



BOARD MEETING MATERIALS

Wednesday, September 25th, 2024

UC Room # 441

5:30 PM

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GSA BOARD MEETING AGENDA

Wednesday September 25th, 5:30 p.m.

Please send Regrets to gsa@uoguelph.ca, no later than Tuesday September 24th 2024, at 12 p.m.

5:30 p.m. Call to Order: Roodiya Awosanmi, Chair

Territorial Acknowledgement

We acknowledge that the University of Guelph resides on the ancestral lands of the Attawandaron people and the treaty lands and territory of the Mississauga's of the Credit. We recognize the significance of the Dish with One Spoon Covenant to this land and offer our respect to our Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee and Métis neighbours as we strive to strengthen our relationships with them.

Today, this gathering place is home to many First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples and acknowledging them reminds us of our important connection to this land where we learn and work.

Approval of Agenda:

MOTION #1: B.I.R.T. The Agenda for the September 25th 2024 GSA Board Meeting, be approved as presented.

Approval of Minutes:

MOTION #2: B.I.R.T. the GSA Meeting Minutes of July 24th 2024 be approved as presented.

5:35 p.m. CUPE #3913: Kimber Munford, Vice-President External

5:45 p.m. Executive Goals – GSA President, Emily Minard

6:00 p.m. GSA Budget Presentation – GSA VP Finance, Marcellus Li

MOTION #3: B.I.R.T. the GSA allocate \$10,000 per year for a Compassionate Bursary fund.

6:15 p.m. General Director Honoraria – GSA VP Internal, Jacob Yates

MOTION #4: B.I.R.T. the GSA approve the release of \$_____ for General Director Honoraria.

6:30 p.m. Departmental and Committee Reports - Included below.

6:35 p.m. Question Period

6:45 p.m. Executive and Staff Reports

6:45 p.m. President & CEO: Emily Minard

6:55 p.m. V.P. Internal: Jacob Yates

7:05 p.m. V.P. Academic: M. Manjurul Islam

7:15 p.m. V.P. Financial: Mingze Li

7:25 p.m. V.P. Community Engagement: Rebecca Randle

7:35 p.m. Arising Business

7:45 p.m. In Camera Session

MOTION #5: B.I.R.T. the Meeting move 'In-Camera' for discussion.

(Under the direction of the Chair - Staff, Members-at-Large, and Guests will be asked to leave the Meeting.)

MOTION #6: B.I.R.T. the GSA Board Meeting 'In-Camera' session end.

Adjournment

GSA Board Meeting Minutes

Wednesday July 24th, 2024, 5:30pm

Hybrid Teams Meeting, UC # 441



JULY 24th 2024, BOARD MEETING MINUTES

ATTENDEES PRESENT

GSA Executives	
Emily Minard	President and CEO
Jacob Yates	Vice President Internal
Mingze Li (Marcellus)	Vice President Finance
Rebecca Randle	Vice President Community Engagement
M. Manjurul Islam	Vice President, Academic
General Directors	
Akierah Binns	Black Student Representatives
Mavis Opoku	
David Bahrami	Biomedical Science
Okoroike Ozoemena	Chemistry
Michael Capperauld	
Elizabeth Manchester	Integrative Biology
Barbara Hyde-Lay	Human Health and Nutritional Science
Juno McGowan	LGBTQ2SIA+ Student Representative
Olivia O'Neill	Psychology
Guests	
Mike Calvert	Senior Operations Manager, University Centre Services
Staff (Non-voting)	
Michelle Morris	GSA, Office Manager

Regrets with Notification: Kimber Munford, Environmental Studies; Janan Shoja Doost,

Pathobiology;

Regrets without Notification: Akshita Akshita, Environmental Studies; Justina Assuah, Food Agriculture and Resource; David Bailey, Economics and Finance; James Rubino, History; Annia Lewis, International Students; Siamoy Stewart, Hospitality, Food and Tourism Management; Dharamdeo Singh, Yuxin Hu Food Science;

Ashley Athier, Sociology and Anthropology; Riva Lewis, History, Alice Hinchliffe, English and Theatre Studies; Alexander Urthiel, Engineering; Julia Mellary, Integrative Biology

5:35 p.m. Call to Order: J. Yates, GSA VP Internal

Territorial Acknowledgement

The personal land acknowledgement statement was shared by the GSA VP Internal.

Approval of Agenda:

MOTION #1: B.I.R.T. **The Agenda for the July 24th, 2024 GSA Board Meeting, be approved as presented.**

Motioned by E. Minard, seconded by R. Randle. Motion carries.

Approval of Minutes:

MOTION #2: B.I.R.T. **The GSA Meeting Minutes of June 19th 2024, be approved as presented.**

Motioned by R. Randle, seconded by O. Ozoemena. Motion carries.

5:40 p.m. CUPE #3913: Kimber Munford, Vice-President External

K. Munford was away and requested for the following to be shared with all present.

- Reminder to check CUPE newsletter
- Keep an eye out on social media for upcoming CUPE fall events starting September.

5:45 p.m., 2023-2024 Year End Financial Statement and Operational Planning Brief, Mike Calvert, M. Calvert gave a quick run through of the 2023-2024 Financial statements highlighting the following:

Financials

- Revenue improvement of \$18,185 to a total of \$148,457 for the year.
- Yearly reduction of cost of sales to \$5,979.
- Yearly gross margin ending at \$88,611.
- Payroll increase of \$4,467 to date, attributed to minimum wage increase.
- Overall savings of \$7,277.
- Reduction in maintenance of work order of \$2,594.
- Yearly expenses amounting to \$113,089
- Improvement expenses of \$9,054 out of \$10,000 in allocation.

