



BOARD MEETING MATERIALS

Wednesday, April 22, 2026

Hybrid: Microsoft Teams & UC Room # 332

5:30 PM

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GSA April Board Meeting Agenda

Please send regrets to gsa@uoguelph.ca no later than **April 22, 2026, at 12:00 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 Mississaugas 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 April 22, 2026, GSA Board Meeting be approved as presented.

Approval of Minutes:

MOTION #2: B.I.R.T. the GSA Meeting Minutes of February 25, 2026, be approved as presented.

5:40 p.m. | CUPE 3913 Update: Grace Goderre, Vice President External

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

6:00 p.m. | General Director Appointment: Olivia Gibson, GSA Vice President Academic (Presented on behalf of VP Internal - vacant position)

1. Bibek Ghimire - Department of Plant Agriculture

MOTION #3: B.I.R.T. The GSA Board of Directors appoints Bibek Ghimire as a GSA general director in the Department of Plant Agriculture, effective immediately.

6:10 p.m. | PDR: College of Biological Sciences – Graduate Student Symposium: Jayson Capistrano

MOTION #4: B.I.R.T. the GSA Board of Directors approves the release of \$1,000 to the Research and Graduate Officer, Abiran Sritharan, in support of the 2026 College of Biological Sciences Graduate Student Symposium.

6:20 p.m. | 2026 – 2027 GSA Board Meeting Dates: Olivia Gibson, GSA Vice President Academic

MOTION #5: B.I.R.T. the GSA conduct its monthly board meetings at 5:30 p.m. on the following dates for the 2026 – 2027 term:

- May 20,
- June 17,
- July 22,
- September 23,
- October 21,
- November 18,
- December 16 (Virtual Meeting Only),
- January 20,
- February 17,
- March 24 (AGM)
- April 21

6:30 p.m. | 2026 – 2027 GSA General Director and Executive Elections: Olivia Gibson, GSA Vice President Academic

MOTION #6: B.I.R.T. the GSA’s annual General Director and Executive elections for 2026–2027 be held on the following dates:

General Director Elections	Date / Time
Nomination Period	September 16, 2026 @ 8:30 a.m. – September 28, 2026 @ 11:59 p.m.
Campaign Period	September 29, 2026 @ 8:30 a.m. – September 30, 2026 @ 11:59 p.m.

Voting Period	October 1, 2026 @ 8:30 a.m. – October 2, 2026 @ 11:59 p.m.
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Executive Elections	Date / Time
Nomination Period	March 17, 2027 @ 8:30 a.m. – March 22, 2027 @ 11:59 p.m.
Campaign Period	March 23, 2027 @ 8:30 a.m. – April 5, 2027 @ 11:59 p.m.
Voting Period	April 6, 2027 @ 8:30 a.m. – April 8, 2027 @ 11:59 p.m.
Results Announcement	April 9, 2027 – April 12, 2027

6:40 p.m. | Campus Safety Office Referendum Fee Preamble and Question: Yusra Hasan, GSA President & CEO

MOTION #7: B.I.R.T. the GSA approves the Campus Safety Fee referendum question as presented, to be included as part of the winter 2026 referendums.

7:00 p.m. | Amendments to GSA Bylaws: Spandana Chereddy, Vice President Community Engagement

MOTION #8: B.I.R.T. the GSA Bylaws be amended to reflect the following changes, as outlined in the Board materials:

- a correction of a typographical error,
- clarification of General Director removal conditions, and
- the separation of the Executive Committee and Appointed Officers into distinct articles.

7:10 p.m. | Amendments to GSA Board Policies: Spandana Chereddy, Vice President Community Engagement

MOTION #9: B.I.R.T. the Board Policy Manual be amended to reflect the following changes, as outlined in the Board materials:

- a correction of the Executive positions list, and
- the recognition of the Events Coordinator and Communications Coordinator as separate roles.

7:20 p.m. | Expansion of Travel Grant Eligibility Criteria: Ayush Chawla, Vice President

Finance

MOTION #9: B.I.R.T. the Board of Directors approves the expansion of the Travel Grant eligibility criteria to include graduate students engaged in thesis-based research.

7:30 p.m. | Department and Committee Updates

Executive Updates:

7:40 p.m. | President & CEO – Yusra Hasan

7:50 p.m. | Vice President Finance – Ayush Chawla

8:00 p.m. | Vice President Academic – Olivia Gibson

8:10 p.m. | Vice President Community Engagement – Spandana Chereddy

8:20 p.m. | In-Camera Session

MOTION #10: B.I.R.T. the GSA board meeting moves ‘in-camera’ for discussion.

MOTION #11: B.I.R.T. the GSA board meeting ‘in-camera’ session ends.

Adjournment



GSA February Board Meeting Minutes

February 25, 2026, 5:30 p.m.

Virtual Teams Meeting

ATTENDEES PRESENT

GSA Executives	
Yusra Hasan	President and CEO
Ayush Chawla	Vice President, Finance
Olivia Gibson	Vice President, Academic
Spandana Chereddy	Vice President, Community Engagement
General Directors	
David Bahrami	Biomedical Science
Nicole Loyola Andrad	
Mavis Opoku	Black Student Representative
Michael Capperault	Chemistry
Lokesh Kumar	Computer Science
Himashree Ponrajan	Interdisciplinary Engineering
Hrishikesh Patil	
Sarah Kingsley	Environmental Science
Jenna Scharnowski	
Ruitian (Sky) Chen	International Student Representative
Barbara Hyde-Lay	Human Health and Nutritional Sciences
Zayd Al Kassem	
Jenna Ford	Management
Erin Howard	Pathobiology
Samantha Dobson	
Ishrat Zahan	Plant Agriculture
Staff	
Kathleen Nolan	Chair
Harrison Barretto	GSA Administrative Assistant
Michelle Morris	GSA Business Operations Manager
Guests	
Benjamin Bradshaw	Assistant Vice President Graduate Studies
Emma Robinson	College Royal – PDR Applicant
Madeline Medrano	Geography Research Symposium – PDR Applicant

Regrets (with notification): Grace Goderre, LGBTQ2SIA+ Student Representative;
Mavis Opoku, Black Student Representative

Absent (no regrets received): Amna Jaleel, Population Medicine

5:30 p.m. | Call to Order: Kathleen Nolan, Chair

Territorial Acknowledgement

The Chair shared the personal land acknowledgement statement.

