

GSA Council Meeting MINUTES
Monday, September 26, 2016 at 6:00 pm
2-100 University Hall, Van Vliet Complex

IN ATTENDANCE:

Sarah Ficko (President)	Amy Reedman (Anthropology)	Lorna Sutherland (Elementary Education)	Cindy Ning Wu (Nursing)
Firouz Khodayari (VP Academic)	Michael Woolley (Art & Design)	Shaina Humble (English & Film Studies)	Kelsey Peterson (Occupational Therapy)
Sasha van der Klein (VP Labour)	Swai Mon Khaing (Biochemistry)	Neil Prather (History & Classics)	Radim Barta, Daniel Kryz (Oncology)
Ali Talaei (VP Student Services)	Francesca Jean; Michele DuVal (Biological Sciences)	Mohammed Abdul-Bari (Human Ecology)	Brabhjot Bedi (Paediatrics)
Sulya Fenichel (Speaker)	Andrew Williams (Biomedical Engineering)	Jocelyn Beyer (Humanities Computing)	Jay Worthy (Philosophy)
Darcy Bemister (DRO)	Trent Nabe (Business MBA)	Faisal Hirji (Lab Medicine & Pathology)	Andrzej Pokraka (Physics)
Michelle Campbell (Councillor-at-Large)	Boshen Qi (Business PhD)	Carla Lewis (Library & Info Studies)	Brayden Whitlock (Physiology)
Alicia Cappello (Councillor-at-Large)	Sahar Saadat (Chemical & Materials Engineering)	Falene Karey-McKenna (Linguistics)	Justin Leifso (Political Science)
Colin More (Councillor-at-Large)	Anis Fahandej-Sadi (Chemistry)	Michelle Michelle (Math & Statistical Sciences)	Michal Juhas (Psychiatry)
Nicole Noel (Councillor-at-Large)	Wai Man Wong (Civil & Environmental Engineering)	Hirad Soltani (Mech Eng)	Joshua Yong (Psychology)
Phil Oel (Councillor-at-Large)	Roshan Shariff (Computing Science)	Fahed Elian; Allison Lewis; Vanessa Carias (Medical Genetics)	Colin Reynolds (Public Health)
Robert Reklow (Councillor-at-Large)	Brette Harris (Earth & Atmo Sciences)	Melissa Silva (Medicine)	Owain Bamforth (Religious Studies)
Dasha Smirnow (Councillor-at-Large)	Melody Li; Jane Traynor (East Asian Studies)	Jay Friesen (MLCS)	Ryan Stanfield (Renewable Resources)
Ahmed Najjar (Councillor-at-Large)	Amanda Radil (Ed Psych)	David Parent (Native Studies)	Liam Li (Resource Economics & Environmental Sociology)
Nian Liu (AFNS)	Ryan Kisslinger (Electrical & Computer Engineering)	Mischa Bandet; Grant Norman (Neuroscience)	Tasha Jayatunge; Kelsi Barkway (Sociology)

Speaker Sulya Fenichel in the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm.

S Fenichel noted that the GSA acknowledged that the University of Alberta is situated on the Traditional Territory of Treaty Six.

Roll Call

1. Roll Call of Council Members in Attendance

Approval of Agenda

2. Approval of the 26 September 2016 Consolidated Agenda

Members had before them the 26 September 2016 Consolidated Agenda, which had been previously distributed on 23 September 2016. S Ficko **MOVED**; N Prather **SECONDED**.

Motion **PASSED**. One Opposed.

Approval of Minutes

3. Minutes from the 18 July 2016 GSA Council meeting

Members had before them the 18 July 2016 GSA Council Minutes, which had been previously distributed on 16 September 2016. S Ficko **MOVED**; N Prather **SECONDED**.

Motion **PASSED**. B Whitlock Abstained.

