

**AUGSA Council Meeting Minutes**

November 12, 2024 – 6:00 pm MST

Microsoft Teams

**Attendance**

**Faculty of Business Representatives:** Brittany Hollett

**Faculty of Health Disciplines Representatives:** Sarrah Ahmed, Pamela Ferguson

**Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences Representative:** Dave Roy

**Faculty of Science and Technology:** Paul Ackah, Gagan Jhaji

**Staff:** Meaghan Sullivan (Executive Director), Kelly DeCoste (Manager, Governance & Administration)

		<b>PRESENTER</b>	<b>ACTION</b>
<b>1.0</b>	<b>Call to Order</b>	D. Roy	The meeting was called to order at 6:02 pm MT.  D. Roy presented the land acknowledgment.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Approval of Agenda</b>	D. Roy	<b>Motion 2.0: to approve the agenda as presented.</b> Moved: P. Ferguson Seconded: S. Ahmed Motion carried without opposition.
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Approval of Previous Minutes</b>	D. Roy	<b>Motion 3.0: to approve the minutes of October 15, 2024, as presented.</b> Moved: B. Hollett Seconded: P. Ferguson Motion carried without opposition.  <b>Motion 3.1: to approve the minutes of November 7, 2024, as presented.</b> Moved: B. Hollett Seconded: S. Ahmed Motion carried without opposition.
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Reports and Presentations</b>	D. Roy	Reports presented as distributed.



<p><b>5.0</b></p>	<p><b>Financial Reports (2025 Budget for Approval)</b></p>	<p>D. Roy</p>	<p>D. Roy delivered a presentation on the draft 2025 operating budget recommended for approval to the Council by the Finance Committee. The presentation included an overview of what shaped the budget's priorities and direction, a breakdown of the revenue and expenses, and a financial analysis that incorporated historical trends and data for the Association that considered graduate student enrollment and previous financials.</p> <p><b>Motion 5.0: to approve the 2025 operating budget as presented.</b></p> <p>Moved: P. Ackah Seconded: S. Ahmed Motion carried without opposition.</p>
<p><b>6.0</b></p>	<p><b>Annual Membership Survey Review</b></p>	<p>M. Sullivan</p>	<p>M. Sullivan provided a high-level overview of the 2024 Annual Membership Satisfaction survey. The survey received 486 responses from active graduate students, which is approximately over a 10% response rate. The 6 key advocacy priorities as outlined by the membership for recommendation to Athabasca University are as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Tuition &amp; Financial Aid</li> <li>2. Course Content &amp; Delivery</li> <li>3. Professional Development</li> <li>4. Research Engagement &amp; Funding</li> <li>5. Communication</li> <li>6. Orientation &amp; Academic Success</li> </ol> <p>The 3 categories of recommendations to AUGSA are as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Advocacy             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Affordable education</li> <li>b. Incorporation of EDIA in teaching and learning</li> </ol> </li> </ol>



			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>c. Professional development</li> <li>d. Research and funding</li> </ul> <p>2. Community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Use innovative approaches to build a sense of community</li> <li>b. Promote mentorship opportunities</li> <li>c. Graduate Student Research Conference</li> </ul> <p>3. Communication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Seek active engagement in AUGSA’s student membership</li> <li>b. Provide up-to-date information regarding advocacy progress</li> <li>c. Dedicated support to facilitate improvements to communications with membership</li> </ul>
7.0	<b>GSRC Post-Event Review</b>	M. Sullivan	<p>The Graduate Student Research Conference (GSRC) was delivered in a hybrid format this year and had approximately 120 registrants. The post-conference survey was generally positive with almost 100% indicating satisfaction with the event, wanting to return next year, and would recommend the event to others. While we are still working on some post-conference paperwork to wrap up the event and archive the 2024 information on the GSRC website, we have begun planning for the 2025 conference. M. Sullivan has reached out to the conference venue as well as to Whova for quotes and bookings. M. Sullivan explained the goal for next year is to scale the size of the conference now that we have successfully delivered our very first and fully hybrid event. Next year, it would be good for AUGSA to coordinate having all of the Council present at the event and even consider tagging on an AUGSA gathering. With an Executive</p>



			Committee coming into effect on May 1 <sup>st</sup> , Executive Committee members will have a role in the 2025 GSRC, such as the President being appointed to the Steering Committee.
8.0	<b>Upcoming Events – Council By-Election</b>	D. Roy	D. Roy shared that the by-election vote for the 2 vacant positions on the Council opens at midnight and the vote will remain open for the full two days of November 13 and 14, 2024. Council Members are eligible to vote, so long as they are in the faculty for which the vote will occur (Faculty of Business, and Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences).
9.0	<b>Old Business</b>	D. Roy	No business at this meeting.
10.0	<b>New Business</b>	D. Roy	<p>Graduate Research Assistantship (GRA) Funding:</p> <p>A meeting is being scheduled for next week with Council Members Pamela Ferguson, Gagan Jhajj, and Paul Ackah to discuss upwards of \$180,000 in potential funding for graduate students. The Faculty of Graduate Studies would like to consult with AUGSA on how best to disperse these funds.</p> <p>While the AUGSA Council expressed the preference for these funds to be used for research assistantship opportunities, that deliver both funding and academic experience, there is an understanding surrounding a time constraint that the funds must be dispersed by the end of March 2025.</p> <p>One possible idea discussed was the funds go to students already engaged in research at AU in the form of a prestigious scholarship through an application process with a potential deadline of February 1st, which could be one of the following scenarios:</p>



			<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 36 Awards of \$5,000</li> <li>2. 18 Awards of \$10,000</li> <li>3. 12 Awards of \$15,000</li> </ol> <p>M. Sullivan explained that all of the Council could go to the meeting once the date and time are confirmed. It would be a good opportunity for the Council to share their perspectives on the usage of funding in future years, with advocacy encouraging the funds to support research assistantship opportunities.</p>
11.0	Other Business	D. Roy	D. Roy shared that the Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences (FHSS) Appreciative Inquiry is currently active and has received 22 responses to date. Another newsletter for FHSS students only is scheduled for November 13 <sup>th</sup> to collect a few more responses that can be used as a basis for the graduate student perspective in shaping the future of the faculty.
12.0	Adjournment	D. Roy	<p><b>Motion 15.0: to adjourn the meeting at 7:48 pm.</b>          Moved: B. Hollett          Seconded: P. Ackah          Motion carried without opposition.</p>

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Dave Roy, Chair

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Meaghan Sullivan, Executive Director

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Date of Approval

