



BOARD MEETING MATERIALS

Wednesday, January 21, 2026

Hybrid: Microsoft Teams & UC Room # 332

5:30 PM

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GSA January Board Meeting Agenda

Please send regrets to gsa@uoguelph.ca no later than January 20th, 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 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 January 21st, 2026, GSA Board Meeting be approved as presented.

Approval of Minutes:

MOTION #2: B.I.R.T. The GSA Meeting Minutes of December 17th, 2025, be approved as presented.

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

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

6:00 p.m. Black History Month Presentation and Discussion – Akierah Binns

6:10 p.m. General Director Appointment - Jenna Ford , Department of Management

MOTION #3: B.I.R.T. The GSA Board of Directors appoint Jenna Ford as a GSA general director in the Department of Management, effective immediately.

6:20 p.m. PDR: Teaching and Learning Innovations Conference - Megan De Roover

MOTION #4: B.I.R.T. The GSA Board of Directors approve the release of up to \$1,950 (\$65 per student for a maximum of 30 students) to the Office of Teaching and Learning in support of the 2026

Teaching and Learning Innovations Conference, with funding expedited and adjusted to the final number of registered graduate students.

6:30 p.m. Discussion regarding GSA member access to board meetings – Yuxin Hu, GSA Vice President
Internal

6:45 p.m. Clarification on the GSA executive vacation-related motion during the December 2025 board meeting – Yusra Hasan, GSA President & CEO

7:00 p.m. Department and Committee Updates

7:10 p.m. Executive Updates

7:10 p.m. President & CEO – Yusra Hasan

7:20 p.m. VP Internal – Yuxin Hu

7:30 p.m. VP Finance – Ayush Chawla

7:40 p.m. VP Academic – Olivia Gibson

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

8:00 p.m. In-Camera Session

MOTION #5 B.I.R.T. The GSA board meeting moves ‘in-camera’ for discussion.

MOTION #6 B.I.R.T. The GSA board meeting ‘in-camera’ session ends.

Adjournment.



GSA December Board Meeting Minutes

December 17th, 2025, 5:30 p.m.

Virtual Teams Meeting

ATTENDEES PRESENT

GSA Executives	
Yusra Hasan	President and CEO
Yuxin Hu	Vice President, Internal
Ayush Chawla	Vice President, Finance
Olivia Gibson	Vice President, Academic
General Director	
Kathleen Nolan	Chair
David Bahrami	Biomedical Science
Nicole Loyola Andrad	
Mavis Opoku	Black Student Representative
Michael Capperault	Chemistry
Lokesh Kumar	Computer Science
Hrishikesh Patil	Engineering
Sarah Kingsley	Environmental Science
Jenna Scharnowski	
Ruitian (Sky) Chen	International Student Representative
Juno McGowan	LGBTQ2SIA+ Student Representative
Barbara Hyde-Lay	Human Health and Nutritional Sciences
Zayd Al Kassem	
Erin Howard	Pathobiology
Samantha Dobson	
Amna Jaleel	Population Medicine
Ishrat Zahan	Plant Agriculture
Staff	
Michelle Morris	GSA Business Operations Manager
Guests	
Benjamin Bradshaw	Assistant Vice President Graduate Studies

Regrets with Notification: Spandana Chereddy, VP Community Engagement; Grace Goderre, LGBTQ2SIA+ Student Representative; Himashree Ponrajan, Engineering

5:30 P.M. | 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 the December 17th, 2025, GSA Board Meeting be amended so Motion #5 reads:

“MOTION #5: B.I.R.T. The GSA Board of Directors supports a maximum of two weeks for an executive vacation over a one-year term.”

Motioned by Y. Hasan, seconded by J. Scharnowski. *Motion carried.*

MOTION #2: B.I.R.T. The amended Agenda for the December 17th, 2025 GSA Board Meeting be approved as presented.

Motioned by Y. Hasan, seconded by Y. Hu. *Motion carried.*

Approval of Minutes:

MOTION #3: B.I.R.T. The GSA Meeting Minutes of November 26th, 2025 be approved as presented.