New Initiatives

- Launch of new website starting August 2024.
- Online ordering and community pickup options

- Deskside delivery program within University Centre
- Mural installation by graduate student Shelby Bohn to be commenced shortly.
- 15% discount on food for graduate students.
- Operating hours effective September to be 9:30am to 8:00pm

Discussion Period:

A question was raised about the process to claim the 15% discount on food. It was confirmed that graduate students need to state their status at the time of purchase to avail themselves of the discount.

6:00 p.m. Departmental and Committee Updates

There were no updates to discuss.

6:00 p.m. Executive & Staff Reports

6:00 p.m. GSA President Report – Emily Minard

E, Minard shared the following:

- Influx of incoming undergraduate students in September 2024
 - Anticipate a total of 7,500 students
 - Meeting with CUPE to discuss who this impacts TA ships and instructor positions
- Collaboration with CUPE on events
 - New international member social at the lookout
- Meeting with Ben Bradshaw to discuss effects of undergraduate intakes
 - Increase in graduate student enrollment in the coming year.
 - Vast increase in course-based master's as opposed to PhD master's thesis research.
- GSA Team photoshoot
 - Photos to be updated on new website to increase familiarity
- Hiring of alternate Trivia Host
 - New hosts (Nicole Zielinska and Ashley Fisher) to co-host and run the event collaboratively.
- VPSA Meeting on July 10th
 - GSA Executives raised concerns of undergraduate student influx.
 - Require clarity on communication between University and City regarding increase in student enrollments for new year.

There was a discussion of the impact on TA ships and the anticipation of an increase to current stipends. Also, if the university has a plan of action to support the increase in student enrollment.

6:10 p.m. VP Internal – Jacob Yates

J. Yates shared the following updates:

- Working on transitioning bylaws to be ONCA compliant
- Wrapping up work on training modules
- Assigned as chair of the new equity ad-hoc committee
- Looking for General Directors to participate in the ad-hoc committee

6:20 p.m. VP Academic – M. Manjurul Islam

M. Islam shared the following:

- Memorial Tree Ceremony
 - Scheduled for October 3rd from 4pm to 6pm at the Arboretum Centre.
 - Selected theme for the event “Forever in our Hearts, Never Truly Gone”.
 - Invitation letters to be sent out by the end of July.
- GSA Club Accreditation Policies and Procedures
 - Currently in progress and to be sent to GSA executives and student experience staff for review and comments.

6:30 p.m. VP Finance - Mingze Li

M. Li shared that he did not have any updates to discuss, as July has been a slow month this far. Any concerns or questions could be directed to him via email.

6:35 p.m. VP Community Engagement – Rebecca Randle

R. Randle shared the following:

- GSA/GSA Transit committee meeting on July 18th .
 - Attended meeting along with GSA office manager
 - Late night contract approved
 - Late night promotion subcommittee starting effective fall 2024
- Details on Late night service
 - Service running Tuesdays through Saturdays starting Friday, August 30th
 - Service running through Thursday, April 17th of 2025,
 - Service breaks during university holidays like fall Reading Break, Spring Reading Week and between semesters for the December break.
 - Increased service on Homecoming and St. Patrick's day.
 - Late night service hours to be extended to 2:30/3am.
 - Extended Bus Services on Sundays to 1:00am
- Gulf housing affordability Strategy Focus group meeting.
 - Listening to other focus members and submitting our reflection.

6:45 p.m. Question Period

There were no questions at the time.

6:45 p.m. Arising Business

There were no topics of Arising Business to discuss.

6:45 p.m. In Camera Session

MOTION #10: B.I.R.T. the Meeting move 'In-Camera' for discussion.

(Under the direction of the Chair - Staff, Members-at-Large, and Guests will be asked to leave the Meeting.)

Motioned by R. Randle, Seconded by E. Minard. Motion carries.

There was a discussion on the chair's resignation and the absence of B. Bradshaw at the meeting.

MOTION #11: B.I.R.T. the GSA Board Meeting 'In-Camera' session end.

Motioned by M. Capperauld, Seconded by O. Ozoemena. Motion carries.

There was a discussion on the high influx of incoming undergraduate students at the University.

Adjournment

The Meeting was adjourned at 7:00 p.m., and the next GSA Board meeting scheduled for September 25th, 2024. Please send your regrets no later than September 24th at 12 p.m.

Minutes Submitted by:	Minutes Approved by:
<hr/> <p data-bbox="232 1444 500 1512">Michelle Morris GSA – Office Manager</p>	<hr/> <p data-bbox="716 1444 1252 1512">Jacob Yates GSA Vice President – Internal & Acting Chair</p>

GSA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE GOALS OF 2024-2025

While GSA years were plagued with instability and executive disorganization, the prior year (2023 – 2024) focused on restabilizing the GSA, restructuring the executive committee, and rewriting many of our bylaws in response to the restructuring and former structural and functional disorganization. Additionally, the executive team last year put large efforts towards rebuilding relationships with university administrators as the years prior had hindered these relationships and trust. Seeing as the prior year focused heavily on restructuring the GSA and rebuilding relationships, this upcoming year the executives' priority is shifting towards starting initiatives based on graduate student needs, as well as emphasizing more advocacy during our meetings with committees and university administrators.