Approval of Agenda:

MOTION #1: B.I.R.T. The February 25, 2026, board meeting agenda be amended to include Olivia Gibson's report at the start of the meeting.

Moved by O. Gibson, seconded by H. Ponrajan. Motion carried.

MOTION #2: B.I.R.T. The amended Agenda for February 25, 2026, GSA Board Meeting be approved as presented.

Moved by M. Capperauld, seconded by S. Chereddy. Motion carried.

Approval of Minutes:

MOTION #3: B.I.R.T. The GSA Meeting Minutes of January 21, 2026, be approved as presented.

Moved by A. Chawla, seconded by M. Capperauld. Motion carried.

5:36 p.m. | Vice President Academic – Olivia Gibson

O. Gibson provided the following updates:

- Participated in:
 - Academic Governance Processes
 - Individual Student support and consultations
 - Board of Graduate Studies
 - Institutional Statement Guidelines Working Group
 - Senate
 - Conducted consultations related to the academic plan

O. Gibson requested that the Board members refer to her written report in the meeting materials for further, as she was unable to provide a full verbal update due to unexpected circumstances.

5:38 p.m. | CUPE 3913 Update: Grace Goderre, Vice President External

The Chair noted that G. Goderre sent their regrets. No update from CUPE3913.

5:36 p.m. | Faculty of Graduate Studies: Dr. Ben Bradshaw, Assistant Vice President (Graduate Studies)

B. Bradshaw provided the following updates:

GTA Bursary

- In response to student requests, OGPS asked CUPE 3913 to provide GTA bursaries as lump-sum payments; however, this has not yet been approved.

Implications of Provincial Decision to Unfreeze Domestic Tuition

- In Fall 2019, the provincial government froze tuition and reduced graduate domestic tuition fees by 10%.
- Beginning in Fall 2026, tuition fees will increase by 2%, generating additional revenue to help address the University's structural deficit.
- The government has also committed to increasing base funding and emphasizing enrollment in STEM fields.

OSAP – Shift in Grant-to-Loan Ratio

- There has been a significant policy shift in OSAP, with funding moving toward a higher proportion of loans and fewer grants.
- This change is intended to align Ontario more closely with other provinces.
- The University of Guelph does not have a formal position on this matter. However, provincially mandated financial aid programs remain available, allowing eligible students to access up to \$5,000 per term.

Questions and Discussion

A question was raised regarding whether Graduate Research Assistant (GRA) payments could be issued as a lump sum prior to the start of the semester.

B. Bradshaw noted that he has encouraged faculty advisors to “front-load” GRA payments; however, many have expressed concerns regarding student motivation and productivity.

As a result, most faculty continue to distribute GRA payments bi-weekly over the course of a semester. He further clarified that he does not have the authority to mandate this practice and has instead raised the matter with Graduate Program Coordinators for consideration at the faculty level.

5:48 p.m. | General Director Appointment Motion – K. Nolan, Chair

Candidate – Jenna Ford (Department of Management)

An individual statement was shared by the candidate.

MOTION #4: B.I.R.T. The GSA Board of Directors appoints Jenna Ford as a GSA General Director in the Department of Management, effective immediately.

Moved by A. Chawla, seconded by H. Ponrajan. Motion carried.

5:58 p.m. Discussion on redistribution of VP Internal duties and potential honorarium – Yusra Hasan, GSA President & CEO, and Ayush Chawla, GSA Vice President Finance

Y. Hasan & A. Chawla provided the following overview:

- Proposed breakdown of key responsibilities, as discussed at the most recent Executive Committee meeting:
 - **Vice President Academic:** Oversee by-elections, manage election processes, coordinate Board meetings and logistics, present at the AGM in place of the Vice President Internal, and oversee the Athletics Committee.
 - **Vice President Community Engagement:** Chair the Bylaw Committee, propose election dates, prepare forms, coordinate voting processes, and support office administration as needed.
 - **Vice President Finance:** Maintain General Director records in coordination with office staff.
- This arrangement ensures that all critical responsibilities of the Vice President Internal role are maintained without disruption, while distributing the workload equitably among the Executive team.
- A. Chawla clarified that he will not receive an honorarium for his additional responsibilities; however, an honorarium will be provided to the other two Executives in recognition of their expanded duties.
- A proposed honorarium of \$350 each was recommended.

MOTION #5: B.I.R.T. The GSA Board ratifies the appointments of the Vice President Academic, the Vice President Community Engagement, and the Vice President Finance to fulfill the responsibilities of the vacant Vice President Internal position for the months of March and April.

Moved by A. Chawla, seconded by H. Patil. Motion carried.

6:08 p.m. | PDR: College Royal – Emma Robinson, Vice President – College Royal Society

E. Robinson presented the following event information:

- **Organization:** A not-for-profit organization, with a significant portion of funding derived from off-campus business donations, on-campus student governments, and event enhancement funds.
- **Event:** A 10-day series of events for students, including the College Royal Ball, Super Thursday, flower arranging, a euchre tournament, and a cattle clipping competition.

- This is followed by an Open House Weekend featuring additional events, shows, and competitions.
- **Main Expenses:** Event supplies, marketing and outreach, and room and venue bookings.
- **Total Estimated Expenses:** \$200,000
- Sponsorship levels and associated benefits were outlined based on contribution amounts.