Motioned by Y. Hasan, seconded by Y. Hu. *Motion carried.*

5:36 P.M. | CUPE 3913 Update: Grace Goderre, Vice President External

G. Goderre sent her regrets and requested the Chair to read their update.

- **Tabling Schedule – Winter 2026:**

CUPE 3913 will be tabling in the University Centre (UC) during January, February, and March 2026. Specific dates will be shared in early January. The Graduate Students' Association (GSA) is invited to share the table and is asked to notify CUPE in advance if interested. Additionally, CUPE will be tabling during Trivia Nights at the Lookout weekly throughout January, and bi-weekly during February and March.

- **CUPE Executive Committee Meetings:**

Beginning in January 2026, CUPE will include a standing agenda item to welcome a GSA representative to attend Executive Committee meetings and provide updates on GSA-related issues and events.

- **Bargaining Proposals – TAs and SLs:**

CUPE is preparing to introduce the full slate of bargaining proposals for Teaching Assistants (TAs) and Sessional Lecturers (SLs). CUPE may host a collaborative event in late March or early April, tentatively planned as an outdoor food and beverage gathering followed by a meeting. The GSA is invited to collaborate and is encouraged to contact Grace Goderre if interested.

5:37 P.M. | Faculty of Graduate Studies: Dr. Ben Bradshaw, Assistant Vice President (Graduate Studies)

B. Bradshaw provided the following updates:

- **University Centre Closure:**

The University Centre (UC) will be closed from December 19, 2025, to January 5, 2026.

- **International Graduate Recruitment:**

Dr. Bradshaw noted a shift in the Canadian federal government's approach to international students, with new funding being made available to universities across Canada to support the recruitment of international doctoral and postdoctoral students.

The University of Guelph is actively working to secure its allocation early in 2026.

5:40 P.M. | General Director Appointment Motions: presented by Yuxin Hu, GSA Vice President Internal

See Board Meeting Materials for the personal statements.

Candidate – Jenna Ford (Department of Management)

Due to a communication misunderstanding, the candidate did not receive an invitation to attend this meeting. J. Ford will be invited to attend the January Board meeting for consideration.

Candidate – Hrishikesh Patil (School of Engineering)

An individual statement was shared by the candidate.

MOTION #4: B.I.R.T. The GSA Board of Directors appoints Hrishikesh Patil as a GSA general director in the School of Engineering, effective January 1st, 2026.

Motioned by O. Gibson, seconded by Y. Hasan. *Motion carried.*

5:47 P.M. | Discussion of the Health and Dental Benefit – Ayush Chawla, GSA Vice President Finance

A. Chawla provided the following update:

- GSA currently holds one seat on the Health and Dental Committee; however, the Executive has noted a need for increased representation on the Committee.
- Board members and graduate students are encouraged to share relevant experiences or concerns regarding the Health and Dental Insurance platform with A. Chawla, which will be brought forward to the Committee for review and improvement.
- A survey will be distributed via GSA social media channels to collect broader student feedback.

5:55 P.M. | Executive Holidays – GSA President & CEO

Y. Hasan provided the following update:

- Executives are permitted up to two weeks of vacation within a one-year term, excluding conference attendance and sick leave.
- This policy is intended to ensure sustainable and effective delivery of services to graduate students.
- The policy promotes accountability, continuity of leadership, and the consistent fulfillment of Executive responsibilities, while recognizing the importance of reasonable time off.

MOTION #5: B.I.R.T. The GSA Board of Directors supports a maximum of two weeks for an executive vacation over a one-year term.

Motioned by: A. Chawla, seconded by S. Kingsley. *Motion carried.*

6:00 P.M. | Department and Committee Updates

Individual updates were shared by the General Directors representing their respective departments and committees.

Department of Pathobiology – Samantha Dobson & Erin Howard

- Graduate Student Committee opportunities were offered across various departmental roles; applications closed on December 10.
- *Holiday Baking and Appetizer Making* event was held on December 11.
- *The OVC Holiday Mingle* was held on December 11.
- *Holiday Lunch* event was held on December 16.
- *12 Days of Giving* initiative:
 - Donations were collected for the graduate student food pantry, which will be available to graduate students throughout the holiday season.

Department of Environmental Sciences – Jenna Scharnowski & Sarah Kingsley

- *Holiday Crafting Party* held on December 11.

Department of Computer Science – Lokesh Kumar

- Departmental updates were provided in the Board Meeting Materials.

