



BOARD MEETING MATERIALS

Wednesday, November 26th, 2025

UC Room # 332

5:30 PM

<i>GSA November 26th Board Meeting Agenda</i>	32
<i>GSA October Board Meeting Minutes</i>	34
<i>GENERAL DIRECTOR APPOINTMENTS</i>	47
<i>Personal Statement – Juno McGowan, LGBTQ2IA+ Student Representative</i>	47
<i>Personal Statement – Ruitian (Sky) Chen, International Student Representative</i>	48
<i>Personal Statement – Mavis Opuko, Black Student Representative</i>	49
<i>DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS</i>	50
<i>COMMITTEE REPORTS</i>	58
<i>EXECUTIVE & STAFF REPORTS</i>	63
President & CEO – Yusra Hasan.....	63
VP Internal – Yuxin Hu	65
VP Finance – Ayush Chawla	66
VP Community Engagement – Spandana Chereddy	67
Business Operations Manager – Michelle Morris.....	70
Communications Coordinator – Joshua Gonzales.....	72
Events Coordinator – Hrishikesh Patil.....	73





GSA November 26th Board Meeting Agenda

Please send regrets to gsa.businessops@uoguelph.ca no later than November 25th 2025 at 12 p.m.

5:30 p.m. Call to Order: Kathleen Nolan, 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 November 26th, 2025 GSA Board Meeting, be approved as presented.

Approval of Minutes:

MOTION #2: B.I.R.T. The GSA Meeting Minutes of October 29th 2025 be approved as presented.

5:40 p.m. CUPE #3913: Vice-President External, Grace Godere

5:50 p.m. Faculty of Graduate Studies: Dr. Ben Bradshaw, Assistant Vice President (Graduate Studies)

6:00 p.m. Student Wellness Presentation - Melanie Bowman and Crystal Wyllie

6:15 p.m. General Director Appointment: Yuxin Hu, GSA Vice President Internal

1. Juno McGowan – LGBTQ2SIA+ Student Representative

2. Ruitian (Sky) Chen – International Student Representative
3. Mavis Opoku – Black Student Representative

See Board Meeting Materials for the personal statements

MOTION #3: B.I.R.T. The GSA Board of Directors appoints Juno McGowan as a GSA LGBTQ2SIA+ Student Representative, effective immediately.

MOTION #4: B.I.R.T. The GSA Board of Directors appoints Ruitian Chen as a GSA International Student Representative, effective immediately.

MOTION #5: B.I.R.T. The GSA Board of Directors appoints Mavis Opoku as a GSA Black Student Representative.

6:30 p.m. GSA Volunteer Committee Removal – Yuxin Hu, GSA Vice President Internal

MOTION #6: B.I.R.T. The GSA Board of Directors approves the removal of the Volunteer Committee and relevant sections from the GSA Bylaws.

6:45 p.m. GSA Equity Committee Chair Appointment – Yuxin Hu, GSA Vice President Internal

MOTION #7: B.I.R.T. The GSA Board of Directors approves the appointment of the GSA Vice President Academic as Chair of the GSA Equity Committee, establishing this role as part of the VP Academic's regular portfolio.

7:00 Department and Committee Updates

7:10 p.m. Executive Updates

7:20 p.m. President & CEO – Yusra Hasan

7:30 p.m. VP Internal – Yuxin Hu

7:40 p.m. VP Finance – Ayush Chawla

7:50 p.m. VP Community Engagement – Spandana Chereddy

8:00 p.m. In-Camera Session

MOTION #8 B.I.R.T. The GSA board meeting move 'in-camera' for discussion.

MOTION #9 B.I.R.T. The GSA board meeting 'in-camera' session end.

Adjournment.

GSA October Board Meeting Minutes

Wednesday October 29th 2025 5:30pm

Hybrid Teams Meeting, Room 332



ATTENDEES PRESENT

GSA Executives	
Yusra Hasan	President and CEO
Ayush Chawla	Vice President, Finance
M. Manjurul Islam	Vice President, Academic
Spandana Chereddy	Vice President, Community Engagement
Kathleen Nolan	Chair
General Directors	
Nicole Loyola Andrade	Biomedical Science
Michael Capperault	Chemistry
Barbara Hyde-Lay	Human Health and Nutritional Sciences
Zayd Al Kassem	
Samantha Dobson	Pathobiology
Erin Howard	
Amna Jaleel	Population Medicine
Ishrat Zahan	Plant Agriculture
Sarah Kingsley	Environmental Science
Olivia Gibson	Population Medicine
Staff	
Michelle Morris	GSA Business Development Manager
Harrison Barretto	Administrative Assistant
Hrishikesh Patel	Events Coordinator
Guests	
Benjamin Bradshaw	Assistant Vice President Graduate Studies
Brenden Bellai	Auditor (RLB Chartered Professional Accountant)
Melissa Conte	Student Wellness: Sexual and Gender-Based
Rashida Odumoye	Violence Support and Education
Himashree Ponrajan	Post-Election General Director Candidates
Jenna Scharnowski	

Lokesh Kumar Beverley Grace Goderre	
--	--

Regrets with Notification: Yuxin Hu, Vice President Internal; Juno McGowan, LGBTQ2SIA+ Student Representative

Regrets without Notification: David Bahrami, Biomedical Science

5:33 PM | Call to Order: Kathleen Nolan, Chair

Territorial Acknowledgement

The personal land acknowledgement statement was shared by the Chair.

Approval of Agenda:

MOTION #1 B.I.R.T. The Agenda for October 29th, 2025, GSA Board Meeting, be approved as presented.

Motioned by M. Capperauld, seconded by Y. Hasan. Motion carries.

Approval of Minutes:

MOTION #2: B.I.R.T. The GSA Meeting Minutes of September 24th, 2025, be approved as presented.

Motioned by M. Capperauld, seconded by A. Chawla. Motion carries.