Questions and Discussion

- A. Chawla noted that, based on the submitted budgets, College Royal reported a surplus of \$49,281 in the previous year and projected a remaining balance of \$41,556 for the current year. He asked whether the requested \$1,000 would be used to expand available resources.
- E. Robinson clarified that the funding would be used to enhance event offerings.

Post-Presentation Discussion

- A. Chawla expressed concern regarding the request, citing the organization's existing surplus and uncertainty surrounding Bill 33. He stated that the GSA should prioritize funding student-led initiatives with fewer resources, rather than large-scale events with substantial existing funding.
- A question was raised regarding the target audience of the event. It was noted that the event primarily serves undergraduate students.

MOTION #6: B.I.R.T. The GSA Board of Directors approves the release of \$1,000 to the College Royal Society in support of the 2026 College Royal.

Moved by A. Chawla, seconded by H. Ponrajan. Motion not carried.

6:26 p.m. | PDR: Geography Graduate Student Research Symposium – Madeline Medrano, President – Geography Graduate Students Society (GGSS)

M. Medrano presented the following event information:

- **Organization:** A student-led society representing graduate students in the Department of Geography, Environment and Geomatics.
 - The society hosts both social and academic events.
- **Event:** A year-end research presentation day for graduate students.
 - Students present their research in one of three formats: 3-minute presentations, oral presentations, or poster presentations.
 - Presentations are evaluated by faculty members.
 - Prizes are awarded to top presenters.
- **Expenses:** \$982 (food and awards)
- **Additional Notes:**

- The GGSS has remained under budget for previous GSA-funded events.
- Funding would support increased accessibility and participation, enhance professional development opportunities, and strengthen community engagement.

Questions and Discussion

- A question was raised regarding additional funding sources. M. Medrano confirmed that no external funding sources were available, noting that departmental funding supports only the speaker series.
- A question was raised regarding expected participation. M. Medrano indicated that approximately 35 graduate students and 5 faculty members were expected to attend, including both presenters and attendees.

Post-Presentation Discussion

- A. Chawla stated that he would abstain from voting due to his involvement in assisting with budget adjustments. He recommended that the motion include a condition requiring submission of receipts to verify expenditures.
- A question was raised regarding the remaining budget for GSA PDR grants. A. Chawla noted that approximately \$1,800 remained in the base allocation. He further explained that unused Childcare Grant funds had been reallocated, bringing the total available PDR funding to approximately \$3,000.
- Several Executive and General Director members expressed strong support for the application.

MOTION #7: B.I.R.T. The GSA Board of Directors approves the release of \$982 to the Geography Graduate Student Society in support of the Geography Graduate Student Research Symposium, with the condition that receipts are provided and any unused funds are returned to the GSA.

Moved by A. Chawla, seconded by Y. Hasan. Motion carried.

6:47 p.m. | Continued Discussion on Honorarium for Redistribution of VP Internal Duties – Ayush Chawla, Vice President Finance

A. Chawla provided the following overview:

- He proposed that a fair honorarium for the two Executives (Vice President Academic and Vice President Community Engagement), who assumed the responsibilities of the Vice President Internal, would be \$400 each per month.
- S. Chereddy noted that, beyond the honorarium, the responsibilities of the Vice President Internal must be fully accounted for and expressed willingness to support the role voluntarily if needed.

- Y. Hasan clarified that, based on the most recent Executive Committee meeting, the primary responsibilities had been distributed as follows:
 - **Vice President Academic:**
 - Oversee by-elections and related election processes
 - Coordinate Board meetings and logistics
 - Present at the AGM in place of the Vice President Internal
 - Chair the Athletics Committee
 - **Vice President Community Engagement:**
 - Chair the Bylaws Committee
 - Develop voting forms for by-elections
- M. Morris added that O. Gibson would assume responsibility for the Vice President's Internal email and manage related communications.
- Y. Hasan suggested that the honorarium be issued upon completion of the assigned responsibilities.
- Further discussion was held regarding the appropriate honorarium amount for the Executives assuming these duties.

MOTION #8: B.I.R.T. The Board of Directors will provide honoraria of up to \$450 to the VP Community Engagement and the VP Academic, pending completion of all assigned tasks. Any changes to the amount of remuneration will be decided by the Executive Committee.

Moved by A. Chawla, seconded by S. Cheretty. Motion carried.

7:13 p.m. GSA Executive W26 By-Election Proposed Dates – Ayush Chawla, GSA Vice President Finance

A. Chawla provided the following overview of the GSA election timeline:

- **Nomination Period:** February 26 – March 19 (3 weeks)
- **Campaign Period:** March 20 – April 7 (2.5 weeks)
- **Voting Period:** April 9 – April 10 (2 days)
- **Results Announcement:** April 11 – April 14
- **Transition Period:** April 14 – April 30
- He noted that the previously planned paid transition period (May 1 – May 31) would be removed.

Discussion

- S. Cheretty proposed extending the voting period to four days and suggested requiring nominees to submit photos along with their statements.
- Y. Hasan, H. Ponrajan, and H. Patil expressed support for extending the voting period.

- E. Howard recommended a three-day voting period, noting that longer voting windows may reduce participation due to delayed engagement.

MOTION #9: B.I.R.T. The GSA Board of Directors approves the proposed Winter 2026 (W26) GSA Executive Election dates as per the above schedule, with one day added to the voting period (total 3 days), with that day removed from the campaign period.

Moved by A. Chawla, seconded by H. Ponrajan. Motion carried.