Black Student Representatives – Mavia Opoku

- The *Black and Racialized Graduate Student Support Network (BRGSSN)* event was held on December 11.
 - Financial support provided by GSA
 - The event brought together Black and racialized students, and featured a Black Faculty member who shared experiences related to navigating graduate studies and professional career pathways.

Department of Chemistry – Michael Capperault

- The annual *Christmas Party* was held.
- Collaborative events with the Undergraduate Chemistry Society are being planned for the Winter semester to reduce costs and support departmental programming.

Department of Plant Agriculture – Ishrat Zahan

- *Christmas Cookie Decoration* event was held.
- *Christmas Dinner* event was held.
- *Christmas Holiday Lunch* event to be held on December 18.

Department of Biomedical Sciences – Nicole Loyola Andrad

- *Christmas Party* was held.
- A change in Department Chair is anticipated in Summer 2026.
- The deadline for OVC Awards applications has passed.

Graduate Lounge Committee – Ruitian (Sky) Chen

An update was provided to K. Nolan for presentation due to R. Chen being unable to speak.

- **Financial Overview (2024 vs 2025):**
 - Total cost of sales increased by approximately \$10,100 (2%) compared to the previous year.
 - Gross profit increased year-over-year.
 - Margin percentage decreased slightly from 62% to 60%.
 - Point-of-sale (POS) machines were upgraded to improve efficiency.
 - Labour costs remained comparable to last year and were slightly lower.

- Miscellaneous sales declined.
- There is a need to rebuild event-based revenue, team rental income, and to monitor sales of peripheral items such as mugs.
- **International Snack Choice**
 - A student survey indicated that 67% of respondents are able to find local food options on campus.
 - The Lookout is exploring the introduction of additional Asian and international snack options through a rotating selection.
- **Branding Update:**
 - The Lookout logo colour update will be implemented on relevant website pages beginning January 2026.

6:08 P.M. | Executive Reports

President & CEO: Yusra Hasan

Y. Hasan shared the following updates:

- Met with the President of CUPE 3913 to discuss improving communication and strengthening a shared commitment to mutual support.
- Addressed student financial matters, with a focus on providing resources and support to graduate students experiencing payroll-related issues.
 - Dr. Ben Bradshaw suggested inviting Nathan Verbaan, Manager, Payroll Services (Human Resources), to present to the Board and address payroll-related questions from General Directors.
 - Y. Hasan shared a link to a payroll information video provided by Dr. Bradshaw, accessible with University of Guelph login credentials.
- Participated in a tour of the College of Engineering graduate student office spaces.
 - Feedback was provided to the Provost, the Dean of the College of Engineering (Dr. Moncef Nehdi), and the College's Administrative Manager (Suzana Milosevic) regarding potential improvements related to organization, cleanliness, and hygiene.
- Attended a Graduate Lounge Committee meeting (refer to R. Chen's report).
- Engaged in discussions regarding the proposed New Fee from the Campus Safety Office.
- GSA Holiday Dinner event to be held on December 18.

6:12 P.M. | V.P. Internal: Yuxin Hu

Board members were asked to refer to the report in the Board Meeting Materials due to Y. Hu being unable to speak.

6:12 P.M. | V.P. Finance: Ayush Chawla

Board members were directed to review the report in the Board Meeting Materials due to A. Chawla's early departure from the meeting.

6:12 P.M. | Vice President Academic – Olivia Gibson

- Recently appointed as Vice President Academic of the GSA.
- An Admissions and Progress Committee meeting was scheduled for December 18.
 - This committee reviews student files forwarded by the Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (OGPS) under specific circumstances.

S. Chereddy sent regrets and requested that the Board members refer to her report, included in the Board Meeting Materials.

Y. Hasan indicated that she would follow up directly with the student via email to address concerns and ensure appropriate coordination.

The Meeting was adjourned at 6:30 P.M., and the next GSA Board meeting is scheduled for January 21st, 2026. Members are asked to submit any regrets no later than January 20th at 12:00 PM.