5:37 p.m. CUPE 3913 Update: Beverley Grace Goderre, Vice President External

B. Goderre reported the following:

- CUPE 3913 is awaiting a response from the University regarding a potential settlement related to the financial aid fund (FAF) being depleted quickly.
 - The fund was exhausted within a month due to an increase in FAF applications as a result of underpayment issues.
 - A monetary offer is anticipated; awaiting legal review.
 - A grievance has been submitted regarding inconsistencies in GTA hiring procedures and allocations.
 - To be addressed during the upcoming bargaining, as the collective agreement expires on August 31st.
 - Non-monetary proposals are nearing completion.
 - A membership meeting is scheduled for November 20th at 7:00 PM.
 - To be reviewed with GSA in a future meeting.
 - Overpayment issues continue to be reported.
-

- Concerns with HR about inadequate communication discussed.
- Systemic issues continue.
- The current system is insufficient and prone to failure across the University.
- Work continues with benefits software provider.
- Concerns remain regarding the timing of graduate payments:
 - Bank processing delays left students unable to purchase food due to drained accounts.
 - The statutory holiday weekend prevented payment processing.

Questions were raised regarding disproportionate payment issues within the Chemistry Department. Students reported comparing experiences across departments and observing that Chemistry appears to be significantly more affected than Physics or Mathematics. In response, it was noted that CUPE stewards and mobilizers are actively addressing these cases; however, no explanation has yet been identified for the disproportionate impact on Chemistry. B. Goderre recommended that the student forward an email outlining the issue and include the survey results containing affected students' testimonials.

5:43 p.m. Faculty of Graduate Studies: Dr. Ben Bradshaw, Assistant Vice President (Graduate Studies)

B. Bradshaw provided the following updates:

- A letter from Megan Black (from the Department of Chemistry) was presented to the Senate outlining concerns regarding payroll and tuition payment problems affecting graduate students.
 - Met with the head of HR and Student Financial Services to discuss the concerns.
 - Systems used for payroll administration are fragile and unable to tolerate even minor administrative errors.
 - A serious case occurred where a graduate student was given only 24 hours to respond to an overpayment notice.
 - Payroll administration has now confirmed that a 24-hour turnaround will *never* occur again: students will have at least one week to respond before any default action is taken.
 - Delayed provision of information by faculty is a contributing factor.
 - This has caused first-pay issues for GRAs and triggered system errors due to the rigidity of the HR/payroll system.
 - The first request for GRA payments has now been addressed with correct coding and amounts.
 - An institution-wide email has been sent to all Grant Program Coordinators and Grant Program Assistants, emphasizing the priority and providing instructions to reduce future errors.
-

- Flexibility exists in how GRAs are distributed (e.g., an \$8,000 GRA may be issued over two months instead of four).
 - This can support financial stability for students, particularly in the Fall semester.
- Faculty and Academic Staff Relations are exploring with CUPE 3913 the possibility of paying the fellowship portion (¼ of the GTA) as a lump sum during the first payroll cycle.
- Regarding discrepancies between student pay stubs:
 - A major factor is the TD1 form, which allows students to indicate that income tax should not be deducted.
 - Most graduate students qualify for this.
 - All discrepancies have an identifiable explanation, typically human error, and issues are being sorted.
- November 1st is a key date for assessing graduate student enrollment numbers:
 - International enrollments are lower than expected.
 - Domestic enrollment is the strongest it has been in several years.

Questions were raised about potential solutions to tuition pre-installments. B. Bradshaw noted the two ways to get money to students earlier are; paying the fellowship portion of TA ships upfront, and advisors issuing stipends as one-time lump-sum payments. It was also shared that the three-installment tuition schedule will not be adjusted. Instead, focus will remain on ensuring students receive funds early enough to make the first installment. B. Bradshaw acknowledged that better financial support is needed across all graduate programs and stated that challenges remain in identifying funding sources. This remains an institutional priority as it affects recruitment, retention, and the University's reputation. It was mentioned that donors are supportive through scholarship funding, but widespread financial support across all programs is not currently feasible.

6:07 p.m. Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) Support and Education Services
 Presentation: Rashida Odumoye, SGBV Support Coordinator; Melissa Conte, SGBV Support Coordinator

A presentation was shared relaying the supports offered, highlighting the key points:

- The Wellness Education and Promotion Centre (WEPC) delivers prevention and education programs.
 - The SAFE Peer Educators Team develops annual SGBV and consent-based programming.
 - Defining Consent – Informed, Moment-to-moment, Specific, Awake & Aware, freely given, Enthusiastic/embodied (I.M.S.A.F.E. Model)
 - SGBV Guiding Principles: Survivor – Centric, Trauma-Informed, Anti-Oppressive & Anti-Racist, Harm Reduction.
 - SGBV Support Pillars: Acute or recent experiences of SGBV, System navigation and reporting support, Safety planning for on-campus and off-campus environments, 1:1 psychoeducation on consent, sexual health, trauma, and SGBV.
-

Questions were raised regarding the updates on the anticipated changes to the sexual violence policy, originally expected by September 2025. In response, it was confirmed that the policy is still under development, with hopes for implementation in the new year. Further confirming that services are available to both part-time and full-time students. The availability of a dedicated online module for staff and faculty was confirmed.

6:33 p.m. GSA Audit Report Presentation: Brenden Bellai, Auditor (RLB Chartered Professional Accountant)

B. Bellai presented the following overview of the GSA Audit Report. Highlighting the following:

- Independent auditor's report refers to:
- Financial Position (balance sheet):
- Statement of Operations (for the year ending April 30, 2025):
 - Overall, \$20,000 increase in surplus, which is very strong.
- Statement of Cash Flows:
 - Cash increase this year was from the net surplus.
- Explanatory Notes to the Financial Statements

Recommendations were sought from the Auditor regarding potential alternative investments.

Approval of Audit Presentation:

MOTION #3 B.I.R.T. "The audit presentation for the fiscal year of 2024-2025, be approved as presented."

Motion carries.