Changes in Council Membership

4. Changes in GSA Council Membership

i. Introduction of New Councillors

This was the first meeting for a number of Councillors: N Liu (AFNS); A Williams (Biomedical Engineering); W Wai (Civil & Environmental Engineering); F Karey-McKenna (Linguistics); D Kryz (Oncology); A Pokraka (Physics); M Abdul-Bari (Human Ecology)

ii. Farewell to Departing Councillors

Councillor Announcements

5. Councillor Announcements

V Carias, Medical Genetics Councillor, noted that Let's Talk Science was in need of volunteers for their "School of Witchcraft and Wizardry" on Saturday, October 29, at which kids learned about science. She asked GSA Councillors to email kcarias@ualberta.ca if they wanted to volunteer or had any questions!

J Leifso noted that Thursday was the 11th Annual Hurtig Lecture and that Dr. Samantha Nutt, founder of War Child Canada, would be speaking.

Action Items, Elections, Appointments, Special Business, Updates

6. GSA Council Quorum: Proposed Changes to GSA Bylaw and to the Standing Orders of GSA Council

MOTION BEFORE COUNCIL: That GSA Council, on the recommendation of the GSA Board and the GSA Governance Committee, **APPROVE** the proposed changes to GSA Bylaw (Part III) and to the Standing Orders of GSA Council, as noted in the attached double column document and effective upon the second reading by GSA Council in the case of GSA Bylaw and the approval of GSA Council in the case of the Standing Orders of GSA Council.

S Ficko reminded GSA Council that at the February 2016 GSA Council meeting a motion from the floor asked GSA Governance Committee to re-consider GSA Council quorum. She also noted that GSA Governance Committee (GSA GC) held three meetings to consider GSA Council quorum. She added that GSA Board also discussed GSA Council quorum and that the GSA GC and GSA Board also held a joint meeting. She indicated that a consensus was reached to propose a GSA Council quorum of 30. She summarized that members of both committees were concerned that too high a number of GSA Council quorum might prevent GSA Council to conduct business but that too low a number was also not ideal and had implications regarding fairness of proceedings. She finally indicated that a set number was chosen rather than a percentage for the ease of Speaker and Minute Takers during meetings.

MOTION: That GSA Council, on the recommendation of the GSA Board and the GSA Governance Committee, **APPROVE** the proposed changes to GSA Bylaw (Part III) and to the Standing Orders of GSA Council, as noted in the attached double column document and effective upon the second reading by GSA Council in the case of GSA Bylaw and the approval of GSA Council in the case of the Standing Orders of GSA Council. S Ficko **MOVED**. J Leifso **SECONDED**.

Motion **PASSED** unanimously

7. GSA Council Elections

R Barta noted that there was one vacancy for the Dean of Science Review Committee and that all departmental GSAs were asked to forward names by the deadline. He added that two nominations were received, one from the department of Chemistry and one from the department of Computer Science. He indicated that both candidates were present. He noted that both candidates would be asked a question which had been provided in advance and that they would have 45 seconds to answer the question.

The question was:

This committee is tasked with reviewing the current Dean for the Faculty of Science. Taking 45 seconds, please tell us, in your opinion, what the current issues in your department are that the Dean should continue to address, particularly with respect to graduate students?

After a draw, A Fahandej-Sadi left GSA Council room and C Pang responded to the question.

C Pang (Computing Science) introduced herself to GSA Council and responded that funding was the biggest issue facing graduate students in her department and that the Chair should secure funding to allow faculty and students to work effectively.

C Pang left the room and A Fahandej-Sadi responded to the question.

A Fahandej-Sadi (Chemistry) responded that the biggest issues facing students in his faculty were the increasing demands on Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTA) and these increasing demands limited their time to actually work on their thesis. He added that the number of graduate student should be increased to decrease the number of GTA hours required of each individual. He also noted that, in Chemistry, the masters program was longer than at other institutions.