Loss of Quorum

As quorum was lost, all remaining agenda items requiring a motion and vote were deferred to the next meeting. This included:

- *The motion to remove the transition period.*
- *The motion to approve additional investment funds into a GIC.*

7:32 p.m. | GIC Investment Discussion – Ayush Chawla, Vice President Finance

A. Chawla provided the following overview:

- As the organization continues to expand, strategic investments are required to support long-term financial sustainability.
- A conservative approach was recommended, involving renewal of existing investments with the addition of new funds.
- The GSA currently holds two Guaranteed Investment Certificates (GICs):
 - \$5,000 allocated for credit card liabilities
 - \$200,000 earning interest at an annual rate of 2.6%
- A proposal was discussed to increase the larger GIC by an additional \$100,000–\$150,000, which would allow for a higher interest rate while safeguarding the GSA’s financial reserves.
- It was noted that the larger GIC was set to mature on March 17.
- K. Nolan indicated that this matter would be revisited at the April Board Meeting.
- A. Chawla noted that, due to the March 17 maturity date, an online motion would be required to approve any increase in the investment amount.
 - K. Nolan confirmed that this would be circulated via email motion on February 26.

7:39 p.m. | Department and Committee Updates

General Directors provided updates on behalf of their respective departments and committees.

Department of Engineering – Hrishikesh Patil

- H. Patil reported ongoing discussions with the Dean of the College of Engineering (COE) regarding the coordination of a meeting involving Finance, Human Resources, CUPE 3913, and COE representatives.
- The purpose of the meeting is to provide clarity on pay stubs and their interpretation, in response to multiple student inquiries.
- He noted that there is currently limited transparency regarding deductions and payment structures, and that he is continuing to work with COE representatives to address these concerns.

7:41 p.m. | Executive Reports

President & CEO – Yusra Hasan

Y. Hasan provided the following updates:

- Advocated for accessibility improvements and enhancements to expanded study spaces
- Participated in SLAM, SEC, and various committee meetings
- Chaired Executive Committee meetings
- Supported efforts to address the Vice President Internal vacancy
- Developed initiatives such as an Executive training familiarity questionnaire for long-term use
- Discussed proposed OneDrive storage solutions with University administration
- Engaged with University leadership
- Collaborated with the President of CUPE 3913
- Continued preparations for the March AGM with the Executive Team
- Confirmed that she would chair the Grad Lounge Sustainability Committee in March

Vice President Finance – Ayush Chawla

A. Chawla provided the following updates:

- Worked on the GIC investment renewal proposal and overall investment strategy
- Collaborated with the Executive Team on the redistribution of Vice President Internal responsibilities
- Noted that the Finance Committee meeting would likely be scheduled for early March due to insufficient applications to justify a February meeting

Vice President Community Engagement – Spandana Chereddy

S. Chereddy provided the following updates:

- Attended the State of the City meeting, where updates were provided on city-wide initiatives, budgets, and funding allocations

- Noted that government funding has been allocated to support housing development for individuals experiencing homelessness and to address the growing student population
- Attended a Transit Committee meeting and raised concerns regarding capacity issues on the 910 bus and Kitchener routes
 - The committee acknowledged these concerns and indicated that updates would be provided at the next meeting
 - S. Cherreddy encouraged Board members to refer to her written report for additional details
- Participated in a SLAM meeting
 - A University-developed tool to support organizations with bylaw amendments was introduced
 - The tool will be shared with S. Cherreddy for further distribution to the Board
- Coordinated with Student Wellness to support events such as “Let’s Talk Grad Life”
- Provided an update on proposed transit fee increases, noting that increases are required to remain below 2% annually over the next four years (see report for detailed fee schedule)

In-Camera Session

A motion to enter an in-camera session was brought forward. The motion did not pass.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at **7:48 p.m.**

The next GSA Annual General Meeting (AGM) is scheduled for **March 25, 2026.**

Minutes Submitted by:	Minutes Approved by:	
Harrison Barretto GSA Administrative Assistant	Olivia Gibson GSA Vice President Academic	Kathleen Nolan Chair

GENERAL DIRECTOR APPPOINTMENT

Personal Statement – Bibek Ghimire, The Department of Plant Agriculture

I am a Master's student in Sustainable Agriculture (Plant Science) at the University of Guelph, seeking to serve as a General Director representing the Department of Plant Agriculture. With over two years of experience as a Vice President in a Student Union and as Secretary of Amnesty International Nepal, I bring strong leadership, communication, and organizational skills. I am committed to serving as an effective liaison between graduate students and the GSA by actively listening to concerns and ensuring their voices are clearly represented. I aim to strengthen student engagement, transparency, and participation within the graduate community. Through this role, I hope to support academic and professional development opportunities while fostering an inclusive, collaborative, and well-connected environment for all graduate students

Bibek Ghimire

PDR GRANT PRESENTATION – College of Biological Sciences - Graduate Student Symposium, Jayson Capistrano

Activities Grant (PDR) Application Form

Event Name

College of Biological Sciences – Graduate Student Symposium

Event Date

05/05/2026

Event Description

The Graduate Student Symposium (GSS) is an annual conference hosted and organized by the College of Biological Sciences (CBS) with support from the Associate Dean Research Office. It is a college-level student-run conference that provides graduate students from CBS an opportunity to present their research via posters and/or oral presentations. Graduate students from all three departments within CBS, namely the Human Health Sciences (HHS), Integrative Biology (IB), and Molecular and Cellular Biology (MCB) departments, are also afforded a chance to familiarize themselves with the research being conducted by their peers and other research groups and labs across CBS, foster meaningful connections, and build networks and collaborations.

Additionally, GSS offers newly enrolled graduate students a low-stake opportunity to practice their presentation skills, while honing those who are more senior. GSS invites professors and teaching faculty from the three different departments to evaluate and judge graduate students' presentations, thus providing them with objective feedback and a critical appraisal of their research. Finally, prizes are awarded to graduate students who excelled in either poster or oral presentations, which boosts a graduate student's confidence and morale for future similar opportunities.

Because GSS is local and accessible, all these experiences become invaluable to graduate students' development and success in their academic growth and journeys.