The predominant theme you will see throughout this report is centered around affordability as the cost-of-living (COL) increases, thus rendering increasingly more students to be housing and food insecure. While the executive team recognizes that the reasons behind the increased COL vary and are multi-faceted – such that it has been affected/exacerbated from many levels including the university, Conestoga, provincial and federal government policies, etc. – we are nonetheless committed to advocating for graduate student affordability using the resources and connections we have, and are of course open to developing new ones.

With that, you will find the executive goals outlined below. These goals aim to reflect the evolving needs of the graduate students and emphasize not only addressing immediate concerns like affordability and financial strain, but also establishing groundwork for longer-term improvements in graduate student life. We aim to strike a balance between meeting urgent needs and advocating for systemic changes, as well as ensuring that the voices of our graduate students are heard and considered in decision-making processes.

Below is a list of abbreviations that will be used throughout this report:

- P&C (President & CEO)
- VPI (Vice President Internal)
- VPF (Vice President Finance)
- VPA (Vice President Academic)
- VPCE (Vice President Community Engagement)

Increasing Graduate Student Awareness of GSA and Resources

One of the primary challenges the GSA has historically faced is the barrier of graduate student outreach. From years prior until now, the executives will still interact with graduate students who are unaware of the GSA's existence, let alone know about the academic and financial resources we offer them. Furthermore, we have not yet had a completely full board of representatives from each academic unit and student community, further impeding our ability for graduate student outreach. Outreach and communication of our resources is especially pertinent given the recent

financial strain many graduate students have been facing. With that said, increasing student awareness, filling board positions, and creating outreach strategies have been focuses over the summer semester and remain key goals for the coming year. Below you will find a summary of strategies we are looking to implement, as well as the executive positions the goals fall within the portfolio of:

- Mandate in bylaws that General Directors (GDs) facilitate GSA representation at departmental-level orientation sessions in September **(VPI)**
 - Training sessions and ppt slides to be provided
- Devise strategies to reach academic units and student communities without board representation **(VPI, VPA)**
- Attend tabling sessions during election periods **(P&C, VPI)**
- Running community-focused GSA events (i.e. LGBTQ2SIA+ -related Trivia Nights; **P&C, VPA)**
- Finalize and launch the new website and ensuring there is accessibility and up-to-date information **(P&C, VPCE)**
- Collaborating on more events with relevant organizations on campus **(P&C, VPCE)**

Improving GSA Resources

On the topic of affordability, while recognizing that a large contributor of the increased COL for graduate students has been perpetuated by decisions made by the university, the GSA unfortunately cannot dictate policy changes at the university level. Understanding this has led the executives to prioritize changes we can make internally to help temporarily alleviate the current financial burdens faced by graduate students.

- Look into implementing a GSA Compassionate Bursary Fund **(VPF)**
- Look into non-risk investments to expand current GSA funds **(VPF)**
- Assess current usages of GSA grants and bursaries and rethinking budget allocations **(VPF)**
- Initiating and hosting affordability, housing, and food-related events **(P&C)**
- Create outreach initiatives to incoming international graduate students to provide resources on housing in Guelph **(P&C, VPA)**
- Complete the development of the Clubs Accreditation system **(P&C, VPA)**
- Revamp GSA board room to accommodate meetings for GSA-accredited student councils **(P&C, VPI, VPA)**
- Align GSA bylaws with ONCA regulations, look into hiring lawyer for help **(P&C, VPI)**
- Investigate ways in which the GSA can move away from CFS **(VPCE)**

Reassessing GSA Executive, Staff, and General Director Compensation

While last year we added an executive position in response to the high demands of the former executive positions and the addition of responsibilities (i.e. clubs accreditation), the current executives (and staff) over the past summer semester have still felt overwhelming workloads. Executives are expected to work 10-15 hours/week and often meet this cap in weekly meetings alone, not including countless email correspondences throughout the day and individual work in preparation for meetings/events/projects. As well, in light of wanting to improve GSA awareness through launching of a new website and increasing our events and social media use, workloads of our staff have also been increasing overwhelmingly. Michelle, Rebecca, and I met with UofWaterloo's GSA over the summer where we learned that their GSA 1. Collects roughly an equivalent in annual revenue as we do, and 2. Pay their executives and staff over twice as much as we pay ours while still expecting the same work hour requirements from them. With that said and the COL crisis in mind, one of our executive goals will be to reassess the compensation we are providing our team and rethink their responsibilities (executives, staff, and GDs).

- Conduct a review of other Ontario GSA's compensation structure **(P&C, VPCE)**
- Compare current GSA honoraria to the rate of pay of TAs and Guelph's COL **(P&C, VPF)**
- Look into ways for increased utilization of GDs to relieve workload of staff and executives; rethink compensation accordingly **(VPI)**
- Develop a scribe position to relieve workload of Office Manager **(P&C, VPI)**
- Conduct a review of the executives and office manager to assess compensation and workload **(P&C)**
- Work with Events and Communications Coordinators to gain deeper insights into their weekly workloads for reassessment of compensation and/or responsibilities **(VPA, VPCE)**
- Present collective findings of compensation and workloads to the VPI for subsequent bylaw change recommendations **(P&C, VPI)**

Advocating for More Academic and Financial Supports from External Sources

Over just this past summer semester we have seen compounding financial burdens placed on graduate students. From issues such as removal of the top-up funding to the several downstream impacts resulting from undergraduate student over-enrolment, advocacy for graduate student financial aid from the university has become undeniably pressing. Furthermore, there is a need for stronger academic advocacy when thinking about student-advisor relationships. While students are held accountable to meeting expectations set out by the university, their lab, and their advisor(s), this same accountability structure does not seem to be present for graduate student advisors.