6:46 p.m. Fall 2025 General Election Result

VP Internal item to be presented by VP Finance, A.Chawla, due to the absence of Y. Hu.

A. Chawla presented the following general election results:

- Biomedical Science – David Bahrami, Nicole Loyola Andrade
- Chemistry - Michael Capperauld
- Environmental Science – Sarah Kingsley
- Human Health and Nutritional Sciences - Barbara Hyde-Lay, Zayd Al Kassem
- Pathobiology - Samantha Dobson, Erin Howard
- Plant Agriculture - Ishrat Zahan
- Population Medicine – Olivia Gibson, Amna Jaleel

6:48 p.m. General Director Appointments Motions - GSA VP Finance

Candidate – Jenna Scharnowski (Environmental Science)

Individual statement was shared by the candidate.

MOTION #4 B.I.R.T. "The GSA Board of Directors appoints Jenna Scharnowski as General Director representing the School of Environmental Science, effective immediately."

Motioned by A. Chawla, seconded by M. Capperauld. Motion carries.

Candidate – Lokesh Kumar (Computer Science)

Individual statement was shared by the candidate.

MOTION #5 B.I.R.T. "The GSA Board of Directors appoints Lokesh Kumar Karuppaiya Muthiah as General Director representing the School of Environmental Science, effective immediately."

Motioned by S. Cherreddy, seconded by M. Capperauld. Motion carries.

Candidate - Beverley Grace Goderre

Individual statement was shared by the candidate.

Discussion:

The GSA CEO and President noted that, as GDs or executives, members act in the best interest of students and strive to mitigate any substantial conflict of interest. A potential concern was raised on the topic of conflict of interest in the event an individual assumes both a CUPE and GSA role simultaneously.

Further clarification was requested on the prioritization of current versus new General Directors receiving priority over new ones. It was confirmed that appointments are based on a first-come, first-serve basis, with no priority.

MOTION #6: B.I.R.T. The GSA Board of Directors appoints Grace Goderre as a GSA LGBTQ2SIA+ Student Representative, effective immediately.

Motioned by A. Chawla, seconded by M. Capperauld. Motion carries.

Candidate – Himashree Ponrajan

Individual statement was shared by the candidate.

MOTION #7: B.I.R.T. The GSA Board of Directors appoints Himashree Ponrajan as General Director representing the Department of Engineering, effective immediately.

Motioned by M. Capperauld, seconded by A. Chawla. Motion carries.

7:07 p.m. VP Academic Vacant Position for November – GSA President & CEO

Updates were shared about the Executive discussion on the VP Academic vacancy for November.

MOTION #8: B.I.R.T. The GSA Board of Directors motions to approve the GSA President & CEO, in consultation with the remaining Executive delegating tasks of the vacant position between some of the remaining Executive for the month of November.

There was a discussion on how to manage the responsibilities associated with the vacant VP Academic position, including the possibility of allocating specific duties to existing executive members. The consensus was to split the required duties amongst three executives to maintain full sustainability. Detailed options from the current GSA Bylaws were taken into account and discussed.

An equitable allocation of honorarium between the three executives was agreed upon.

It was also noted that the nomination period for the upcoming by-election was set at one month, as decided previously by the By-Election Committee. This extended nomination period contributed to the current gap in the VP Academic role for November. Additionally, it was acknowledged that the outgoing VP Academic had informed the GSA of his resignation approximately one month prior.

Motioned by M. Capperauld, seconded by A. Chawla. Motion carries.

7:22 p.m.

Department and Committee Updates

There were no departmental and committee updates since the assignments were not completed at the time.

7:22 p.m. Executive Reports

7:22 p.m. President & CEO: Yusra Hasan

Y. Hasan shared the following updates:

- Campus Master Plan
 - Involved in ongoing discussions related to the Campus Master Plan.
 - Attended Student Executive Council Meeting
 - Student Memorial Services
 - Delivered a speech honoring the lives of students who passed.
 - DJ Night
 - Ensured a security guard was present and the CSO Constable was informed of the event one week prior to support student safety
 - Oversaw all communications and assisted with coordination of the setup.
-

- Involved in the SLEF Application Reviews
 - Participated in a series of review appointments for funding requests totaling over \$130,000
 - GSA Executive Committee Meeting
 - Called and chaired by Y. Hasan
 - Meeting with GSA President, VP Academic, Graduate Studies – Ben Bradshaw
 - Confirmed that College of Engineering students affected by the air conditioning issues in the summer will receive an acknowledgement of lunch, tentatively for November 17th at the University Club.
 - Discussed ongoing payroll issues affecting graduate students, the University's planned resolutions, and strategies to mitigate the impacts.
 - TSS Discussion with GSA Executive Team
 - Reviewed the TSS Contract.
 - 1:1 Leadership Education and Development Advisor Meeting
 - Discussed GSA functionality and received insights on leadership development.
 - CRO Resignation
 - Acknowledged and appreciated the CRO's efforts and contributions to serving the community.
 - Payroll Discussion with Megan Black and Michael Capperauld
 - Survey that M. Black and M. Capperauld created, to be shared with GSA Executives.
 - Potentially to be sent through the listserv to support students.
 - Meeting with Undergraduate and Graduate Students
 - Held several meetings with students seeking academic advice.
 - Responded to inquiries regarding graduate program opportunities at the University of Guelph.
 - GSA-TSS Non-Renewal Contract_
 - In accordance with the terms of the TSS contract, the Executive team mutually agreed with TSS not to renew the contract after the final date (December 19th,
-

2025). The contract has been honored in full.