Minutes Submitted by:	Minutes Approved by:	
Harrison Barretto GSA Administrative Assistant	Yuxin Hu GSA Vice President - Internal	Kathleen Nolan Chair

GENERAL DIRECTOR APPPOINTMENT

Personal Statement – Jenna Ford, The Department of Management

When I reflect on my experience as an undergraduate student, my fondest memories stem from club involvement. Whether playing for the varsity lacrosse team or serving as Director of Events for the Guelph Entrepreneurship Society, every game and meeting was a chance to apply learnings alongside inspiring teammates. I thrive in collaborative environments and believe I can bring creative insights to discussions and initiatives within GSA. After nearly two years working in sales, I've returned to Guelph, though this chapter looks a little different. I'm a Master of Science Management student, assistant coach for varsity lacrosse and dare I say a tad wiser. Being on campus brings a sort of renewed familiarity and the only thing missing is a deeper connection with my peers. Joining the GSA provides a meaningful opportunity to engage, contribute and grow within the academic community and once again enhance the overall experience.

Jenna Ford

ACTIVITIES GRANT PRESENTATION

PDR: Teaching and Learning Innovations Conference – Megan De Roover

Activities Grant (PDR) Application Form	
Event Name Teaching and Learning Innovations Conference	Event Date 05/21/2026
Contact Person	
Name Megan De Roover	
Department Office of Teaching and Learning	
Email deroover@uoguelph.ca	Phone (519) 731-5533
Organization Information	
Organization University of Guelph	
Department OTL	
Email otl@uoguelph.ca	Phone (519) 824-4120
Audience Information	
Graduate Students Expected 32	
Undergraduate Students Expected 22	
Faculty, Staff and Community Members Expected 202	

Total Expected

256

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

Yes

Please specify how the money was spent

In 2025, GSA agreed to sponsor up to 30 graduate student presenters and non-presenters in registering for the Teaching and Learning Innovations Conference. In total, 32 conference attendees identified as University of Guelph graduate students, which was a significant increase in participation from 2024 (11). Of those 32 students, 14 were able to be financially supported by their colleges/departments/supervisors while 18 students used a dedicated GSA registration code.

These 18 students were funded at \$65 registration fee for a total of \$1,170.00 from the GSA. Without the GSA's generous support, it is unclear as to whether or not these students would have been able to participate otherwise. Considering that for many of them, this was their first conference experience, starting them on a journey to public participation in research and learning, the impact the GSA had was invaluable.

This year, we have had to raise our regular registration fees from \$65 to \$85. Knowing how prohibitive such raises are for graduate students, we have kept graduate tickets at a reduced rate of \$65.

We are anticipating similar numbers of graduate student registrants for 2026, and it is our hope that the GSA will agree to support up to 30 students again this year for a total of \$1,950.00.

The 2026 TLI Conference is organized by co-chairs Megan De Roover and Christie Stewart, Educational Developers in the Office of Teaching and Learning (OTL).

Teaching and Learning Innovations Conference

Summary of Budget for 2026 TLI Conference

Budget Item	Revenue	Expense	Balance
Registration - Regular (est. 186 x \$80 fee)	\$10,188		
Registration – Graduate Student (est. 33 x \$65 fee)	\$2145		
Registration – Undergrad Student (est. 22 x \$65 fee)	\$1430		
Registration system fee		\$607	
Keynote expenses		\$2150	
Hospitality (breakfast, coffee break, lunch, poster reception)		\$8027	
Catering service fees		\$324	
Material costs (printing, conference supplies, poster boards)		\$585	
Facilities fees		\$2207	
Documentation (photography, video recording)		\$592	
Totals	\$18,455	\$14,492	\$3,963

Summary of Budget for 2026 TLI Conference

Budget Item	Revenue	Expense	Balance
Registration - Regular (217 x \$65 fee; includes undergraduate students)	\$15,275		
Registration – Graduate Student (est. 18 x \$65 fee)	\$1170		
Sponsorships – hospitality/catering service fees	\$7000		
Registration system fee		\$517	
Keynote expenses		\$1114	
Hospitality (breakfast, coffee break, lunch, poster reception)		\$6679	
Catering service fees		\$204	
Material costs (printing, conference supplies, poster boards)		\$563	
Facilities fees		\$1089	
Documentation (photography, video recording)		\$400	
Totals	\$23,455	\$10,566	\$12,889

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS

Animal Bioscience

Report:

Report by:

Biomedical Science

Report: Nothing new to report.