- Conduct a survey among graduate students that assesses housing accessibility and insecurity **(P&C, VPF)**

- Form an affordability committee centered around housing with external (to the GSA) involvement that investigates ways in which we can better advocate for improved resources from the university **(P&C, VPCE)**
- Continue work with the Dean of Academic Equity and Anti-Racism to devise solutions for improved academic protections of graduate students **(VPA, VPCE)**
- Outreach to Family and Graduate Student Housing to advocate for international student-specific housing **(VPA)**
- Looking into existing housing projects within and outside of the university that the GSA can become potentially involved in **(P&C, VPF, VPCE)**
- Continue collecting information from other organizations/demographics regarding how undergraduate over-enrolment has impacted their constituents and present these findings to the university **(P&C)**
- Continue advocacy for funding of the Food Prescription Program that matches contributions made by the GSA **(P&C)**
- Advocate on food security committees for the re-initiation of the Grocery Bus **(P&C)**

The GSA executives recognize that this is an exhaustive list and that not everything outlined here will be completed by the end of our terms. However, we are committed to making meaningful progress on each of our aims and hope that we can at least set a strong foundation for the next elected executives to work with should we not complete each of the goals. In conclusion, the GSA Executive Committee is committed to improving our resources and being an effective voice for advocacy, support, and positive change at the University of Guelph.

Cheers,

Emily Minard
President & CEO
gsapres@uoguelph.ca

DEPARTMENTAL AND COMMITTEE REPORTS

Departmental Reports

Animal Bioscience

Report:

Report by:

Biomedical Science

Report:

Report by:

Black Student Representatives

Report: Mavis and I continue to partner with the Cultural Diversity committee by attending meetings to discuss and plan activities for black and racialized students. Recently, I spoke at the orientation dinner for graduate and undergraduate international students along with other student representatives as part of START international.

Report by: Akierah Binns

Business Administration/Management

Report:

Report by:

Chemistry

Report: The Graduate Chemistry Society (GCS) will hold its first event of the Fall 2024 semester—a free Pizza Picnic—on Johnston Green, Friday, September 27th, from 1:00 to 2:30 PM. Also, the Graduate Studies at the College of Engineering and Physical Sciences (CEPS) is organizing CEPS Graduate Career Week 2024 for November, with the exact date to be announced soon.

Report by: Okoroike C. Ozoemena

Clinical Studies

Report:

Report by:

Computing & Information (Computer Science)

Report:

Report by:

Economics and Finance

Report:

Report by:

Engineering

Report:

Report by:

English & Theatre Studies

Report:

Report by:

Environmental Design & Rural Development

Report:

Report by:

Environmental Science

Report: The department is in the process of hiring for the Cameron Chair in Ecological Pest Management.

Report by: Kimber Munford

Family Relations & Applied Nutrition

Report:

Report by:

Fine Arts & Music

Report:

Report by:

Food Science

Report: The departmental seminar series has resumed. The Sep, 17th session will be a CV/Resume workshop.

Report by: Yuxin Hu

Food, Agriculture & Resource Economics

Report:

Report by:

Geography

Report:

Report by:

History

Report:

Report by:

Hospitality, Food & Tourism

Report:

Report by:

Human Health & Nutritional Science (HHNS)

Report: : The annual HK5K (organized by the HKSA) is set for October 6th from 9:00-11:30am. This event is open to all and sign up is available via the link in the HKSA (human kinetics student association) Instagram.

Report by: **Barbara Hyde-Lay**

Indigenous Student Representatives

Report:

Report by:

Integrative Biology

Report:

Report by:

International Student Representatives

Report:

Report by:

Languages & Literature

Report:

Report by:

LGBTQ2SIA+ Student Representatives

Report:

Report by:

Marketing & Consumer Studies

Report:

Report by:

Mathematics & Statistics

Report:

Report by:

Molecular & Cellular Biology

Report:

Report by:

Pathobiology

Report:

Report by:

Philosophy

Report:

Report by:

Physics

Report:

Report by:

Plant Agriculture

Report:

Report by:

Political Science

Report:

Report by:

Population Medicine

Report:

Report by:

Psychology

Report: no updates

Report by: Olivia O'Neill

Sociology & Anthropology

Report: no updates

Report by: Ashley Ethier

PhD in Social Practice and Transformational Change (SOPR)

Report:

Report by:

Committee Reports

Admissions & Progress Committee

Meeting date:

Report:

Next Meeting:

Advisory Committee on Student Mental Health & Wellness

Meeting date:

Report:

Next Meeting:

Academic Policies & Procedures

Meeting date:

Report:

Next Meeting:

Alcohol & Substance Abuse Advisory Committee

Meeting date:

Report:

Next Meeting:

Animal Care Committee

Meeting date: September 13, 2024

Report: Not much new. The ACC is looking to increase the number of non-animal users and community members on the committee.