R Barta thanked both candidates and asked GSA Council to cast their ballots.

i. Dean of Science Review Committee

Nominees for Dean of Science Review Committee

Anis Fahandej-Sadi (Chemistry)
Candy Pang (Computing Science)

ii. Dean of Native Studies Selection Committee

MOTION BEFORE COUNCIL: That GSA Council **RATIFY** the appointment of the graduate student from the Faculty of Native Studies noted below to serve on the Dean of Native Selection Committee:

One nomination by the deadline

Nominees for Dean of Native Studies Selection Committee

Mike Dockman

MOTION: That GSA Council **RATIFY** the appointment of the graduate student from the Faculty of Native Studies noted below to serve on the Dean of Native Selection Committee. RB **MOVED**. Nicole meyer **SECONDED**.

Motion **PASSED**. D Parent and J Yong Opposed. R Barta Abstained.

iii. GSA Standing Committees

a. GSA Awards Selection Committee

MOTION BEFORE COUNCIL: That GSA Council **DECLARE ELECTED** to the GSA Awards Selection Committee the graduate students below:

Nominees for GSA Awards Selection Committee:

Yingzhou Li (Earth and Atmospheric Science)
Wade Michaelchuk (Physical Education and Recreation)

Preshit Verma (Civil and Environmental Engineering)

R Barta explained that the GSA Nominating Committee (GSA NoC) ran an ad for 5 to 7 vacancies on the GSA Awards Selection Committee and three nominees came forward. C More asked why GSA Council did not see the bio and resume for all the nominees put forward. R Barta explained that these were circulated to GSA NoC and then voted on. He added that if GSA Council wanted to see those it could be a possibility going forward. M DuVal (former Administrative Chair of the GSA NoC) pointed out to GSA Council that the package they received to read in advance of GSA Council was already very large and additional materials would make it more cumbersome. She added that the purpose of GSA Standing Committees which have specific mandates approved by GSA Council, such as the GSA NoC, is to do specialized work for GSA Council. She also noted that GSA Council needed to trust that the GSA Standing Committees are effectively meeting their mandates as the alternative would be for GSA Council to do all the work itself. A Najar requested that the GSA worked on outreach to faculties that are not represented in GSA Standing Committees.

MOTION: That GSA Council **DECLARE ELECTED** to the GSA Awards Selection Committee the graduate students below.
R Barta **MOVED**. T Jayatunge **SECONDED**.

Motion **PASSED** unanimously.

b. GSA Governance Committee

R Barta explained that there was one vacancy on the GSA GC and that the GSA NoC received two nominations two nominees came forward. He indicated that both candidates were present. He noted that both candidates would be asked a question which had been provided in advance and that they would have 45 seconds to answer the question.

The question was:

Taking 45 seconds, please tell us why you'd like to serve on the GSA Governance Committee and specifically, what does governance mean to you?

After a draw, R Reklow left GSA Council room and N Noel responded to the question.

N Noel responded that governance kept things structured, regulated, and accountable. She added that the GSA GC was frequently evaluating GSA Bylaw and Policy to maintain clarity and relevance. She also noted that the GSA GC was a chance to be active in the GSA and in the graduate student community. N Noel indicated that she believed she would be a valuable member because she was interested, motivated, and willing to learn.

N Noel left the room and R Reklow responded to the question.

R Reklow responded that he ran as a GSA Councillor-at-Large to influence his own graduate degree and to give back to the GSA. He noted that as a GSA Councillor-at-Large, he had had an active voice but the GSA GC would require a greater contribution. He indicated that for him governance was analogous to the inner gears in a machine; when properly positioned and well maintained the machine operates efficiently.

R Barta thanked both candidates and asked Council to cast their ballots.

Nominees for GSA Governance Committee:
Robert Reklow (Councillor-at-Large; Physiology)
Nicole Noel (Councillor-at-Large; Biological Sciences)

B Whitlock asked if it would be possible for GSA Councillors to sign in and then roll call could be removed of the GSA Council Agenda. GSA Speaker noted that it had been discussed in the past and it could be discussed again if need be.