Contact Person**Name**

Jayson Capistrano

Department

Department of Molecular and Cellular Biology

Email

jcapistr@uoguelph.ca

Phone

(505) 365-8157

Organization Information**Organization**

2026 Graduate Student Symposium Planning Committee

Department

College of Biological Sciences (Inter-departmental)

Email

cbsgss@uoguelph.ca

Phone

(505) 365-8157

Audience Information**Graduate Students Expected**

160

Undergraduate Students Expected

30

Faculty, Staff and Community Members Expected

20

Total Expected

210

Funding Information**Have you received funding from the GSA before?**

Yes

Please specify how the money was spent

The committee consists of volunteer graduate students from the three CBS departments who plan, execute, and host the event. Each year, there are new volunteers and a handful of returning members in the planning committee. According to last year's final budget, the GSS received \$1,000.00 in funding from the GSA Activities Grant. The amount was used to support and cover the cost of the event. Specifically, the amount was used for the AV rental fee (\$93.91, included the podium, microphone, speakers, and projectors) and the Waasaamowin booking fee (\$500.00). The amount was also used to partially cover the cost of the prizes (totaling \$840.00 in Amazon gift cards, valued at \$70.00 each) which were awarded to the winners of the oral and poster presentations.

Similar to last year, the funds will be allocated to booking equipment and facilities and the prizes. The event will still include oral and poster presentation, but instead of keynote speakers, the GSS will be hosting its inaugural "Departmental Brawl". Participants for this brawl will be chosen from the best oral presentations from each of the three departments and the best overall presentation will be selected by the audience through crowd voting. The best presentations from the oral, posters, and departmental brawl will receive gift card prizes.

Amount Requested

\$ 1,000.00 CAD

IF ALLOCATED, please indicate who the cheque can be made payable to:

Abiran Sritharan (Research and Grad Officer, Associate Dean Research Office, asrithar@uoguelph.ca)

Event Budget

REVENUE (Sources)	Last Year (2025)	Projected (for 2026)		
CBS ADR Office	\$5,000.00	\$7,000.00		CBS ADR Office
SLEF/UGAA Funds	\$1,000.00	\$0.00		GSA PDR Funds
GSA PDR Funds	\$0.00	\$1,000.00		Both
Total Revenue	\$6,000.00	\$8,000.00		
EXPENSES				
Site/Facility				
Waasamowin Booking Fee	\$500.00	\$500.00		
Waasamowin AV Equipment Rental Fee	\$93.91	\$125.00		
Waasamowin Table and Chair Set-up Fee	\$180.00	\$180.00		
Brass Taps AV Equipment Rental Fee	\$85.00	\$0.00		
Food/Refreshment				
Hospitality Services Catering	\$4,197.00	\$4,905.00		
Brass Taps Catering	\$136.34	\$0.00		
Promotion/Advertising				
Printing Costs	\$0.00	\$0.00		
Program/Event				
Name Tags (Printing, Lanyard, etc.)	\$139.57	\$0.00		
Prizes for Presenters	\$840.00	\$1,500.00		
Gifts for Judges	\$0.00	\$0.00		
Gifts for Keynote Speakers	\$55.00	\$0.00		
Trivia Host Honorarium	\$150.00	\$0.00		
Total Expenses	\$6,376.82	\$7,210.00		

Campus Safety Office Graduate Student Referendum Fee Preamble

Since 1967, the University of Guelph's Campus Safety Office (CSO) has provided safety and security patrols, emergency response, and student-focused programs to support a safe and welcoming campus environment.

At present, the CSO receives base funding from the university to cover legislated responsibilities. When available, the CSO also seeks one-time funding opportunities from grants to help support additional programming and services. The CSO is designed to provide services to students, staff, faculty, and visitors, and students are the most served population. Currently, there is no student fee in place to help support the Campus Safety Office (CSO).

The CSO is asking full-time graduate students to support the introduction of a \$4.00 per semester fee, and \$2.00 from part-time graduate students. Both fees would be indexed annually to the Statistics Canada Consumer Price Index (CPI). This cost-of-living adjustment will help ensure that the fee and its application toward services stay closely aligned with annual inflation. These fees would not be eligible for an opt-out option.

With the introduction of this fee, the CSO will be able to:

- **Sustain and enhance critical safety programs** such as safety-based Apps, the lock-4-lock program, and the E-Bike Patrol Program.
- **Expand experiential learning opportunities** giving students hands-on training, mentorship, and leadership experience in the areas of dispatch and community-based policing.
- **Enhance specialized training** in mental health support, victim-centred approaches, domestic violence response, and crime prevention, improving the quality of service and response for students and including applicable student groups in relevant training when appropriate.
- **Increase student engagement and awareness** through in-person and online, safety campaigns, workshops, and education events, and programming that foster a safer, more connected campus community.

Campus Safety Office Graduate Student Referendum Question

The Campus Safety Office (CSO) is requesting the introduction of a \$4.00 per semester fee, to be collected from all full-time and \$2.00 from part-time graduate students, to support campus safety through student-focused services, programs, education, and training. The fee would be adjusted annually based on the Statistics Canada Consumer Price Index (CPI) average for Ontario and would not be subject to an opt-out option. Do you support the establishment of this fee, beginning in Fall 2027, for all full-time and part-time graduate students?

Amendments to GSA Bylaws

AMENDMENT A - Correction of Typographical Error

In Section 9.11 (Responsibilities of the Vice-President Community Engagement), final duty clause: change "Vice-sPresident Community Engagement" to "Vice-President Community Engagement".

AMENDMENT B - Clarification of General Director Removal Conditions

Section 8.6 (Removal of General Directors), first bullet to be replaced with the following three clear, non-overlapping conditions:

- a. they are absent without providing regrets from three (3) or more regularly scheduled meetings of the Board of Directors, including the AGM;
- b. they are absent from five (5) or more regularly scheduled meetings of the Board of Directors, including the AGM, regardless of whether regrets were provided;
- c. they fail to fulfill their duties as General Directors as outlined in Article 8.1 for three (3) consecutive months.