Next Meeting: October 11, 2024

Athletics Advisory Committee

Meeting date:

Report:

Next Meeting:

Board of Graduate Studies

Meeting date:

Report:

Next Meeting:

By-Laws & Constitution Committee (GSA)

Meeting date:

Report:

Next Meeting:

Co-Curricular Experiential Learning Integrity Committee (CELIC)

Meeting date:

Report:

Next Meeting:

Code of Ethical Conduct Committee

Meeting date:

Report:

Next Meeting:

Compulsory Fees Committee (CFC)

Meeting date:

Report:

Next Meeting:

Energy Conservation Working Group

Meeting date:

Report:

Next Meeting:

Equity Committee

Meeting date: N/A

Report:

Next Meeting:

Experiential Learning Committee

Meeting date: N/A

Report: N/A

Next Meeting:

Student Learning Committee

Meeting date:

Report:

Next Meeting:

Finance Committee (GSA)

Meeting date: September 17, 2024

Report: Approved grant applications.

Next Meeting:

Grad Lounge Sustainability Committee (GSA)

Meeting date:

Report:

Next Meeting:

Graduate Student Learning Initiative Committee

Meeting date:

Report:

Next Meeting:

Graduate Student Mental Health Curriculum Committee

Meeting date:

Report:

Next Meeting:

GSA Restructuring Committee

Meeting date:

Report:

Next Meeting:

Hate Activity Committee

Meeting date:

Report:

Next Meeting:

Health & Dental Plan

Meeting date: N/A

Report: Currently, there are no updates or scheduled meetings.

Next Meeting: N/A

Homecoming Committee

Meeting date:

Report:

Next Meeting:

Hospitality Services Advisory Committee (HSAC)

Meeting date:

Reports:

Next Meeting:

Human Rights Advisory Group

Meeting date:
Report:
Next Meeting:

Information Technology Student Advisory Committee

Meeting date:
Report:
Next Meeting:

Judicial Committee

Meeting date:
Report:
Next Meeting:

Late Appeals Committee

Meeting date:
Report:
Next Meeting:

OUTline Committee

Meeting date:
Report:
Next meeting:

Positive Space Committee

Meeting date:
Report:
Next Meeting:

Sexual and Gender-Based Violence Advisory Committee

Meeting date:
Report:
Next Meeting:

SHINE Mental Well-Being Week Committee

Meeting date:
Report:
Next Meeting:

Special Grants & Speakers' Fund Committee

Meeting date:
Report:

Next Meeting:

Student Assessment Committee

Meeting date:

Report:

Next Meeting:

Student Budget Committee

Meeting date:

Report:

Next Meeting:

Student Executive Council

Meeting date:

Report:

Next Meeting:

Student Food Security Committee

Meeting date:

Report:

Next Meeting:

Student Leaders and Administration Committee

Meeting date:

Report:

Next Meeting:

Student Life Advisory Committee

Meeting date:

Report:

Next Meeting:

Student Life Award Committee

Meeting date:

Report:

Next Meeting:

Student Life Enhancement Fund (SLEF)

Meeting date:

Report:

Next Meeting:

Student Organization Policy Steering Committee

Meeting date:

Report:

Next Meeting:

Student Rights & Responsibilities Committee

Date:

Report:

Next Meeting:

Student Transit Committee (GSA/CSA)

Meeting date:

Report:

Next Meeting:

Teaching and Learning Network

Meeting date:

Report:

Next Meeting:

Town and Gown

Meeting date:

Report:

Next Meeting:

Student Experience

Meeting date:

Report:

Next Meeting:

Student Wellness Advisory Group (SWAG)

Meeting date:

Report:

Next Meeting:

University Centre Board

Meeting date:

Report:

Next Meeting:

UC Digital Signage Content Review Committee

Meeting date:
Report:
Next Meeting:

Volunteer Committee (GSA)

Meeting date:
Report:
Next Meeting:

EXECUTIVE & STAFF REPORTS

President & CEO – Emily Minard

Hi everyone!

Hope you all had a great summer and that you were able to take some time to relax. Hopefully you've each had a smooth transition into the Fall semester, I know how hectic things can be during this time! As well, I want to thank all the general directors for their contributions and participation throughout your past terms. Without our directors, the GSA board wouldn't be what it is with its diversity in perspectives and collaborative efforts towards a focused goal of advocating for graduate students. Your roles have truly been invaluable and I wish you all the best in your endeavours moving forward, and to those running again in our elections, good luck! With that, you will find below my activities over the past couple of months 😊

GSA Elections!

Jake and our CRO, Maryam, have worked hard to ensure efficiency of our general director elections. The nomination period will run until the 25th, campaigning from the 26th – 27th, and voting from the 28th to 30th. Check your student emails to nominate yourself!

GSA Executive Meetings

The executives met on July 29th, August 16th, August 30th, and September 13th. For more details on discussions held at these meetings, please see the executive meeting minutes in the materials package.

GSA Executive Goals

I met with each of the executives individually to write a report for this board meeting on our goals for the 2024/2025 term. Please refer to this report for more information.

GSA x CUPE Meetings and Events

Rebecca and I met with CUPE on August 9th to discuss event planning, departmental orientations, and ways in which we could improve clarity of health benefits information. Kat was able to put together some CUPE and GSA health benefits cards to help students better differentiate the benefits they have with CUPE versus the GSA!