Report by: Nicole Loyola Andrade

Black Student Representatives

Report:

Report by:

Business Administration/Management

Report:

Report by:

Chemistry

Report: Nothing new to report

Report by: Michel Capperault

Clinical Studies

Report:

Report by:

Computing & Information (Computer Science)

Report: Nothing new to report.

Report by: Lokesh Kumar K M

Economics and Finance

Report:

Report by:

Engineering

Report:

Report by:

English & Theatre Studies

Report:

Report by:

Environmental Design & Rural Development

Report:

Report by:

Environmental Science

Report: Nothing new to report. The first meeting of the new year is the same day as our first meeting.

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: Nothing to report!

Report by: Barbara Hyde-Lay

Indigenous Student Representatives

Report:

Report by:

Integrative Biology

Report:

Report by:

International Student Representatives

Report: 1. START International – Reconnect

Friday, January 16, 5 to 7 p.m. | Summerlee Science Complex Waasamowin

All international students are welcome.

RSVP required through <https://gryphlife.uoguelph.ca/event/312966>

2. SIN Number Renewal

- Check the expiry date and renew it on time

Report by: Sky Chen

Languages & Literature

Report:

Report by:

LGBTQ2SIA+ Student Representatives

Report: nothing to report at this time.

Report by: Grace Goderre

Marketing & Consumer Studies

Report:

Report by:

Mathematics & Statistics

Report:

Report by:

Molecular & Cellular Biology

Report:

Report by:

Pathobiology

Report:

- The search for the next Dean of OVC is underway. Public presentations will take place January 20, 26 and 27th and graduate students are encouraged to attend. More information on the sessions can be found [here](#).
- Students planning to defend this semester (**for April/early May**) are reminded to submit their

defence coordination requests by March 2nd (for PhD/DVSc) or March 30th (for MSc).

Information on how to do so can be found [here](#).

- Resume Development Workshop through the OVC Grad and Research Support team will be taking place January 14th from 10 – 11:30am (in person and online). For more information and to register, click [here](#).
- OVC is hiring a Research Officer working with the Associate Dean of Research and Grad Studies: deadline is January 11th. To apply, click [here](#).
- Nomination-based OVC Internal award nominations are due January 12th, some awards do not have any nominees yet, so good odds! Submit a nomination [here](#).
- OVC Graduate Student Orientation was held January 7th, OVC GDs introduced themselves to incoming students.

Report by: Sam Dobson & Erin Howard

Philosophy

Report:

Report by:

Physics

Report:

Report by:

Plant Agriculture

Report:

Upcoming Events & Deadlines

- New Graduate Student Orientation: Scheduled for January 20, 2026. This session will welcome incoming students to the Plant Agriculture department and provide essential introductory information.
- OAC Scholarship Celebration: The Ontario Agricultural College (OAC) Scholarship Celebration is listed for January 20, 2026.

Plant Agriculture GSLC Initiatives

The Graduate Student Liaison Committee (GSLC) is currently active with the following projects:

- Leadership Recruitment: The GSLC is officially recruiting for two key positions: M.Sc. Representative and Ph.D. Representative. Planning is underway for an upcoming hiring event for those two positions.
- Annual Plant Sale: Preliminary planning has begun for the Annual Plant Sale, a staple departmental event.

Report by: Ishrat Zahan

Political Science

Report:

Report by:

Population Medicine

Report:

Upcoming events:

- OVC is hosting a recreational volleyball game – staff versus students, on February 11th.
- OVC Diverse is hosting a dinner and panel discussion on intersectionality in veterinary medicine on Thursday, January 22, 2026, from 5:30–8:00 PM in ECLA 1720. The event is open to both DVM and graduate students, and dinner will be provided.
- Resume Development Workshop through the OVC Grad and Research Support team will be taking place January 14th from 10 – 11:30am (in person and online).

Report by: 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: Jan 16

Report: Nothing new to report

Next Meeting: Feb 6

Report by: Barbara Hyde-Lay

Animal Care Committee

Meeting date:

Report:

Next Meeting:

Report by:

Athletics Advisory Committee

Meeting date:

Report:

Next Meeting:

Report by:

By-Laws & Constitution Committee (GSA)

Meeting date: N/A

Report: No updates this month!