For Discussion:

8. GSA Health and Dental Plan

S Ficko presented the item. She noted that the GSA Plan was established by referenda in 1994 for the dental portion and the GSA added a Health portion in 2003. She noted that the GSA Plan is designed to cover “extras” and to fill gaps in provincial healthcare. She also noted that the GSA Health and Dental is the largest service provided by the GSA in terms of money. She pointed out that Studentcare has been our broker since 2003 and that since 2012 Desjardins Insurance is our insurer. She mentioned that about 5400 GSA members out of 7200 are enrolled in the Plan. She also indicated that the Plan is regularly reviewed by the GSA Board and that GSA Council approved the GSA Health and Dental Plans’ fees every year. S Ficko noted that Insurance businesses aimed to build up a large reserve of money and hoped that no one filed claims to access this reserve. She explained the depletion of this reserve was what drove the costs up in order to replenish the insurance company’s reserve. She explained that the cost of our plan was the result of the insurance premium and the cost of Studentcare for administering the Plan. She added that the premium, the insurance rates, could be understood as the risk or the cost associated with paying out claims. She then explained that this risk is assessed on the group as a whole and that information such as claims history and demographics was taken into account. S Ficko mentioned that Studentcare fees were fixed. She finally noted that given an increasing number of GSA members use the Plan, the cost of the Plan increased annually. She then noted that one way to manage the cost of the Plan could be to cut benefits.

S Ficko presented on the current coverage of the Plan. She then noted that it was hard to compare the Plan coverage and its associated cost to any other Plan as cost was driven by claims and that each group claimed differently.

S Ficko presented a table comparing the GSA Health and Dental Plan with individual plans from Blue Cross, FlexCare, and Alberta Motor Association. She then noted that group plans are usually more advantageous because they are based on the average member claim history and that in this perspective insurance companies could give a better deal as some members made more minimal claims.

D Smirnow asked if it was possible to have a break down of the cost increase for how the cost increased for a particular service. A Talaei responded that the cost of dental services in Alberta was one of the highest in the country. As a follow-up, D Smirnow asked if, in an attempt to keep the cost down, ab-GPAC could lobby the government for a better regulation of dental services prices. S Ficko noted that she would bring it to the ab-GPAC but emphasized that this kind of measure would take time to have an impact. A Talaei added that inflation was not the main driver of the Plan cost.

T Nabe asked when the GSA changed to Desjardins Insurance. S Ficko noted that the GSA switched to Desjardins Insurance in 2012 at a time where Desjardins Insurance was trying to enter the insurance market in the West of Canada and they offered the GSA a good deal. She also noted that Studentcare did not recommend the GSA go look for a new insurer as there are no incentives for insurance companies to offer the GSA an advantageous deal. A Talaei added that changing insurers was extensively discussed at the GSA Board and that GSA Board decided that it was not desirable at this time to change insurers. A Cappello also added that the GSA used a broker and that the GSA broker, Studentcare, was acting in the best interest of GSA members. A Talaei noted that Studentcare had established a network of practitioners that would give you a discount if students mentioned that they are insured through Studentcare. It was added that all the information about the Studentcare Networks was on their [website](#).

D Bemister asked about the cost of the Plan in other institutions with graduate students in the province such as the University of Calgary and the University of Lethbridge. S Ficko noted that University of Calgary could not be used as a comparative as their coverage was far beyond what the GSA Plan covered. She noted that she did not know about the University of Lethbridge.