I met with CUPE several times since our July board meeting to do event planning for three orientation-related events in September. On September 18th we hosted a Disorientation event that focused on housing and food insecurity and how it had been affected by the university's over-enrollment. This divulged into a focused discussion where we collected insights from other graduate

students, post-docs, and a representative from Your Downtown Guelph Friends on how we can better support students experiencing these insecurities. Ideas such as collection and sharing of personal stories were discussed, as well as efforts from the GSA to reach out to student housing resources within the university were discussed. We also collaboratively held events on September 24th and September 25th for the International Members Social and New Members Social events respectively. These events took place in The Lookout.

Departmental Orientations

The GSA executives attended several departmental orientations. For myself, I attended the Psychology orientation session as well as the mass Orientation hosted by Ben Bradshaw from OGPS. This orientation session included a full room in Rozanski with all the incoming graduate students!

START International Events

I attended the Coffee and Company START International event, as well as the Community BBQ event with Jake. At these events I spoke to many international graduate students and brought awareness to the resources we offer.

Meetings to Discuss Top-Up Funding Issue

For those who may not know, OGPS made the decision in mid-September to remove the tri-council scholarship top-up fund to all tri-agency scholarship holders (new holders as well as old holders still within the funding period). This fund was valued at \$5,000 per year of tri-agency funding. Manjural and I met with Ben Bradshaw on August 19th to discuss the logic behind making this decision so abruptly and close to the start of the Fall semester. We were informed that the decision to move forward in this direction was made following the announcement of the tri-agency scholarship increases back during the Winter semester but that OGPS did not want to release the information until they confirmed they could remove the top-up fund from holders who received the scholarship in previous years but were still within their funding period.

I emphasized heavily that it was unfair that students received promises of this funding in their offer letters, and that they also saw this funding in their webadvisor account which was misleading. Furthermore, I emphasized that this news should have come out before offer decision deadlines and that many rental units start at the beginning of September and that this could be affecting students cost-of-living/housing security. I asked about redistribution of this funding and I was informed that the money would be redistributed back into the pockets of non-scholarship holders in the form of increasing bursaries and TAships. I asked if the decision to put the money into more TAships was influenced by the over-enrolment of undergraduate students and I was told it was. I explained that increasing TAships as a form of redistribution of the top-up fund money was unfair as now graduate students have to *work* for the money whereas they previously did not have to.

The executives met with Ben and the new Vice Provost Academic, Bill Rosehart, on September 5th.

One of the primary discussions here was that of the top-up fund removal. Bill promised to look into the issue further and a follow-up meeting with me and Ben will be held September 23rd.

GSA Hiring: Chair and Trivia Host

I worked with Jake to coordinate interviews and the hiring of our new GSA Chair, Roodiya! I'm incredibly excited to welcome Roodiya to our team. She has had prior experience working with the CSA and Chairing the Board of Governors for her department, as well as holding several executive positions in clubs and councils. Welcome, Roodiya!

I am also excited to announce that we now have a new GSA Trivia Host, Ashley! Ashley was the alternate host over the summer semester so had an accordingly smooth transition into her position for the fall. Manpreet has attended one of her trivia sessions and had nothing but positive feedback to give! I encourage you all to attend Ashley's trivia nights at The Lookout on Thursday evenings. Welcome back, Ashley!

Clubs Accreditation

Manjurul and I met with Jen Durst on August 19th. Manjurul put great efforts into writing up a draft of our Clubs Accreditation policies which was reviewed by Jen. We will have a follow-up meeting at the end of September.

GSA Website

Rebecca has been an advocate for including a working calendar on our website that clearly outlines important dates (i.e. dental opt-out deadlines, semester registration deadlines, etc.) and events (i.e. Trivia Nights, board meetings, etc.). I was able to find a really good example of this from UofT's GSA's website which was sent over as an example to our web developer. Since then, the developer has been able to put together an awesome draft of a calendar on the website! We will be meeting further to finalize this before launching the website officially.

Admissions and Progress (A&P) Committee

I met with this committee on August 15th and September 19th. We discussed and voted on applications for requests such as semester extensions and leave of absences.

Lunch with the Provost

The GSA executives met with Ben Bradshaw and the new Vice Provost Academic, Bill Rosehart, on September 5th over lunch at The Lookout. Here, the executives updated Bill on the primary issues affecting graduate students such as the top-up funding removal, food and housing insecurity, and the need for more accountability from faculty on their advising of graduate students. Overall, I welcome Bill to his new position and look forward to working with him!

The Lookout Renovations

For those who haven't been to The Lookout yet, a mural is being painted by the bar and is near completion! It looks beautiful and fits in well with the rest of the new themes and decoration of the restaurant. I encourage you all to stop by The Lookout for some coffee and check out the mural! I also met with Mike and Brooke on September 12th and a meeting to try out the new menu will be scheduled in October.

VPSA Meeting

I attended the GSA/VPSA meeting on August 14th. In this meeting I provided updates from the GSA as well as brought up the concern of over-enrolment again. I discussed how following my meeting with Hartej, CSA President, I learned that the CSA is concerned about whether there will be sufficient resources for students, particularly from the departments of Athletics and Student Wellness. Melinda informed me that Student Wellness has actually seen increased funding and that there will be more support for SAS in anticipation of the over-enrolment. However, she explained that the Athletics department will eventually receive no funding from Student Affairs and will be expected to fund themselves within the next 3-5 years.