- University of Guelph Presidential Installation
 - Attended the installation ceremony for Dr. Rene Van Acker, the 10th President of the University of Guelph.
 - Noted that it was a meaningful moment for the community. Highlighted Dr. Van Acker impactful quote:
“Our mission to improve life and our ability to solve real-world challenges are clearly needed in the world. This is how bold new chapters begin. Forward together.”
- Lunch with Provost (Bill Rosehart) / Vice-Provost (Melinda Scott), CSA Executive, GSA Executive
 - Discussed student spaces across campus.
- Executive Committee Special Meeting – Regarding the VP Academic Matter
 - Discussed matters related to the VP Academic vacancy for November.
- SLAM: Student Leaders and Administrators Meetings
 - Focused on the University’s approach to AI and explored effective methods to train faculty and students on responsible AI use to enhance teaching, learning efficiency, and DEI practices.
- Attended SEC Meeting
- Grad Lounge Sustainability Committee
 - The meeting was postponed this month, awaiting new GD appointments and will take place in November.

7:30 p.m. V.P. Internal: Yuxin Hu (*regrets received, please refer to the report in the Board Meeting Materials*)

7:30 p.m. V.P. Financial: Ayush Chawla

A.Chawla shared the following updates:

- GSA Grants
 - Three grant applications were approved at this month’s Finance Committee meeting.
 - Noted increased interest from graduate students in organizing events.
 - A greater portion of the budget is being used to support initiatives to enhance
-

student life.

- Confirmed that a reallocation of funds was made this year toward DEI initiatives.
- Health and Dental Committee Participation
 - A reminder to students on proper submissions of psychotherapy claims was made.
 - This includes 1:1 treatment that can be accessed through services such as MintOT.
 - Students experiencing significant health or dental insurance issues are encouraged to contact A. Chawla or GSA Staff.
- Travel Grant & Braithwaithe Travel Grant Cross-Reference System Update
 - OGPS has cooperated in assisting with cross-referencing recipients of the Braithwaithe Travel Grant and the funding granted.
 - This information allows the Finance Committee to make more informed decisions on GSA Travel Grant applications based on financial need.
 - This month marked the first meeting using the updated cross-reference system.
- Attended CUPE 3913 Networking Event
- VP Academic Responsibilities – Budget Review
- Health & Dental Coverage Discussion

A discussion took place regarding the current \$120 vision care allotment over two years, which was identified as insufficient for students. The Health and Dental Committee noted that increasing coverage would raise fees for all students, and other priorities currently take precedence. All cost changes must be approved through a referendum.

- A suggestion was raised about combining health and dental coverage into a single flexible-use pool, allowing students to allocate funds based on individual needs.
- Availability of additional benefits through CUPE 3913 was discussed.
- Dual insurance payments charges for students who are also University employees were also discussed.

7:42 p.m. V.P. Academic: M. Manjurul Islam

M. Islam shared the following update:

- Board of Graduate Studies Committee Meeting
 - Presentations and orientation for new members.
 - Introduction of three new master's programs.
-

- Three major modifications to existing master's programs.
- Admissions and Progress Committee Meeting
 - Review of Student files from OGPS records.
 - Approval of study extension requests.
- Attended Meeting with AVP Graduate Studies and GSA President & CEO
 - *Refer to Y. Hasan's report.*
- Student Support
 - Assisted a student experiencing an academic conflict with their advisor.
- Student Memorial Service
 - Attended the event alongside the GSA President & CEO.
- Student Senate Caucus Meeting
 - Discussed the process for selecting a chairperson for the committee.
 - Concern raised by graduate student senator regarding ongoing payment issues.
- Library Student Services Committee Meeting
 - Introductory session reviewing member responsibilities.
 - Committee chair elected.
 - Distributed last year's committee report.
- Senate Meeting – October 2025
 - Concern raised by graduate student senator regarding ongoing payment issues.
 - The AVP Graduate Studies initiated contact with the Registrar, Associate Registrar of Student Financial Services, and Vice-President of Human Resources to assist in resolving the matter.

The GSA President & CEO expressed appreciation for the VP Academic's service and dedication whilst his tenure to the GSA. VP Academic responded, sharing his gratitude to the GSA team.

7:46 p.m. V.P. Community Engagement: Spandana Chereddy

S. Chereddy shared the following update:

- DJ Night – September 26th
 - Positive turnout from 60 – 70 students. Assisted the Events Coordinator and GSA Team to help coordinate the event.
-

- Black History Month Weekly Planning
 - Attended weekly Wednesday meetings with the planning committee.
 - Focused on programming, collaboration and highlighting black student voices and stories.
 - SGBV Committee – September 29th
 - Discussed prevention training and awareness initiatives.
 - Attended Student Leaders & Administrators Meeting (SLAM)
 - University Hearing Board (2025 – 2026 Term)
 - Serving as the GSA representative on this board.
 - Focuses on student conduct processes.
 - GSA Executive & Internal Meetings – October 6th
 - Discussed VP Academic position transition, TSS Contract, and event planning.
 - Executive Committee Special Meeting – October 23rd
 - Discussed about the semester updates and finances for the VP Academic position.
 - Met TSS – October 16th
 - *Refer to Y. Hasan's report.*
 - Lunch with Provost, Vice-Provost, CSA & GSA Executives
 - Discussed study spaces, accessibility improvements for students
 - Bus Pass Opt-Ins and Opt-Outs
 - Processed three bus pass opt-outs for eligible students
 - Approved two opt-ins in October
 - It is feasible to opt-in before November 8th if the bus pass is required until the end of the semester.
 - Weekly Newsletter & Listserv
 - Assisted with sharing information for the weekly newsletters and listserv announcements.
 - Dental Opt-Outs
 - Funds were disbursed for dental-opts. Please reach out to the VP Finance or GSA
-

Business Operations for discussion on any delayed opt-out funding.

- Wellness Department Collaboration
 - Continued to meet bi-weekly to plan and discuss collaboration.

- Weekend GO Train Service Coming to Guelph
 - There was an issue that the Kitchener Line was closed.
 - GO Transit will be providing four trips from Guelph to Union Station on weekends that will begin on November 23rd
 - Route 99 Issue discussed. The meeting was postponed.
 - New buses were added to Route 99.

7:54 p.m. In Camera Session

The meeting moved into an in-camera session at 7:54 p.m. with only voting members present.

MOTION # 9: B.I.R.T. The meeting moved to an in-camera session at 7:54 p.m. with only voting members present.