Next Meeting: Not set

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: No meeting

Report:

Next Meeting: February 5th, 2026

Report by: Spandana Chereddy

Equity Committee (GSA)

Meeting date: December 5th

Report:

Next Meeting: January 22nd

Report by: Spandana Chereddy

Finance Committee (GSA)

Meeting date:

Report:

Next Meeting:

Report by:

Grad Lounge Sustainability Committee (GSA)

Meeting date: None

Report: None

Next Meeting: TBD

Report by: Sky Chen

Health & Dental Plan

Meeting date:

Report:

Next Meeting:

Hospitality Services Advisory Committee (HSAC)

Meeting date:

Reports:

Next Meeting:

Report by:

Human Rights Advisory Group

Meeting date: None

Report: Still have yet to receive any update on a next meeting.

Next Meeting: N/A

Report by: Michael Capperault

Judicial Committee

Meeting date: January 12th

Report: Orientation

Next Meeting: To be Scheduled

Report by: Spandana Chereddy

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:

Next Meeting:

Report by:

Student Wellness Advisory Group

Meeting date: did not occur

Report: n/a

Next Meeting: Jan 26

Report by: Grace Goderre

Student Wellness EDI Committee

Meeting date:

Report:

Next Meeting:

Report by:

Student Experience Advisory Committee

Meeting date: No meetings have taken place since last one.

Report: N/A

Next Meeting: No meeting has been scheduled

Report by: Nicole Loyola Andrade

Transit Committee (GSA/CSA)

Meeting date: None

Report:

Next Meeting: None

Report by: Spandana Chereddy

EXECUTIVE & STAFF REPORTS

President & CEO – Yusra Hasan

Hello Folks,

I hope you are all doing well and had a pleasant break. Happy New Year!

Below are the most important updates, in addition to the duties outlined in my role, that I would like you to be aware of.

VP Academic Meeting

I had a meeting with AVP International and AVP Graduate Studies, Ben Bradshaw, as well as GSA VP Academic, Olivia Gibson, where we discussed the following:

- **Tuition Payments:** Graduate students are experiencing difficulties with tuition payments and are being charged installment fees. We advocated for an increased number of installments with reduced fees per installment, evenly dispersed across a larger number of payments. This request was also strongly supported by General Director Hrishikesh Patil. Ben mentioned that he will bring forward a request at the university level to implement five installments, particularly as approximately 15-20% of graduate students rely on installment plans.
- **Payroll Issues:** We discussed the need for OGPS and GSA to raise awareness across campus, encouraging advisors to provide lump-sum payments with the first payroll installment (potentially a few thousand dollars, including GTA 1/3 and 1/7 of GRA). This would better support students in covering tuition costs, improve financial stability, and allow them to focus more effectively on their academics.
- **Scholarship Indications:** Olivia emphasized the need for a more effective system for displaying scholarship information on Webadvisor, including notifications from OGPS to graduate students when scholarships are deposited into their accounts. This was a strong suggestion, and Ben indicated that he would investigate this further.

Executive Committee Meeting

I called and chaired this month's Executive Committee meeting. The team brainstormed effective strategies

to improve the transition and training of incoming executives. We also discussed how fully restructuring executive roles could have negative implications, given that executive terms are only one year long and that proposed changes should be tested before being introduced to incoming executives. We concluded that small, targeted modifications may be feasible through the by-laws committee and the board. I also strongly expressed that we should not assume the full honorarium for May, as a two-week training period is sufficient for the outgoing executive team and is a more financially sustainable approach.

CUPE 3913 and GSA Relations

The Presidents of CUPE 3913 and President and CEO (myself) of the GSA will be meeting this month to discuss potential conflicts of interest and to establish mutually agreed-upon principles to strengthen our relationship and maximize benefits for graduate students.

Thank you so much.

Best regards,

Yusra

VP Internal – Yuxin Hu

Hi everyone!

Hope you all had a wonderful holiday and a great start to the year!

I do not have major updates other than the regular duties in my portfolio and attending meetings with GSA and university committees.

Updated all bylaws and board policies and worked with the new communication coordinator to reflect the updates on the GSA website.

All GD honoraria have been processed. Please let me know if you have any questions!

Some ongoing discussions after the holidays include reconsideration of the structure of the exec transition period as part of the GSA restructuring discussion and feasibilities of public member access to GSA board meetings.

