on the GSA Governance Committee. She added that her term as GSA Councillor ended and that she was interested in continuing her involvement with the GSA. For the second question, J Peck pointed out that she had past experience being involved with GSA Council and that she had a good background for the position.

For the first question, A Najar, who spoke last, listed things that motivated him to run, including the opportunity for learning and growth and to further his volunteering with the GSA. For the second question, A Najar mentioned that he wished to convey some of the stories that he had heard regarding labour issues. He added that he has his grievances and his issues but was committed to supporting the institution.

d) Nominees for GSA Appeals and Complaints Board:

M DuVal noted that this was a little addendum as the nomination process was not completed in time to be included in the GSA Council package or agenda. M DuVal mentioned that the GSA Nominating Committee (GSA NoC) interviewed the nominee and the GSA NoC voted via email over the weekend.

MOTION: That GSA Council, acting on the unanimous recommendation of the GSA Nominating Committee, **RECEIVE FOR INFORMATION** the newly-elected GSA Council member, Jane Traynor (East Asian Studies), for the position on the GSA Appeals and Complaints Committee. M DuVal **MOVED**. R Barta **SECONDED**.

Motion **CARRIED**; 1 Abstention.

Reports

9. President

i. President's Report:

Members had before them a letter from the President, a written report from the 2015-2016 President, and a written report from the 2016-2017 President, which had been previously distributed on 13 May 2016. The report stood as submitted.

S Ficko highlighted the key points of her letter. She noted that she would hone in on student engagement and advocacy to improve the life of graduate students. She added that she and her team were accountable to GSA Council and noted that her written report consisted of a summary of her first week in office.

S Ficko then updated GSA Council on was the GSA Board Health and Dental Plan Subcommittee. She noted that at the May GSA Council meeting, GSA Council moved from the floor to create an *ad hoc* committee to review the GSA Health and Dental Plan. She then noted that this Motion was carried without thoroughly consulting the relevant GSA Bylaw and Policy. Once consulted, GSA Bylaw and Policy showed that oversight of the GSA Health and Dental Plan was under the purview of the GSA Board and *ad hoc* committees can only be struck to deal with matters not already in the purview of a GSA standing committee. As a result, the GSA Board voted instead to strike a subcommittee of GSA Board and approved terms of reference. M DuVal noted that the GSA NoC advertised positions to serve on that subcommittee through the GSA Newsletter and that only three (3) graduate students expressed interest in serving. As quorum for the subcommittee was set at four (4) members, plus the Chair or Vice-Chair, scheduled meetings could not proceed. M DuVal indicated that the subcommittee was working with a very tight timeline and that by losing the next month to re-advertise positions, the subcommittee would not be able to meet its deadline of writing a final report and making recommendations by the end of the summer. At S Ficko's request, C Thomas spoke about the timeline to present a referendum question regarding the GSA Health and Dental Plan to graduate students during the 2017 General Election.

S Ficko suggested a number of potential alternatives to consult graduate students in advance of any referendum, including town halls that would be open to all graduate students, and having some GSA Board meetings opened to graduate students, and the development of a survey for GSA Councillors to distribute to their constituents. C More noted that he thought that doing town halls was an excellent idea as they would possibly bring together a more representative cross section of graduate students and carried the possibility to receive feedback on various matters in addition to feedback on the GSA Health and Dental Plan. D Smirnow noted that she supported the GSA Board doing the legwork. C Reynolds noted that he liked the idea of a town hall. Following a question by P Oel, S Ficko noted that the GSA Board would update GSA Council on the outcomes of the town halls and on all aspects of the ongoing discussion concerning the Plan. C More mentioned the desirability of investigating whether a subset of graduate students could be brought together to bounce ideas off of, mirroring the consultation process undertaken by the University during the development of the Institutional Strategic Plan.

G Little said that he liked the idea of town halls but was concerned about student engagement and whether they would be well attended. At S Ficko's request, C Thomas noted that the town halls on tuition held several years ago were well attended. C Reynolds noted that there were less students on campus in the summer and asked that that be considered. S Ficko replied that the town halls could be scheduled over the summer and the fall.