Motioned by A. Chawla, seconded by Y. Hasan. Motion carries.

MOTION # 10: B.I.R.T. The in-camera session ended.

Motioned by A. Chawla, seconded by S. Chereddy. Motion carries.

Adjournment

The Meeting was adjourned, and the next GSA Board meeting is scheduled for November 26th, 2025. Please send your regrets no later than November 25th at 12 p.m.

Minutes Submitted by:	Minutes Approved by:	
<hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">Harrison Barretto GSA Administrative Assistant</p>	<hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">Yuxin Hu GSA Vice President - Internal</p>	<hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">Kathleen Nolan Chair</p>

GENERAL DIRECTOR APPOINTMENTS

Personal Statement – Juno McGowan, LGBTQ2IA+ Student Representative

Hi, I'm Juno and I am hoping to continue to try and help the LGBTQ1SIA+ grad community which remains so separated from each other by department and poor community attempts on behalf of the school. I also aim to push away senseless standards of how a person should be a grad student.

Thank you,

Juno

GENERAL DIRECTOR APPPOINTMENT

Personal Statement – Ruitian (Sky) Chen, International Student Representative

As an international student who has completed both undergraduate and graduate studies in Environmental Science at this university, I have developed a strong understanding of the unique challenges faced by international students, including academic adjustment, cultural adaptation, and navigating institutional systems. Having experienced these transitions personally, I am deeply committed to advocating policies and initiatives that foster inclusivity, accessibility, and equitable support for all international students. My long-term academic journey within this community has equipped me with insight into both the academic and social aspects of student life, allowing me to represent diverse perspectives effectively. If elected, I will work to enhance communication between international students and the university, promote resources that facilitate integration, and create opportunities for cross-cultural engagement. I am dedicated to ensuring that every international student feels heard, supported, and empowered to achieve academic and personal success.

Regards,
Ruitian (Sky)

GENERAL DIRECTOR APPOINTMENT

Personal Statement – Mavis Opuko, Black Student Representative

Hello, my name is Mavis Opoku. I am a Black PhD student in the Department of Management, and I have previously served as the Black Student Representative on the Graduate Student Association. In this role, I worked closely as a General Director to strengthen our collaboration with the Cultural Diversity Office. One of our key accomplishments was supporting the creation and coordination of the Black and Racialized Graduate Student Support Network, which continues to play an active role in planning community building events during the Fall and Winter semesters.

I hope to be re-elected so that I can continue to advocate for the needs of Black graduate students and help foster spaces that support growth, inclusion, and cultural celebration. Thank you for your continued support and consideration.

Regards,
Mavis

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS

Animal Bioscience

Report:

Report by:

Biomedical Science

Report: The OVC Graduate In-Program Awards Competition for 2026 is now open, offering over 70 awards to students enrolled in graduate programs for Winter 2026. Applications are due by December 15, 2025, at 11:59 PM.

Report by: David Bahrami

Report: The Biomedical Sciences department holds a two-hour weekly accountability group every Monday to support graduate students in maintaining progress and accountability. Some students have reported that this initiative has been very helpful. Furthermore, a new course has been made available for the Winter semester: ENGG*6301 – Advanced Topics in Micro and Nano Biotechnology, a new course opportunity.

Report by: Nicole Loyola Andrade

Black Student Representatives

Report:

Report by:

Business Administration/Management

Report:

Report by:

Chemistry

Report:

Report by:

Clinical Studies

Report:

Report by:

Computing & Information (Computer Science)

Report:

Report by:

Economics and Finance

Report:

Report by:

Engineering

Report:

The month of November featured a series of academic, professional development, and community-building activities across the College of Engineering and the broader University of Guelph community.

1. November 6 – Special Lecture by Dr. Aref Ali Nayed: A distinguished lecture titled “Engaging Operational Artifacts: Toward a Philosophy of Engineering” was delivered by University of Guelph alumnus Dr. Aref Ali Nayed.
 2. November 7 – Regenerative Medicine Seminar: A seminar on “Microscale Tissue Engineering: Leveraging Mechanical Feedback Loops in Microphysiological Organs.” by the speaker: Dr. Christopher Moraes from The University of British Columbia.
 3. November 9 – Fall Open House: The College of Engineering hosted a successful Fall Open House, welcoming prospective students, families, and community members. Visitors toured facilities, engaged with faculty and current students, and learned about academic programs including the newly added Civil Engineering.
 4. November 11 – Pre-Social Robotics Tour & Innovators Social: A Robotics Institute tour in the College of Engineering was conducted by Cole Tarry. Following the tour, graduate students attended the Innovators & Entrepreneurs Social at The Lookout, designed to encourage idea sharing, networking, and entrepreneurial collaboration.
 5. November 14 – Winter 2026 Course Selection Began.
 6. November 17 – Graduate Student Lunch Gathering: A lunch gathering at the University Club was held as a gesture of recognition following the air conditioning system failures experienced during the summer in the third-floor graduate office.
 7. November 19 – Professional Networking Talk by Farheen Ahmed was held in RICH 3507.
-

8. Announcement – The Canadian Food Engineering Conference 2026 dates were announced to be on May 14–15, 2026 organized by the College of Engineering, University of Guelph.

Report by: Himashree Ponrajan

English & Theatre Studies

Report:

Report by:

Environmental Design & Rural Development

Report:

Report by:

Environmental Science

Report:

- The School of Environmental Science Graduate Student Council (SES GSC) held a Halloween Cookie Decorating Event where graduate students were encouraged to come out and decorate some cookies
 - A graduate student presentation series began with a workshop looking at improving scientific communication skills in presentation and then we held our first presentation session where students have the opportunity to practice upcoming presentations or try out new ideas for presenting their work in a low-pressure environment to their student peers. We are planning to hold one more presentation session before the semester ends and then picking back up in the winter semester.
 - The SES GSC is working with some of the SES faculty to develop and start up a department-wide student seminar series in the new semester where graduate students will have the opportunity to present to students, faculty, and staff in the SES department in hopes to build more of a community within our department. We had our first meeting with the faculty to discuss this initiative and plan to meet again in December after the next SES faculty meeting takes place.
 - SES merch orders were offered to SES graduate students, and we have had good success with interest in placing orders from students.
 - The SES GSC is also working on planning our annual SES GSC Symposium which is a graduate student conference where students are given the opportunity to present their research through poster and PowerPoint presentations with prizes given to best presentations based on judge voting. We have been in discussions with OMAFA about potential sponsorships and panel
-

members for the conference.