Stay warm!

Best regards,

Yuxin

VP Finance – Ayush Chawla

Dear Graduate Students,

I am writing to update you on several important initiatives and operational matters currently underway.

As our Business Operations Manager is currently on leave, I will be assuming operational control and maintenance responsibilities for the next month. While this represents a considerable undertaking, I am confident that with the collective expertise and support of our team, we will maintain seamless operations throughout this period.

I have had the privilege of providing direct support to graduate students during Wednesday office hours, which will continue till the end of the semester (1-3 PM; 5th floor of the UC, 531).

Many of you have sought assistance with application processes and navigating our bursary system, and I remain committed to ensuring you can access the financial support available to you.

In response to the significant demand for PDR grants, I have developed a comprehensive tracking system to document which campus organizations receive GSA support and the corresponding funding amounts over the last two semesters. This framework will enable us to forecast future demand more accurately and optimize our bursary allocation processes. It will also encourage more equitable awards in the future.

Over the past month, I have been investigating concerns regarding our health insurer and compiling documented student cases and complaints. These will be formally addressed at our upcoming Health and Dental Insurance Committee meeting. If you have experienced issues with your coverage, please continue to bring them to my attention so we can advocate effectively on your behalf. (Please reach out at: gsavpfin@uoguelph.ca)

I am currently evaluating options for our Guaranteed Investment Certificate (GIC) as it approaches maturity. I will keep you informed as decisions are finalized to ensure responsible stewardship of our collective resources.

Please do not hesitate to reach out if you have questions or require financial assistance.

Best,

Ayush Chawla, GSA VP Finance.

VP Academic – Olivia Gibson

Hello all,

I hope you had a restful holiday season and a positive start to the new year.

Over the past month, my work as VP Academic has focused primarily on direct student support, ongoing advocacy at the executive level, and participation in academic governance processes. A brief summary of my activities is outlined below.

Student Consultation

I provided individual support and guidance to graduate students experiencing academic difficulties, including concerns related to program progression. These consultations focused on clarifying options available to students, outlining informal and formal resolution pathways, and ensuring students understood relevant policies and timelines.

Meeting with GSA President and Ben Bradshaw

We discussed several ongoing academic matters, including:

- Department-specific scholarship availability and how funding opportunities are communicated to graduate students
- Student expectations and navigation of WebAdvisor for funding and academic information
- Requests for guidance and next steps on individual student cases requiring executive-level input

These discussions helped inform advocacy strategies and ensured alignment between executive leadership on student academic concerns.

A&P (Admissions & Progress) Meetings

I participated in Admissions & Progress meetings, contributing a graduate student perspective to discussions related to academic progression, policy interpretation, and procedural fairness. Key considerations included consistency in decision-making and clarity of expectations communicated to students.

As always, I remain committed to protecting graduate students' academic rights, ensuring transparency in academic processes, and maintaining clear documentation and communication in all student-facing work. I wish you all the best in the upcoming semester. Please take care of yourselves, and good luck as the term gets underway.

Thank you for all that you do.

Warm regards,

Olivia Gibson

Vice President Academic

VP Community Engagement – Spandana Chereddy

Happy New Year everyone! I hope you all had a wonderful holiday season and a restful break with family and friends. Wishing you a productive and fulfilling Winter semester ahead.

1. Judicial Committee Representation

- Attended the first Judicial Committee meeting of the year as the GSA representative.
 - Completed required orientation and training sessions for committee members.
 - Committee is well-aligned for the Winter term and prepared for upcoming responsibilities.
-

2. Equity Committee

- Next Equity Committee meeting scheduled for January 22nd.
 - Agenda includes:
 - Review and discussion of the draft Equity Concerns Form / Survey.
 - Planning strategy for distribution and inclusive communication.
 - Timeline development for feedback processing and next steps.
 - Goal is to collect meaningful input from the graduate community and collaboratively address identified equity priorities.
-

3. Mental Health & Wellness Collaboration — Mint Occupational Therapy

Supported and promoting Winter 2026 mental wellness offerings for graduate students in collaboration with Mint Occupational Therapy (OT). Programming includes:

(a) 5-Week Grad Therapy Group (Hybrid)

- January 28 – March 4
- Facilitated by occupational therapists Melissa & Tara
- Focus on procrastination, perfectionism, advisor dynamics, imposter syndrome, emotional workload, and graduate wellbeing.