S Ficko presented possible options for the modification of the Plan: retention of the current Plan structure, an enhanced Plan (Plan that offered more coverage and a higher cost), a basic plan (Plan that offered less coverage and a lower cost), creation of a two-tiered Plan (with a basic Plan and an enhanced Plan), and the creation of the three-tiered Plan (with a basic Plan, the current Plan, and an enhanced Plan). S Ficko then invited GSA Council to participate in small group discussion to rank the options presented and provide further feedback. B Whitlock asked what were the downsides of having more options. S Ficko replied that the question was more would it be worth all the work to modify the GSA Health and Dental Plan if the current Plan is satisfactory. She added that the GSA Board was looking for guidance on what the next steps should be. A Talaei noted that having a plan with many options meant more administrative work, which could lead Studentcare to increase their administrative fee. S Ficko handed out a guide designed by Studentcare of what the coverage, and its associated estimated costs for a basic plan and an enhanced plan could be. Also listed was the current Plan coverage and its costs.

GSA Council broke up in small groups and asked to rank the options presented. After a certain amount of time elapsed, groups were asked to share their rankings, shared below along with summarized group comments. The most desirable plan appears first.

Group 1

1. Three-tiered Plan
2. Two-tiered Plan
3. Current Plan
4. Enhanced Plan

N Meyer, noted that the enhanced Plan did not make much sense as some person would not be able to pay for it.

Group 2

1. Current Plan
2. Two-tiered Plan
3. Three-tiered Plan

F Karey-McKenna, as the spokesperson for this group, noted that an enhanced Plan would be too expensive.

Group 3

1. Current Plan with an increased in vision coverage
2. Two-tiered Plan
3. Three-tiered Plan

Group 4

1. Current Plan
2. Two-tiered Plan
3. Three-tiered Plan

Group 5

1. Three-tiered Plan
2. Two-tiered Plan
3. Enhanced Plan
4. Basic Plan

R Reklow, as the spokesperson for this group, noted that offering GSA members choices would be beneficial and that his group felt that cutting services for all (basic Plan) was not what students wanted.

Group 6

1. Current Plan
2. Two-tiered Plan
3. Three-tiered Plan
4. Enhanced Plan
5. Basic Plan

A Lewis, as the spokesperson for this group, noted that they were not keen on any of the options and that the enhanced was getting expensive.

Group 7

1. Three-tiered Plan
2. Current Plan
3. Two-tiered Plan
4. Enhanced Plan
5. Basic Plan

Group 8

1. Three-tiered Plan
2. Current Plan
3. Two-tiered Plan
4. Enhanced Plan
5. Basic Plan

Group 9

1. Three-tiered Plan
2. Current Plan

Group 10

1. Three-tiered Plan
2. Current Plan
3. Two-tiered Plan

Group 11

1. Basic Plan
2. Enhanced Plan
3. Three-tiered Plan
4. Current Plan
5. Two-tiered Plan but being comprised of the Current Plan and an Enhanced Plan

GSA Council moved back to general discussion.

A Lewis noted that she was uncomfortable to pay for some of the services such as naturopathy as they do not have any scientific basis.

In response to a question by M Juhas regarding why was the GSA Council having this discussion and whether or not a referendum was inevitable, S Ficko noted that this discussion of the GSA Health and Dental Plan arose from a Motion made at the April 2016 GSA Council. She added that the GSA does not have the preliminary projection of the cost for 2017-2018 and hence it was hard to predict what would happen.

T Nabe asked about providing a spending account and S Ficko noted that this question was discussed with Studentcare and that it would be expensive and not worth its price.

S Ficko reminded GSA Council of the last GSA Health and Dental Town Hall on the Friday, September 30, at 1:00 PM in Triffo Hall and she invited GSA Council to email her or A Talaei with any questions.

9. Right to Strike Consultation

S Ficko presented the item. She started by noting that she would give some background information as to why this was a discussion for GSA Council and that this would be followed by a small group discussion. She then asked if there were any members of GSA Council who lived through a strike before, she asked these members to split in different groups in order to share their experience.