- Symposium is tentatively scheduled for March 2026

Report by: Jenna Scharnowski (agreed! Sarah Kingsley)

Family Relations & Applied Nutrition

Report:

Report by:

Fine Arts & Music

Report:

Report by:

Food Science

Report:

Report by:

Food, Agriculture & Resource Economics

Report:

Report by:

Geography

Report:

Report by:

History

Report:

Report by:

Hospitality, Food & Tourism

Report:

Report by:

Human Health Sciences (HHS)

Report: No updates

Report by: Zayd Al Kassem (agreed! BHyde-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:

- **OVC Graduate In-Program Awards Competition 2026 - NOW OPEN!**
 - o Deadline to apply is December 15, 2025, at 11:59pm
 - o For information on requirements and how to apply: [Click here.](#)
 - **OVC Food Market Continues**
 - o Every Monday from 3-5 pm in the OVC Cafeteria
 - **2025 Schofield Lecture: Dr. Yasuko Rikihisa**
 - o November 19th, 2025, at 10:30 a.m.
 - o Location: In person in ELCA 1720 and virtually via [Teams.](#)
 - **Grad Student Workshop - A Fresh Approach to Career Exploration: Creating a Meaningful Career**
 - o Monday, November 17th at 10:00-11:30, ECLA 1725
 - o Snacks and coffee provided
 - **2026 OVC Summer Research Studentships**
 - o Proposals due December 8th, 2025
 - o <https://uoguelphca.sharepoint.com/sites/OVCResearch/SitePages/Summer-Research-Studentships-2026.aspx?OR=Teams-HL&CT=1759772206951>
 - o The Studentships support opportunities for students to engage in semi-independent research projects or participate in larger ongoing research projects during the summer.
 - **OVC Bakes**
-

- o OVC faculty, staff and students baked up nearly 900 treats to welcome students back this fall

Report by: Sam Dobson & Erin Howard

Philosophy

Report:

Report by:

Physics

Report:

Report by:

Plant Agriculture

Report:

1. Events and Community Engagement

Pumpkin Carving Event: The annual Pumpkin Carving event was a great success. It was well-attended, with approximately 60 people participating. This event served as a strong start to our fall social calendar.

2. Facilities and Lounge Updates (The Pub)

We have received approval to proceed with facility updates in the Pub area. Aggie Pub Night was held on November 5, 2025.

Charitable Giving: A total of \$100 was donated to United Way by the Plant Ag. Grad Student Liaison Committee.

3. Graduate Student Initiatives

Monthly Coffee Break

We are introducing a regular initiative to support connection among our graduate student community:

Purpose: To host a regular, monthly coffee break for graduate students located in the Bovey building and the crop science building.

The second coffee break of Fall 25 took place on November 3rd at noon. This will continue monthly to foster a supportive and collaborative environment and to connect graduate students from the buildings.

Report by: Ishrat Zahan

Political Science

Report:

Report by:

Population Medicine

Report: The OVC Graduate In-Program Awards Competition for 2026 is now open. Applications are due by December 15, 2025, at 11:59 PM. OVC food market continues. MPH student placement showcase occurring Nov 21st.

Report by: Olivia Gibson, Amna Jaleel.

Psychology

Report:

Report by:

Sociology & Anthropology

Report:

Report by:

PhD in Social Practice and Transformational Change (SOPR)

Report:

Report by:

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Alcohol & Substance Abuse Advisory Committee

Meeting date:

Report:

Next Meeting:

Reported by:

Animal Care Committee

Meeting date: Nov 7, 2025

Report: No updates to report

Next Meeting: Dec 5, 2025

Reported by: Barbara Hyde-Lay

Athletics Advisory Committee

Meeting date: Nov 17, 2025

Report: No meeting updates to report

Next Meeting: January 27th, 2026

Reported by: Olivia Gibson

By-Laws & Constitution Committee (GSA)

Meeting date:

Report:

Next Meeting:

Reported by:

Co-Curricular Experiential Learning Integrity Committee (CELIC)

Meeting date:

Report:

Next Meeting:

Reported by:

Code of Ethical Conduct Committee

Meeting date:

Report:

Next Meeting:

Reported by:

Compulsory Fees Committee (CFC)

Meeting date:

Report:

Next Meeting:

Reported by:

Digital and Technology Advisory Committee

Meeting date:

Report:

Next Meeting:

Reported by:

Equity Committee (GSA)

Meeting date: September 22nd, 2025

Report: The committee did not meet in October. The committee will resume meetings in November once new GDs have been assigned to committees.

Next Meeting: No next scheduled meeting as of 11/17/2025

Reported by: Erin Howard

Finance Committee (GSA)

Meeting date:

Report:

Next Meeting:

Reported by:

Grad Lounge Sustainability Committee (GSA)

Meeting date:

Report:

Next Meeting:

Reported by:

Health & Dental Plan

Meeting date:

Report:

Next Meeting:

Reported by:

Hospitality Services Advisory Committee (HSAC)

Meeting date:

Reports:

Next Meeting:

Reported by:

Human Rights Advisory Group

Meeting date:

Report:

Next Meeting:

Reported by:

Judicial Committee

Meeting date:

Report:

Next Meeting:

Reported by:

OUTline Committee

Meeting date:

Report:

Next meeting:

Reported by:

Student Food Security Committee

Meeting date:

Report:

Next Meeting:

Reported by:

Student Life Award Committee

Meeting date:

Report:

Next Meeting:

Reported by:

Student Wellness Advisory Group

Meeting date:

Report:

Next Meeting:

Reported by:

Student Wellness EDI Committee

Meeting date:

Report:

Next Meeting:

Reported by:

Student Experience Advisory Committee

Meeting date: 24/Oct/2025 and 14/Nov2025

Report: It was discussed the Student Experience budget for the remainder of 2025, and during the next meeting we reviewed plans to integrate activities aimed at enhancing the student experience.