R Shariff suggested providing backgrounding information to those attending the town halls. S Ficko thanked him for his suggestion and M DuVal added that Studentcare representatives could also attend to answer questions.

S Fenichel explained that it was not in the power of GSA Council to dissolve the GSA Board Health and Dental Plan Subcommittee as it was a GSA Board Subcommittee and, accordingly, S Ficko noted that that GSA Board would consider a

Motion to dissolve it at their next meeting while moving forward with pursuing alternate means of collecting feedback from graduate students, as discussed. She encouraged GSA Councillors with any further thoughts to contact her.

ii. GSA Board

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 13 May 2016. The report stood as submitted.

iii. Budget and Finance Committee

No meetings this reporting period.

iv. GSA Governance Committee

No meetings this reporting period.

10. GSA Nominating Committee

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 13 May 2016. The report stood as submitted.

In addition M DuVal stated that there were vacancies on the Arts Faculty Council and on various Arts Faculty subcommittees. She also added that nominations for Speaker, Deputy Speaker, CRO, and DRO were still open; nominations will be accepted until noon on 30 May 2016.

11. Vice-President Academic

i. Vice-President Academic's Report:

Members had before them a written report from the 2015-2016 VP Academic and a written report from the 2016-2017 VP Academic, which had been previously distributed on 13 May 2016. The report stood as submitted.

In addition F Khodayari stated that at its last meeting FGSR Council discussed the addition of the Professional Experience or Development Leave to the three existing leave categories (Medical, Parental, and Compassionate). F Khodayari mentioned that, if approved, the new category would allow graduate students, for a maximum of a year, to take advantage of professional development opportunities when they arise and then return to their programs.

12. Vice-President External

i. Vice-President External's Report

Members had before them a written report from the 2015-2016 VP External and a written from the 2016-2017 VP External, which had been previously distributed on 13 May 2016. The report stood as submitted.

In addition M Khademi stated that ab-GPAC met in Calgary. He explained that ab-GPAC was the provincial advocacy group that the GSA was part of, along with the other research institutions in the province. He stated that the first part of the meeting was aimed at transitioning the new team and the second part discussed how to unify graduate students' voices across the province. He also mentioned that the Edmonton Student Alliance (ESA) recently met with the President of Concordia University.

ii. GSA Awards Selection Committee's Report

No meetings this reporting period.

13. Vice-President Labour

i. Vice-President Labour's Report

Members had before them a written report from the 2015-2016 VP Labour and a written report from the 2016-2017 VP Labour, which had been previously distributed on 13 May 2016. The report stood as submitted.

In addition S van der Klein stated that she had only been in office for five days when she wrote her report and that she was looking forward to working with the new Collective Agreement and on mental health issues.

ii. GSA Negotiating Committee

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 13 May 2016. The report stood as submitted.

iii. GSA Labour Relations Committee

No meetings this reporting period.

14. Vice-President Student Services

i. Vice-President Student Services' Report

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 13 May 2016. The report stood as submitted.

ii. GSA Student Affairs Advisory Committee

No meetings this reporting period.

15. Senator

i. Senator's Report

No written report at this time. Senator was not present and will report at next meeting.

16. Speaker

i. Speaker's Report

No written report at this time.

17. Chief Returning Officer

i. Chief Returning Officer's Report

No written report at this time.

18. GSA Elections and Referenda Committee

i. GSA Elections and Referenda Committee Report

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 13 May 2016. The report stood as submitted.

19. GSA Management

i. Executive Director's Report

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 13 May 2016. The report stood as submitted.

In addition, C Thomas, Acting Executive Director, stated that the GSA had a wonderful staff team. C More asked what C Thomas did in her position and she noted that the GSA management and staff teams support the Directly-Elected Officers and the GSA's governance structure and services; she provided, as a small cross section example of some of the work done by the GSA office, the example of preparing material for GSA Council meetings after meetings of the GSA Board and other GSA standing committees, booking space for GSA Council meetings, preparing minutes, etc. N Prather noted that he appreciated the staff and the job that they do and was thanked by C Thomas and H Hogg.

Question Period

20. Written Questions

None at this time.

21. Oral Questions

C Reynolds mentioned to GSA Council that students could claim the Athletic and Recreation fee on their taxes.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:59 pm.