AMENDMENT C - Separation of Executive Committee and Appointed Officers into Distinct Articles

Article 9 to be retitled 'The Executive Committee' and restructured to cover only the five elected Executive positions: President and CEO, Vice President Internal, Vice President Finance, Vice President Academic, and Vice President Community Engagement.

A new Article 10 to be created, titled 'Appointed Officers', to contain all provisions currently in Article 9 relating to the Chair, Chief Returning Officer, Events Coordinator, and Communications Coordinator.

Articles 10 through 22 to be renumbered as Articles 11 through 23 accordingly, with all internal cross-references updated to reflect the new numbering.

Amendments to GSA Board Policies

AMENDMENT A - Correction of Executive Positions List

The Executive positions listed in §1.5 to be replaced with the following five correct positions:

- President and CEO
- Vice President Internal
- Vice President Finance
- Vice President Academic
- Vice President Community Engagement

All Bylaw article references adjacent to each position to be updated to reflect the March 2026 Bylaws numbering.

AMENDMENT B - Recognition of Events Coordinator and Communications Coordinator as Separate Roles

All references throughout the Board Policy Manual to 'Activities & Communications Coordinator' or 'Activities Coordinator' to be updated as follows:

- Where the reference applies to event programming and organization: replace with 'Events Coordinator'
- Where the reference applies to communications, social media, and newsletter: replace with 'Communications Coordinator'
- Where the reference applies to both roles jointly: refer to both positions by name

The maximum hours for the Events Coordinator position to be updated to fourteen (14) hours per week, consistent with the March 2026 Bylaws.

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS

Animal Bioscience

Report:

Report by:

Biomedical Science

Report:

Report by: David Bahrami

Black Student Representatives

Report: We successfully held the last BRGSSN event for the semester on April 9th. We also had GSA representatives join the event.

Report by: Mavis Opoku

Business Administration/Management

Report:

Report by:

Chemistry

Report: A Mario Kart event for graduate students in the Chemistry department was held two weeks ago. Graduate students have also been participating in the CCMPS seminar series, allowing an opportunity for them to discuss their group's research and have practice doing scientific presentations. There are currently no plans for any future events.

Report by: Michael Capperault

Clinical Studies

Report:

Report by:

Computing & Information (Computer Science)

Report: Dr. Stacey Scott from the School of Computer Science has been selected as the new dean for the College of Computational, Mathematical and Physical Sciences (CCMPS). On April 07, the 3MT heats for CCMPS was conducted, in which a graduate student from Computer Science won the second place and will be representing the college at the University level held on April 30. The School of Computer Science participated in both College Royal and Open house held on March 21 and 29 respectively, in which a working robot from GRASP AI Lab and posters from several graduate and undergraduate students were presented.

Report by: Lokesh Kumar K M

Economics and Finance

Report:

Report by:

Engineering

Report:

Report by: Hrishikesh Patil & Himashree Ponrajan

English & Theatre Studies

Report:

Report by:

Environmental Design & Rural Development

Report:

Report by:

Environmental Science

Report:

Report by: Sarah Kingsley & Jenna Scharnowski

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: HHS is hosting a seminar series at the end of May for HHS graduate students to showcase the research they have been completing over the course of the academic year. HHS (Guelph) is also planning and co-hosting the Ontario Exercise Physiology conference at the end of June.

Report by: Barbara Hyde-Lay

Indigenous Student Representatives

Report:

Report by:

Integrative Biology

Report:

Report by:

International Student Representatives

Report:

Report by: Sky Chen

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:

- **April:**
 - **2026 ICCI Cancer Research Symposium**
 - Will be held on Tuesday, 23rd June 2026 in Pathology room 1800 and via Teams
 - anyone working in cancer-related research is encouraged to submit an abstract for a poster or 10 minute oral virtual presentation.
 - Abstracts due June 1st, 2026. Apply [here](#).
 - Anyone wishing to attend can register [here](#).
 - **Graduate Student bowling Night**
 - Occurred April 1st, snacks were provided.
- **March:**
 - **OVC Grad Student Workshop: Identifying and Responding to Microaggressions**
 - Originally scheduled for January 27th
 - Rescheduled for Tuesday, March 3rd, 10am-11:30am
 - **Spring Crafting Social by the OVC Graduate Connect Club**
 - March 26th from 1-3 pm in the Biomed Common Room in the OVC main building (OVC 2612-15).
 - Bring your own crafts, or paint supplies and craft kits will be available to share

Report by: Erin Howard & Sam Dobson

Philosophy

Report:

Report by:

Physics

Report:

Report by:

Plant Agriculture

Report:

Report by: Ishrat Zahan

Political Science

Report:

Report by:

Population Medicine

Report:

Report by:

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:

Report by:

Animal Care Committee

Meeting date: April 10, 2026

Report: Nothing new to report!

Next Meeting: May 8, 2026

Report by: Barbara Hyde-Lay

Athletics Advisory Committee

Meeting date: 24/03/2026

Report: We discussed the following questions in the meeting:

- What does a healthy campus culture look/feel like?
- When UofG is at its best, what does an exceptional experience look and feel like?
- How should research be experienced by students at UofG?

The responses were collected by Alyssa Voigt, Manager, Strategic Initiatives, Office of the Provost and Vice-President (Academic)

I raised concerns about the safety of members during the rush hours at the gym. We also discussed how to manage members efficiently in the peak hours of operation.