(b) Co-Working Café (Hybrid)

- Wednesdays, January 21 – March 4, 1:30–4:30pm
- Offered at The Lookout + MS Teams
- Productivity support, coaching, and community-focused work environment.

(c) Two Hybrid Workshops

- “Creating Momentum & Tackling Procrastination” — Jan 22
- “When to Work & When to Rest” — Feb 24

Encouraged department-level distribution and peer-to-peer awareness.

4. One-on-One Counselling Drop-In Sessions

- Supporting promotion of new drop-in counselling sessions for graduate students.
 - Offered Thursdays 2:00–4:30pm (Winter 2026).
 - Available in-person at the GSA Office (5th floor UC) or virtual.
 - Open to all graduate students, including those on leave.
 - Aimed at providing accessible support for community, mental health, advisor communication, academic pressure, and personal stress.
-

5. Wellness Groups & Support Circles

- Continued supporting and coordinating with:
 - Graduate Support Circles (GSSC)
 - Grad Student House Calls program in January. Registration is open now until Jan 23, and the calls are scheduled Jan 26 - Feb 6. These are 30 min Teams calls with our Wellness Navigators, who provide listening/support and customized referrals for wellbeing support.
-

6. Bus Pass Opt-Ins & Opt-Outs

- Managing Winter 2026 bus pass opt-ins and opt-outs in accordance with eligibility categories.
-

7. Black History Month Committee

- Participating on the Black History Month Planning Committee for February programming.
-

Business Operations Manager – Michelle Morris

Hello Everyone,

Happy New Year, and best wishes for a successful start to 2026. I hope you have all had a positive beginning to the year.

I would like to share a few updates from my end:

- New Appointments We are pleased to welcome two new appointed officers effective January 2025: Hannah Vanleeuwen, GSA Communications Coordinator, who will be responsible for managing all GSA social media platforms and online interfaces. Sanika Rozario, GSA Events Coordinator, who will oversee the planning and management of all GSA events.
- Financial Update All final payments for 2025 have been expedited.
- Website and Branding Coordination is underway with the web developer to implement the GSA logo colour update. We anticipate this to be completed by February 2025.

Please note that I will be away for the next few weeks and, as such, have sent my regrets for this board meeting. During my absence, Harrison Barretto, GSA Administrative Assistant, will serve as the primary point of contact for general assistance. For more urgent or strategic matters, please reach out to Yusra Hasan, GSA President & CEO.

Wishing you all a productive and successful year ahead.

Best,

Michelle

Communications Coordinator – Hannah Vanleeuwen

- Updated the GSA website with new bylaws, board policies, and directors to ensure current and accurate information
- Coordinated with the Events Coordinator to finalize the semester's event schedule
- Updated GryphLife with upcoming events for the 2026 winter semester
- Designed Instagram posts for upcoming events

Events Coordinator – Sanika Robert Rozario

Below is an updated **January Events Report** outlining Winter semester planning, completed events, and upcoming programming.

Winter Semester Planning

- Created the **event plan for the Winter 2026 semester**.
- Successfully **booked event dates at The Lookout** to support consistent weekly and special programming.

Update on **Professional Headshots Event** - Professional headshot photos have been sent to all

participants.

Completed Events

- **Thursday Trivia Nights**
 - Ongoing weekly event held **every Thursday from 6:00–8:00 PM** at **The Lookout**, focused on student engagement and community building.

Upcoming Events

- **Bingo Night** - A casual social event designed to encourage participation and connection among graduate students.
 - Date: January 27, 2026
 - Time: 5:00 - 7:00 PM
 - Venue: The Lookout
- **Board Game Night** - A relaxed social evening centered around board games and peer interaction.
 - Date: February 12, 2026
 - Time: 6:00 - 8:00 PM
 - Venue: The Lookout
- **Valentine's Dance** - A social evening with a live DJ, giving graduate students a chance to relax, dance, and connect.
 - Date: February 13, 2026
 - Time: 8:00 - 11:00 PM
 - Venue: The Lookout

Prepared by:

Sanika Rozario

Events Co-ordinator

Graduate Students Association (GSA)

University of Guelph