Next Meeting: To be determined

Reported by: Nicole Loyola Andrade

Transit Committee (GSA/CSA)

Meeting date:

Report:

Next Meeting:

Reported by:

EXECUTIVE & STAFF REPORTS

President & CEO – Yusra Hasan

Hello folks, I hope you are all great.

This month has been a busy one for the GSA, happy to share that we are making significant strides!

GSA Executive Committee Special Meeting (Late October)

- Distribution of the GSA VP Academic roles as per board and executive discussions amongst some executive.

Ratified to the UC Governance Board.

GSA VP Academic Student Consultations (20+ hrs.)

GSA President and VP Academic (Ben Bradshaw) Meetings

- Requested payroll guides for graduate students should be accessible on the Human Resources, GSA, and OGPS webpages. Ben Bradshaw mentioned he would investigate coordinating a guide video to be distributed.
- Graduate engineering study spaces to be maintained for hygiene, maintenance, and an acceptable standard of care; issues raised by the GSA President and CEO and investigation commenced.

Executive Committee Meeting Scheduling and Chairing

In-Person Student Supports (every Thursday for three hours)

Lunch Gathering for COE Graduate Students Impacted by Air Conditioning S'2025

- This was an acknowledgement lunch, and students voiced their concerns to the VP Academic and VP Student Affairs and shared thoughts on this with the GSA.

VP Student Affairs (Melinda Scott) and GSA President (in-attendance) Meeting

- Discussed student study spaces at the current student capacity and progress made to inform students of vacant rooms they could use for studies or events.
- Briefly reviewed the overall university operational budget to understand the constraints for accessibility and innovation stemming from pilot university-wide projects the GSA can promote.
- Spoke of the University of Guelph policy statement on Freedom of Expression.

Grad Lounge Sustainability Committee Meeting

- Scheduled for late November with the agenda distributed. This month seems busy for some members, it could occur later in the month.

Hybrid Compulsory Fees Committee Involvement.

Student Senate Caucus

- Participated in this committee meeting on behalf of the GSA VP Academic role.

University Senate (Hold) – to be attended prior to the board meeting and report in the next sessions of reporting.

Executive Committee (Special) Meeting

- Meeting is scheduled and the agenda has been distributed surrounding: MintOT Contract Amendment, restructuring of GSA Executive Roles, OGPS-related matters, timeline of Executive position.

Thank you so much and continue to be awesome, folks!

VP Internal – Yuxin Hu

Hi everyone!

Hope you are all thriving and staying warm!

Here are some things that are ongoing other than my regular duties:

- Bylaws
 - o Committee meeting to discuss some updates and anticipated changes, including the previously discussed GD honorarium amendment. Since Bill 33 has just past, we are taking a financially defensive approach until we get a better understanding of what that means for our organization – hence the proposal will be on hold
 - o Committee changes outlined in the agenda of this meeting. Please refer to the agenda for details.

- Board and elections
 - o Exec by-elections is ongoing and currently in the campaign period. Voting will open November 28th! Please show your support by voting! We will hopefully have a full exec team early December before the next board meeting.
 - o GD appointments and committee assignment are ongoing. If you have not heard anything back from the chair of your assigned committee after the email introduction, please contact me and we can figure something out.

- BRGSSN Networking - attended as one of the GSA reps. Great event organized by the Cultural Diversity team

Please feel free to reach out for any questions or concerns!

Warm regards,
Yuxin

VP Finance – Ayush Chawla

Hello everyone,

I wanted to share some updates from this past month and highlight a few opportunities available to you. This November, I stepped in to assist with VP Academic responsibilities while continuing my routine finance duties. During this time, I supported students navigating academic concerns and worked on updating our Bursary Terms and Conditions. I also had the opportunity to attend the Admissions in Progress meeting as a temporary voting member.

We've had some great community engagements over the last few months! Through our Professional Development and Recognition (PDR) grant system, we've supported several events, and we're excited to sponsor a few more this month. These events demonstrate the kind of vibrant community programming your PDR grants can support—so if you're planning an event or professional development activity, I encourage you to apply! The process is straightforward, and we're here to help bring your ideas to life.

A few important funding updates and reminders:

Travel Grants: Applications for travel funding have become increasingly competitive as demand rises. We're committed to supporting students (up to \$500 at a time) who have limited alternative sources of funding for research or presentation travel. If you're planning to travel for academic purposes, please review our terms, conditions, and required documents before applying—this will help ensure a smooth application process and quicker reviews.

DEI Bursary: This bursary has been fully allocated for the semester, but we may still consider exceptional cases on an individual basis. If you're facing exceptional circumstances, please reach out.

Childcare Support: Our childcare funding remains largely untapped. If you have childcare expenses related to your graduate studies, this support is available to you—don't hesitate to apply. We'll be discussing this fund at our next Finance Committee meeting.

The Finance Committee will be meeting in the final days of November to review applications. We've intentionally scheduled this later in the month to maximize the application window, so if you're experiencing financial need, please submit your application soon.

As always, I'm here to support you. If you have questions about any of our funding programs or need assistance with an application, please don't hesitate to reach out.

Best,
Ayush
VP Finance

VP Community Engagement – Spandana Chereddy

1. Bill 33 – Update and Next Steps

The Ontario government has officially passed **Bill 33** (74–40). This legislation moved forward without public consultations or committee hearings, despite strong province-wide opposition. Nearly **12,000 signatures** were collected and submitted by students, workers, and community partners urging the government to stop the erosion of student democracy and autonomy.