Next Meeting:

Report by: Hrishikesh Patil

By-Laws & Constitution Committee (GSA)

Meeting date:

Report:

Next Meeting:

Report by: Sam Dobson

Co-Curricular Experiential Learning Integrity Committee (CELIC)

Meeting date:

Report:

Next Meeting:
Report by:

Code of Ethical Conduct Committee

Meeting date:
Report:
Next Meeting:
Report by:

Compulsory Fees Committee (CFC)

Meeting date:
Report:
Next Meeting:
Report by:

Digital and Technology Advisory Committee

Meeting date:
Report:
Next Meeting:
Report by:

Equity Committee (GSA)

Meeting date: April 14

Report:

- Discussed responses from the equity survey and how we can increase engagement for the survey
 - chance to win a gift card
 - posting to socials (instagram, linked in)
- Discussed frequency of GSA newsletter emails and how to adjust this to best reach graduate students
 - Feedback on weekly emails is that graduate students don't like receiving so many emails, some are unsubscribing
 - Less frequent emails (monthly or biweekly) with a dedicated page on GSA website to display all events, grad students can access any time
 - Allows the GSA to send out single-topic emails when needed without overwhelming students with emails
- Evaluated the use of jpeg posters being included in GSA communications
 - These images don't display unless you click to load the image (grad students may not be seeing them)
 - People with visual impairments who use screen readers are likely not able to read these image posters

- Replace the images with information about the event in text and a link instead of a QR code within the image
- Noted that the accessibility should be kept in mind when posting on socials (instagram) to always include information in the caption as well
- Working on setting up an event for grad student feedback and discussion
 - Submitted PDR to cover snacks and supplies for the event
 - Collaboration with wellness to have someone come and mediate discussion

Next Meeting: TBD

Report by: Erin Howard

Finance Committee (GSA)

Meeting date:

Report:

Next Meeting:

Report by:

Grad Lounge Sustainability Committee (GSA)

Meeting date:

Report:

Next Meeting:

Report by: Sky Chen

Health & Dental Plan

Meeting date:

Report:

Next Meeting:

Report by:

Hospitality Services Advisory Committee (HSAC)

Meeting date:

Reports:

Next Meeting:

Report by: Jenna Scharnowski

Human Rights Advisory Group

Meeting date: April 7, 2026

Report: Discussed the rise in instances of hate across campus and

sexual harassment claims made to the office. Over the course of the past year, 87 courses have been provided to nearly 1000 participants on various topics, such as making office spaces more inclusive. Also discussed funding new community outreach events for the next year, such as for marginalized groups on campus. Updates were given on accessibility concerns campus and efforts being made to address those issues.

Next Meeting: N/A

Report by: Michael Capperault

Judicial Committee

Meeting date:

Report:

Next Meeting:

Report by:

OUTline Committee

Meeting date:

Report:

Next meeting:

Report by:

Student Food Security Committee

Meeting date:

Report:

Next Meeting:

Report by:

Student Life Award Committee

Meeting date:

Report: This month, we had the **2025-2026 Student Experience Awards Ceremony**. I reviewed the nominations for all the awards and the award criteria. I, along with other representatives in the Awards selection committee identified the right award winners. I also attended the Awards Ceremony on 1st April, 2026 11:30 am.

Next Meeting: N/A

Report by: Himashree Ponrajan

Student Wellness Advisory Group

Meeting date:

Report:

Next Meeting:

Report by:

Student Wellness EDI Committee

Meeting date:

Report:

Next Meeting:

Report by:

Student Experience Advisory Committee

Meeting date:

Report:

Next Meeting:

Report by:

Transit Committee (GSA/CSA)

Meeting date:

Report:

Next Meeting:

Report by:

EXECUTIVE & STAFF REPORTS

President & CEO – Yusra Hasan

Hello Folks,

I hope you are all well.

During this reporting period, I have continued to advance key governance, policy, and student support priorities on behalf of the Graduate Students' Association. I presented my 2026 AGM Report to the Board, outlining major initiatives and progress over the past year. I also attended the Annual University of Guelph Budget Presentation for Student Leaders, contributing to ongoing awareness of institutional financial planning and its implications for graduate students. I have been actively engaged in policy development through the Policy Sub-Group, participating in multiple meetings related to the *Non-Academic Space Booking Working Group*. This work aims to improve access and processes for graduate students utilizing campus spaces.

In collaboration with leadership, I have held meetings with the GSA President, GSA VP Academic and have taken steps to support leadership continuity by inviting the incoming GSA VP Academic and GSA President and CEO to an upcoming meeting. Student advocacy and support remain central to my work. I conducted confidential one-on-one student meetings and participated in the Food Security Committee, where I emphasized the importance of continued collaboration with staff and administration to support students facing food insecurity due to financial, cultural, or accessibility barriers. The GSA contributed \$33,333.33 recently to support the *Food 4 U* initiative.

I have also been in communication with the Campus Safety Office regarding the Graduate Student referendum fee increase, ensuring student perspectives are considered in ongoing discussions, everything is transparent and that the various implications of safety for graduate students are optimal on campus. Additionally, I am currently involved in the GSA Summer Trivia host interview process, supporting student engagement and community-building initiatives. I am volunteering (non-paid service) to support the events for the month of April as the events Coordinator resigned for this month, though I am only supporting and not acting in the capacity of the appointed officer in compliance with the GSA By-Laws.

From a governance and operational standpoint, I scheduled and called a meeting of the GSA Executive Committee, participated in the UC Governance Board meeting, and contributed to the ongoing Chair hiring process. To support a smooth transition for incoming leadership, I am in the process of coordinating the Executive Onboarding Meeting, to ensure transition documents are prepared and submitted for printing. I have also requested that optional onboarding questionnaires be printed and distributed to all incoming executives, with electronic copies provided in advance of the main onboarding session. Finally, I am working on an amendment to the GSA Business Operations Manager contract to ensure compliance with By-Law 5.2.1 (T), which requires annual performance evaluations for permanent staff positions. Overall, this period reflects continued commitment to effective governance, policy development, student advocacy, and organizational continuity.

Thank you so much for a great President and CEO Term! Wishing you all success.

Regards,
Yusra

VP Finance – Ayush Chawla

Dear Graduate Student Community,

I am pleased to share a summary of this month's key activities and accomplishments.

I introduced motions to broaden eligibility criteria for both our Travel Fund and Childcare Support programs, with the goal of ensuring more members of our community can access these vital resources. I look forward to advancing these proposals in the coming weeks.