I was not able to attend the meeting in September as I was at a CUPE/GSA event. Please refer to Jake and Rebecca's updates for discussions during this meeting.

Executive Training

During August and September I completed all of the required executive training as newly dictated in our bylaws. Confirmations of training completion were provided to Michelle.

That's all from me folks. As always, don't hesitate to reach out with questions 😊

Emily

GSA President & CEO (gsapres@uoguelph.ca)

Hi Everyone!

I hope the start to everyone's Fall semester has been great so far! Things have been quite busy, but I will do my best to keep my update brief.

- Hired our new chair, Roodiya!
- Met with CUPE to discuss removal of Dean's Tri-Council Top-Ups
- Met with VP Academic Ben Rosenthal
 - o Addressing removal of Tri-Council top-up
 - o Plans for managing stipend values
- Attended START International with GSA President
- Collaborated with CRO to begin process for GD elections
 - o Nomination period ends September 25, make sure you apply if you want to continue representing your department as a General Director!
 - o Campaign Period September 26 – 27
 - o Election period September 28 – 30
- Attending new/old graduate student departmental orientation sessions to increase awareness about GSA services
- Attended the University of Guelph community breakfast with other GSA Executives
- First equity committee meeting!
 - o Discussed encampment
- Met with VP Student Affairs, Melinda Scott.
 - o Discussed housing strategy at UofG
 - o Creating spaces for graduate students
- Still slowly working away at transitioning to ONCA compliant bylaws

If anyone has any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to reach out (gsavpint@uoguelph.ca)!

Thanks,
Jake

Please see below update:

- Preparations for the Memorial Tree Ceremony, scheduled for October 3rd, 2024, are underway. Invitations have been sent to the families, and they have confirmed their participation in the event. All speakers for the ceremony have also been invited. Currently, we are preparing the introductory outline for the ceremony, working closely with the CSA VP Internal. A site visit is planned to ensure everything is on track.
- The draft of the Grad Council Policy has been shared with the Advisor for Student Experience and the GSA President. Initial feedback has been received, and modifications are in progress. The next update will be provided by the end of the month with modifications.
- The first meeting of the Student Services Fees Committee for the library took place in the second week of September 2024. A library representative presented the committee's functions, and we successfully selected a chair. The chair will distribute the previous year's report to provide an understanding of the process, and actual work will begin at the next meeting.
- The Admissions & Progress Committee met on September 18th, 2024. The committee, now consisting of new members, in this meeting addressed numerous student files.

If you have any questions, comments, or suggestions, please feel free to reach out to me via email at gsavpaca@uoguelph.ca.

Thank you.

M Manjurul Islam
VP – Academic, GSA

VP Finance – Marcellus (Mingze) Li

Dear folks,

I hope you're doing well and enjoying your fall semester so far. I would like to provide you with an update on the recent meetings and progress made this month:

Graduate Student Consultation:

This month, I have been assisting graduate students with their travel grant and childcare grant applications. I have been working closely with them, providing guidance, and clarifying any doubts they may have.

Finance Committee Meeting:

In response to the rising cost of living, the Finance Committee has decided to allocate \$10,000 to establish a new bursary, known as the “GSA Compassionate Bursary”. Each recipient of this bursary will receive \$200, which aims to provide financial support to those in need. The bursary is designed to offer relief to all graduate students who may be facing unexpected financial challenges, helping to alleviate the pressures of living expenses during their studies.

If you have any questions, comments, or suggestions, please don't hesitate to reach out to me via email at gsavpfin@uoguelph.ca.

Thank you and have a wonderful day!

Best regards,

Marcellus (Mingze) Li
GSA VP Finance

Hello all,

I hope that everyone is having a great start to their fall semester! Please find below a summary of my responsibilities since the July board meeting:

Transit

Michelle and I have been working with individual students throughout the month to resolve any questions or concerns that have arisen about student bus passes. There was some confusion as START had posted on their website that F24 bus passes would be activated on August 27th, but bus passes are not active for the semester until the first day of classes. This year, that was September 3rd.

Meeting with CUPE 3913

Emily and I met with Kimber, Kat and Scott on August 9th to discuss and plan events for the start of the fall semester as well as materials for some departmental orientations that CUPE was planning to attend. Kat put together some wonderful reference cards that provide an overview of the benefits and services that CUPE and the GSA offer, which will be available at student wellness and both of our offices.

Town and Gown

I attended the Town and Gown meeting held on August 22nd. There is not a ton of new information or sentiments to report from this meeting that we are not all already aware of. The biggest takeaway was from community representatives who are very concerned about the lack of adequate housing for students. Many expressed that a lot of students would stay with friends in town during the week for classes and then head home on weekends. So even if a house is leased to four students, there may be as many as 10 or 12 students in some cases, staying there regularly from Monday to Friday (or a subset of those days). This has created a lot of issues where residential roads will be so congested with parked cars that other vehicles such as emergency services or snow-clearing crews cannot safely pass to get into certain areas. Residents had remarked that this was a common practice last year, and now with more students than in previous years and residence space not being guaranteed, it is expected to continue. I am unsure if this was adequately captured on the housing survey that was conducted last year as we have still yet to receive the results from it.

Meeting with New Provost

The whole exec. met with the new Provost, Bill, on September 5th. We discussed our concerns with graduate funding overall, the recent claw-back of top-up funding for tri-council scholarship holders, and accountability for graduate supervision. We are meeting with Bill on Monday,

September 23rd to have a follow-up meeting regarding the tri-council top-up funding.