S Ficko noted that the Alberta Government, in order to be compliant with a recent Supreme Court of Canada decision making the right to strike fundamental to the collective bargaining process, is currently working on legislation that will affect labour relations at post-secondary institutions. She noted that this could result in significant changes for graduate students covered under the Graduate Student Assistantship Collective Agreement, as currently there is no right to strike. She explained that, to this date, for post-secondary institutions labour relations had been under the *Post-Secondary Learning Act* (PSLA) and that collective bargaining processes had been embedded in this rather than being part of the labour legislation like in other jurisdictions in Canada. She added that the PSLA mandated compulsory binding arbitration to resolve dispute that occur during collective bargaining and that this prohibits strikes and lockouts, a practice now contrary to the Supreme Court of Canada decision.

S Ficko noted that last fall the provincial government approached the ab-GPAC and other advocacy groups asking them to explain how the right to strike would affect them. She added that the deadline was really short and that the ab-GPAC replied that they would prefer the *status quo*. S Ficko noted that the case was made that graduate students should be treated differently as they were a hybrid category, part students and part employees. She added that the ab-GPAC argued that lockouts could have significant impact on graduate students. She then explained that the government agreed that the *status quo* was desirable however, upon further legal advice, the government stated that this solution would not satisfy the ruling of the Supreme Court of Canada.

S Ficko indicated that in late August the government distributed a new discussion guide on the subject with a desire to consult more widely. She noted that individuals and associations had until October 17 to provide feedback to the government.

S Ficko noted that she had had discussions regarding the guide with the GSA Board, the management team, ab-GPAC, and GU15 (a group consisting of graduate student representatives from the 15 biggest research Universities in Canada). She also noted that she spoke with a labour lawyer who offered her service *pro bono* to the GSA.

S Ficko gave some definitions. She noted that a strike was the cessation or refusal to work, to compel the employer to agree to terms or conditions of employment. She noted that a lockout was closing of a place of work/suspension of work to compel the employees to accept terms or conditions of employment. She noted that a binding arbitration was taking to an individual or a panel the items that cannot be agreed upon during collective agreement. She added that there are two kinds of binding arbitration. She then noted that the binding arbitration written into the Graduate Student Assistantship Collective Agreement (GSA CA) was to have the arbitrator select one of the presented positions for inclusion in the Agreement. She added that this kind of arbitration usually meant that both parties came with more moderate demands. She noted that the alternative for arbitration is to have the arbitrator write the disputed clause, taking into account the submissions by both parties. She added that it was possible, during collective bargaining, to change the kind of binding arbitration included in the GSA CA.

S Ficko explained the steps necessary to go on strike. First she noted that to start a strike parties need to be in collective bargaining over a collective agreement that has expired and the parties must have first tried mediation. She then noted that 12 days after receiving the mediation report (that period is called the cooling-off period), the parties could chose to have a vote to determine to take strike or lockout actions. She indicated that the next step, if the vote was successful was to serve notice to the other party at least 72 hours before the start of any actions.

S Ficko then summarized the feedback received by the lawyer that she consulted. She noted that the lawyer concurred that the situation of graduate students was very peculiar and that she noted that overlaying labour relations legislation on the PSLA could not be perfect in the case of graduate students. She noted that the lawyer's recommendation was to have the GSA remain the bargaining agent and to argue for mandatory arbitration. S Ficko noted two reasons provided by the lawyer for the latter recommendation: one, was that due to the short period of graduate students contract the students voting for the strike might not be the ones actually going on strike; second, the beneficial collegial relation based on communication and cooperation that the GSA had had with the University could be affected. S Ficko also raised the concern that the strike/lockout model could impact the capacity of Student Leaders to attend and participate in the Board of Governors and General Faculties Council as it could be seen as a conflict of interest.

S Ficko noted that the right to strike could be very polarizing and that she personally prefers a collegial environment but that she could also see the benefits of the right to strike. She noted that her biggest concerns were that graduate student engagement is very low, that resources could be an issue, and that financial impacts on certain graduate students could be very damaging. She specified that based on discussion at GU15 if students fulfilling their strike duties received around \$200 a week and taking into account that the longest strike/lockout in Canada lasted 190 days, a strike-fund to survive a worst case scenario would have to be of around \$16.8 millions.