With the new fiscal year on the horizon, I have begun developing our annual budget for the upcoming term. This process will be guided by our community's evolving needs and a commitment to responsible stewardship of our collective funds.

I have listed relevant governance & operational updates as well:

- I will complete a formal performance review for our Business Operations Manager to ensure continued excellence in our day-to-day operations.
- I will serve on the hiring committee for the incoming Chair, contributing to a thorough and equitable selection process.
- I renewed our organizational insurance policy and followed up with our health insurance provider on several matters affecting students.
- Routine organizational upkeep and administrative duties were carried out to keep our operations running smoothly.

A Personal Note of Thanks

I would like to express my sincere gratitude for the trust you have placed in me through my re-election to this role for another term. It is a privilege to serve this community, and I remain deeply committed to advocating for your financial well-being and organizational interests.

I look forward to a productive and impactful year ahead. As always, please do not hesitate to reach out with any questions, concerns, or suggestions.

Warm regards,

Vice President, Finance

Ayush Chawla

VP Academic – Olivia Gibson

Hello all,

It has been a busy month! I hope you all are doing well so far in the term.

Since our past meeting, my work as VP Academic has focused primarily on individual student support, general director training, and participation in academic governance processes.

Student Consultation: I provided individual support and guidance to graduate students experiencing academic difficulties, including concerns related to progression in program, unclear expectations from advisors, difficult advisor relationships, and global conflicts.

Trained New General Director

Senate Meeting: Discussions on how OSAP changes have affected students, new college proposals, and discussion on global events.

Executive Election: Facilitated election and questions received. Sent out results on April 13th.

Congratulations to the new team.

I wish you all the best in the upcoming semester. Please take care of yourselves, and good luck.

Warm regards,

Olivia Gibson

Vice President Academic

VP Community Engagement – Spandana Chereddy

Key Activities & Updates:

-  Mint OT Partnership: Continued discussions with Mint Occupational Therapy regarding the renewal of services for the upcoming year, focusing on sustaining mental wellness programming for graduate students.
-  GSA Executive Committee: Attended the Executive Committee Meeting held on April 13, 2026, contributing to ongoing operational and strategic discussions.
-  Equity Committee: Chaired the Equity Committee meeting and continued progressing key initiatives, including event planning and advancing priorities aligned with equity and inclusion.
-  CUPE Coordination: Collaborated with CUPE 3913 on planning the International Mixer Event, along with coordinating tabling and engagement activities.
-  Transition Planning: Prepared and finalized transition documentation for the incoming Vice President Community Engagement, ensuring a smooth and effective handover.
-  Summer Bus Pass Initiative: Coordinated logistics, communications, and rollout planning for the Summer 2026 Bus Pass, including timelines, promotional strategy, and stakeholder coordination.
-  BRGSSN Engagement: Attended the Black and Racialized Graduate Student Support Network (BRGSSN) meeting and distributed GSA merchandise to support community engagement.
-  Wellness Services: Met with Wellness Therapist Crystal to discuss service continuity. Confirmed that one-on-one wellness sessions will continue throughout the summer term, ensuring ongoing student support.
-  VP Internal Responsibilities:
 - Participated in the Bylaw Committee, contributing to updates and revisions of governance documents.
 - Engaged in discussions related to a referendum process within the committee.

Closing Note

As the Winter 2026 semester comes to a close, this marks my final report as Vice President Community Engagement 2025-2026. It has been a truly meaningful and rewarding experience serving in this role.

I am deeply grateful for the opportunity to contribute to the graduate student community

and for everything I have learned along the way.

Thank you to everyone for your continued support, collaboration, and trust throughout this journey.

I am also excited to continue serving within the GSA as the incoming Vice President Internal, and I look forward to building on this work in a new capacity.

I warmly welcome the rest of the incoming executive team. I am confident we will achieve even greater impact together in the year ahead. ✨

Best,
Spandana

Business Operations Manager – Michelle Morris

Hello everyone,

This has been a busy and productive month. I have continued to provide comprehensive administrative and operational support to the team. Below are some of the key tasks completed:

- Coordinated the Annual General Meeting, including organizing prize payouts.
- Contributed to Executive election administration by overseeing ongoing activities, coordinating processes, and ensuring timely completion of tasks.
- Supported events by coordinating materials, supplies, and prize procurement.
- Renewed officer contracts for the following positions:
 - Trivia Host (Fall 2026 to Winter 2027)
 - Communications Coordinator (Summer 2026 to Winter 2027)
- Ongoing hiring processes for the following roles:
 - Summer Trivia Host
 - Chair
 - Events Coordinator
- Facilitated the expedited processing of Final Winter 2026 student fees to the appropriate entities.
- Confirmed and completed the renewal of GSA business insurance for the 2026–2027 fiscal year.
- Ongoing support for executive transition activities.
- Overseeing communications related to GSA VP Internal responsibilities leading up to the transition.
- Assisted with referendum-related processes.
- Completed monthly financial reconciliation and payments.
- Managed bursary disbursements alongside all other recurring monthly payments.
- Working on the Summer 2026 accreditation process for the GSA student organization at the University of Guelph.

I would like to thank the 2025–2026 Executive Team for their support and collaboration over the past year. I wish those who are moving on great success in their future endeavours.

To the 2026–2027 team, welcome, and I look forward to a productive year together.

Best,
Michelle

Communications Coordinator – Hannah Vanleeuwen

Hi everyone,

I hope the end of the semester is going well. Here's what I've been working on over the last month

- GSA Elections: I focused on promoting the GSA elections this month. I used a mix of video content, social media, and newsletter features to make sure people knew about the candidates and how and when to vote.
- Recruitment: I've been advertising for the Chairperson, Events Coordinator, and Summer Trivia Host roles to fill these open positions
- Newsletter: I've been staying in touch with other groups on campus to make sure our newsletter stays relevant.
- Social Media: I've kept our channels updated so students in the loop about what's coming up next.

Best,
Hannah