Currently, we are awaiting clarity regarding the **implementation timeline** and **organizational impacts** for student unions and graduate associations. I have reached out to CFS-Ontario and campus leadership for guidance, and I will continue to provide updates as more information becomes available.

2. Launching Wellness Drop-In Therapy Sessions — Starting January 2026

Beginning in **January**, the GSA will partner with **Student Wellness** to offer **weekly one-on-one drop-in consultation therapy sessions** hosted directly in the GSA office space.

- Three 45-minute appointment slots will be available each week.
- Online sign-up will open at the start of the winter semester.
- Modeled after the existing BIPOC drop-in program.

This initiative aims to support graduate student mental health by creating accessible, low-barrier wellness support on campus.

3. CUPE 3913 Draft Proposal Meeting — November 25

Attended the CUPE 3913 Draft Proposal Meeting to stay informed about the evolving labour landscape and its potential impact on graduate students, TAs, and GAs. Continued collaboration ensures that the GSA remains proactive and aware of key updates affecting student workers.

4. CUPE + GSA Joint Tabling — November 26

On November 26, the GSA partnered with CUPE for a joint outreach table to promote our services and engage directly with the graduate community. This collaboration helped increase student awareness of both GSA resources and labour rights information.

5. Free Yoga Class with MintOT — December 1

To support student wellness during this busy period, we are hosting a **free yoga class** for all graduate students:

- **Date:** December 1
- **Time:** 1:30–2:30 PM
- **Location:** PCH 001B
- **Registration:** Via Gryphlife

The session will be facilitated by community yoga instructor **Chantalle Aslin**, who brings a warm, grounding energy that is perfect for end-of-term de-stressing.

6. Textile Workshop Collaboration — Art Gallery of Guelph (Feb 6, 2026)

As part of **Black History Month**, the GSA is collaborating on a **Textile Workshop** at the Art Gallery of Guelph scheduled for **February 6th**. Planning is currently underway, including logistics, materials, and community engagement components. More details will be finalized in the upcoming month.

7. Meetings Attended

Throughout November, I participated in the following meetings as part of my executive responsibilities:

- **BHM Committee Meeting** — November 5
- **GSA Executive Committee Meeting** — November 13
- **SLAM: Student Leaders & Administrators Meeting** — November 25
- **Experiential Learning Advisory Committee (ELAC)** — November 25

These meetings focused on coordination, upcoming programming, and supporting key student initiatives across campus.

8. VP Academic Support & Graduate Student Issues

In addition to Community Engagement responsibilities, I supported the VP Academic portfolio by:

- Attending the **Board of Graduate Studies** meeting on behalf of the GSA.
-

- Assisting with several **graduate student academic concerns** brought forward this month.

As we near the end of the semester, I want to extend my warmest wishes to all graduate students.

- **Good luck to everyone writing final exams, submitting papers, or completing major projects.**
- **Take care of yourselves during this busy time.**
- **Wishing you all a restful and joy-filled holiday season ahead.**

Thank you for your continued engagement, and I look forward to everything we will accomplish together in the winter semester.

Regards,

Spandana

VP Community Engagement

Business Operations Manager – Michelle Morris

Hello Everyone,

Trust you are all doing well. November has been a busy month, and I would like to provide an update on ongoing activities:

Communications Coordinator Hiring Process:

We are currently progressing through the hiring process for the new Communications Coordinator. The deadline for résumé submissions is Thursday, November 27th. Our goal is to have the selected candidate start on January 5th, 2026.

VP Academic Election:

A reminder that voting for the VP Academic position closes on December 3rd. The successful candidate is expected to assume the role immediately following the voting period, beginning December 3rd.

Student Advocacy Support:

I continue to coordinate communications with students on advocacy-related matters and direct them to the executives who are temporarily fulfilling the VP Academic responsibilities, ensuring they receive the appropriate guidance and support.

VP Academic Assigned Meeting Coordination:

Meeting schedules and timelines are being shared with executives to ensure they remain on track for all VP Academic–related commitments.

GSA Holiday Dinner – December 18th:

Please remember to confirm your RSVP using the worksheet included in the invitation email. You may also email me directly.

Professional Headshot Event:

In the absence of the Events Coordinator, ensuring that all financial and logistical arrangements for the professional headshot event are in place, and liaison with the relevant partners involved.

GSA Boardroom Furnishing:

Met with the UC Senior Operations Manager to review the furniture purchase and proposed layout for the GSA Boardroom.

Operational and Financial Tasks:

Tasks continue with regular operational responsibilities, including bursary payouts, internal and external payments, reconciliations, banking, and related duties.

Please reach out if you have any questions.

Best,

Michelle

GSA Business Operations Manager



Communications Coordinator – Joshua Gonzales

Dear Board,

I'm writing to let you know that I will be stepping down from the communications coordinator role with the GSA, with December being my final month. I'm deeply grateful for the opportunity to have been part of this team and to contribute to the work of the association.

Thank you for your support, collaboration, and commitment to supporting graduate students. It's been a meaningful experience, and I wish you all continued success in the months ahead.

Warm regards,
Josh Gonzales

Events Coordinator – Hrishikesh Patil

November 2025

Completed Events

Halloween-themed DJ Night

Date: Oct 24

Time: 8:00 PM – 11:00 PM

Venue: The Lookout

Goal: Organized several games and activities to engage participants. More than 70 students participated in this event, indulged in small activities, and had fun.

Thursday Trivia Nights

Overview: Thursday trivia nights to promote student networking and foster a sense of community.

Paint night

Stressbuster event. More than 10 students engaged in painting activities.

Upcoming Events

Professional headshots event

Date: 24th November

Time: 10:00 AM – 01:00 PM

Venue: The Lookout

Paint night

Date: 25th November

Time: 5:00 PM – 7:00 PM

Venue: The Lookout

Prepared by:

Hrishikesh Patil

Events Co-ordinator

Graduate Students Association (GSA)

University of Guelph