N Prather asked if all graduate students would be on strike or only the ones with a graduate student assistantship. S Ficko replied that only the students employed under the GSA CA would be on strike. N Prather also asked if the students would continue to be students. S Ficko noted that that was her understanding.

Following a question by P Oel, S Ficko specified that both during a strike and a lockout, graduate students would not be able to complete their assistantship tasks and that the difference is that the lockout is initiated by the employer (ie the University) and that the strike is initiated by the employees (ie the graduate student assistants)

S Ficko then invited GSA Council to discuss in small group the following questions:

1. What are things you would be willing to fight for?
2. Given the information presented on possible impacts of a strike/lockout, how do you feel about the possibility of a strike/lockout?
3. How long could you go without funding?
4. What excites you about the consultation on labour legislation changes?
5. What are you most concerned about?
6. Do you have any other questions for me or the government?

GSA Council broke up in small groups after a certain amount of time elapsed group were asked to share their thoughts. Below are the responses to the questions shared by each group along with any comments they made.

Group 1

1. Not many things that we would be ready to go on strike for.
2. That it could be very damaging for graduate students
3. It is hard to generalize as it is highly dependent on each student's funding.
4. The possibility of the status quo.
5. That the changes are made in a rush and that the new legislation outlined a not well thought out process
6. What advice did the government receive that made the *status quo* not a viable solution?

Group 2

1. Dramatic change in work environment
2. This answer depend on who you ask as some graduate students have less collegial feeling toward the University
4. Changes can be beneficial and the GSA could gain some new rights
5. Graduate student's engagement

Group 3

1. Health and safety and drastic decrease in funding
2. Apprehensive
3. Highly dependant
4. There is not much that we could see as a benefit
5. The fact the option is on the table might change the discussion
6. Would the Graduate research Assistant Fellowship (GRAF) be affected?

Group 4

1. Relationship with supervisors
2. When does the tinkering stop
3. For some students a strike could potentially have really bad consequences

N Prather, as the spokesperson for this group, noted that sometimes going on strike is easy to defend to the members of the bargaining unit but harder to explain to the general public. He also raised the question of should the GSA be attentive of the needs of the most disadvantaged and that student engagement would be really important for a strike to be successful.

Group 5

1. Wages, working hours, and safety
2. It is important that graduate students have choices however awareness and educations around this choice is very important.
4. The education opportunity
5. That some powers might be taken away from the GSA

Group 6

5. The power imbalance between graduate students and professors

K Barkway noted, as the spokesperson for this group, that it would be interesting to hear more about specific numbers for things such as unions dues. She also noted that it was possible to fill in the government survey online as an individual.

Group 7

1. Wages and basic human rights

L Sutherland noted, as the spoke person for this group, their group had been concerned with the question of would it be beneficial to have a union. She also noted that it would be interesting to see data from other universities on how strikes had affected graduate students studies. She indicated that sometimes strikes could be beneficial with respect to benefits, remuneration and alleviate a feeling of powerlessness. A Cappello, a member of that group, added that in their group there was a lot of discussion of what it would like if there was competing union/multiple unions at play in labour action/disputes.

Group 8

1. Safety concerns

2. Impact on your degree and your relationship with your supervisor
3. Not for a very long time
4. A potential to better improve working conditions
6. What are the chances that the government would get involved if a strike lasts for a long time?

Group 9

M Juhas noted, as the spokesperson for this group, that their group saw strike/lockout as unfavorable and that if the right was implemented there should be a lot of education done. He also added that it would be interesting to learn what other universities find beneficial about the right to strike.

Group 10

R Barta noted, as the spokesperson for this group, that they had similar discussion including what happened to GRAF category of the GSA CA, the impact on degree completion times, and how the students' research would be impacted.