Meeting with Dean of Arts

I met with Jade, the Dean of Arts, on September 12th to further discuss some of the concerns regarding advisory accountability that I had brought up with Bill at the September 5th meeting. Jade and I brainstormed some ways that we could look to improve the A&P appeals process. Students and their supervisors have a relationship with a significant power imbalance that markedly favours faculty, and the current A&P appeals process does not adequately account for this, or how difficult it can be for a student to recount and provide documentation of a distressing and/or traumatic situation. We have a plan to hopefully begin addressing this that I have shared with the other executives. Specific details will be forthcoming once we have received confirmation that we are permitted to move ahead with this.

VPSA Meeting

Jake and I met with Melinda on September 18th to discuss student housing, club regulations, TA pay/the new HR system, and support for students experiencing advisory challenges. The university's board of governors is in the process of approving plans for future residence buildings as space is very tight in residences currently. We are hoping to be able to work with student housing to have some dedicated space for graduate students where we could possibly offer subsidized housing rates. This is very tentative, and we will need to wait until the residence plans are approved in a couple of months before we can have any specific discussions surrounding future on-campus graduate housing.

We also sought some advice on club regulations: in summary, all GSA members must be welcome at all GSA clubs, however, individuals impeding club functions or harassing club members would not be tolerated under student codes of conduct (e.g. If you make a club about trains, any GSA member must be welcome to join your club about trains. Prospective members cannot be required to use trains as their exclusive method of transportation, swear an oath of fealty to trains, wear cool train merchandise, keep a train as a pet, etc. However, club members would not be required to include an individual who was intentionally impeding the club from functioning or acting in other ways that would violate the university's Policy on Non-Academic Misconduct, for instance.)

During the meeting, I expressed that many TAs had not received pay on September 12th. Even though TA work falls under CUPE's purview, they do not administer or manage pay – the university (employer) does. If you did not receive pay that you were expecting on September 12th and have yet to receive it, please contact your department administrator ASAP.

We spoke briefly about the support options that are available for students who are experiencing challenges with their supervisors. Ideally, students and supervisors are to be offered support before the relationship breaks down or becomes untenable. However, it is clear that the supports/support systems that do exist currently are not adequate as we are seeing this issue

become more prevalent instead of less. Melinda is planning to follow up with Ben, Bill, and Jade about this and will get back to us.

Required Executive Role Training

During the summer semester, I completed all of the training courses required of GSA executives in the bylaws. The additional training that I attended was the Beyond the Books: Mental Health Literacy Training on August 20th. That's all for this month! Please feel free to reach out to me via email at gsavpext@uoguelph.ca if you have any questions, comments, or concerns. I welcome feedback and input from graduate students and GSA members regarding anything I discussed so that I may bring your thoughts and opinions to the appropriate committee or representative(s).

Thank you!

Rebecca Randle

GSA VP Community Engagement

1. Trivia Coordination:

I've been working closely with our new trivia host to improve turnout and engagement. At the latest trivia event, our efforts paid off with a noticeable increase in attendance, thanks to better coordination between the host and myself. We'll continue to explore new ways to keep the momentum going and boost participation further.

2. Event Information Request:

I would like to ask the Board members to share any upcoming events within their departments that they want promoted—whether research-related or social. This will help us maximize the reach of these events and boost attendance across the graduate student community.

- **Social Media Promotion:** Please provide event details **at least 2 weeks in advance**. If needed, I can still work with more last-minute submissions.
- **Newsletter Inclusion:** If you would like your event to be included in the monthly newsletter, please provide information **by the end of the month**. For example, events happening in October should be submitted by the end of September to be featured in the next newsletter.

3. Open to Suggestions:

If there are any important pieces of information, procedures within the university, or services provided by the GSA that you think grad students should be aware of, please feel free to send me suggestions for things to post. I'm always looking for ways to keep students informed and engaged!

I hope this helps streamline the process and ensures we can support as many events as possible and improve communication overall.

Thank you,

Josh Gonzales, M.A.
GSA Communications Coordinator

Activities Coordinator – Manpreet Kaur

Hello everyone, I hope you all are having a great start to the semester. I look forward to a great year ahead planning fun and educational events as well as promoting the organization. I look forward to learning from all committee members and board members.

Event Ideas:

Past Events | COMPLETED

Trivia

Location: The Lookout every week

Description: In groups of 4-8, each team will have an opportunity to answer questions related to the trivia theme which will consist of 2-3 rounds.

Upcoming Events |

Trivia

Location: The Lookout every week. Happens every Thursday.

Paint Night

Location: The Lookout

All materials will be provided.

My main goal for this month is to involve new graduate students in events of interest so that they can interact with other students at a common platform and boost engagement through flexible and fun events! If you have any questions, concerns, or even guidance on how I can better myself in this position, I would really love to hear it. Please send me an email if you have any questions or comments about this month's report.

Manpreet Kaur

Events Coordinator gsaact@uoguelph.ca

Office Manager – Michelle Morris

Hello Everyone,

Hope everyone had a good summer and looking forward to a successful fall semester.

- Final Student fees for Summer Semester paid.
- F24 PSO/SSG Accreditation Documents submitted to university (this is a yearly accreditation that needs to be completed)
- Audit communication ongoing – Draft package received.
- Internal payments for summer semester paid.

Best,

Michelle