S Fenichel thanked GSA Councillors for participating in the conversation

S Ficko mentioned that graduate students could provide feedback directly to the government at <http://PSLALabourRelations.alberta.ca> until October 17 and noted several town hall events that were being hosted at the U of A and at the U of C. She encouraged graduate students with questions to email her at gsa.president@ualberta.ca.

For Information None at this time

Reports

10. President

i. President's Report:

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 23 September 2016. The report stood as submitted. In addition, S Ficko noted that most of her report focused on the GSA Health & Dental Town Halls, which had already been discussed. S Ficko noted that she presented the Graduate Assistantship Collective Agreement at the Dean's Council for the first time, as well as to the Graduate Program Administrators Committee. She added that these presentations had reached about 100 different senior administrators on campus so awareness of the Graduate Assistantship Collective Agreement was increasing. S Ficko also welcomed C Thomas as the new GSA Executive Director.

ii. GSA Board

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 23 September 2016. The report stood as submitted.

iii. Budget and Finance Committee

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 23 September 2016. The report stood as submitted.

iv. GSA Governance Committee

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 23 September 2016. The report stood as submitted.

11. GSA Nominating Committee

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 23 September 2016. The report stood as submitted. In addition R Barta stated that the GSA NoC had been busy with lots of elections. He added that M DuVal had stepped down as Administrative Chair of the GSA NoC but that she would stay the GSA NoC. R Barta additionally pointed out two current vacancies: one for a GSA Councillor on the Student Library Advisory Committee and multiple positions on FGSR Council. He encouraged GSA Council to apply for these positions or to forward the information to graduate students in their department.

12. Vice-President Academic

i. Vice-President Academic's Report:

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 23 September 2016. The report stood as submitted.

13. Vice-President External

i. Vice-President External's Report

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 23 September 2016. The report stood as submitted.

ii. GSA Awards Selection Committee's Report

No meetings this reporting period.

14. Vice-President Labour

i. Vice-President Labour's Report

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 23 September 2016. The report stood as submitted. In addition, S van der Klein reported that she recently attended Forensic Experiential Trauma Interview (FETI) Sexual Assault Workshop. She also relayed a recent experience where she was approached by a man at the gym and interrupted during her workout. She added that, despite her clearly expressed disinterest, the man would not leave her alone until she accepted his phone number. S van der Klein later wondered if she had been rude and spoke to S Ficko who vehemently supported her conduct. T Nabe thanked S van der Klein for sharing her experience and suggested that she report the incident to Protective Services for the purpose of tracking statistics. S Ficko noted that the Students' Union was starting an anti-harassment campaign at the gym because such behaviour was a common happening.

ii. GSA Negotiating Committee

No meetings this reporting period.

iii. GSA Labour Relations Committee

No meetings this reporting period.

15. Vice-President Student Services

i. Vice-President Student Services' Report

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 23 September 2016. The report stood as submitted. In addition, A Talaei stated that they were making progress on the U-Pass negotiations and that the University had extended their support and agreed to continue their U-Pass subsidy for the next four years. He added that the University of Alberta was the only post-secondary education participating in the U-Pass program offering a subsidy to the U-Pass fee.

A Talaei also reminded GSA Council that the GSA was holding Coffee Breaks in different departments to get to know more graduate students.

ii. GSA Student Affairs Advisory Committee

No meetings this reporting period.

16. Senator

i. Senator's Report

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 23 September 2016. The report stood as submitted.

17. Speaker

i. Speaker's Report

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 23 September 2016. The report stood as submitted.

18. Chief Returning Officer

i. Chief Returning Officer's Report

No written report at this time.

19. 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 23 September 2016. The report stood as submitted. L Spanner was not present; questions could be sent to her directly. It was noted that the GSA Elections and Referenda Committee was meeting the following day.

20. GSA Management

i. Executive Director's Report

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 23 September 2016. The report stood as submitted.

Question Period

21. Written Questions

None at this time.

22. Oral Questions

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:03 pm.