

AUGSA Council Meeting Minutes

January 21, 2025 – 6:00 pm MST

Microsoft Teams

Attendance

Faculty of Business Representatives: Brittany Hollett, Yi Wang

Faculty of Health Disciplines Representatives: Pamela Ferguson, Sarrah Ahmed

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences Representative: Dave Roy, Emily Grady

Faculty of Science and Technology: Gagan Jhajj, Paul Ackah

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

General Members: Sue Solymosi

		PRESENTER	ACTION
1.0	Call to Order	D. Roy	The meeting was called to order at 6:01 pm MT.
2.0	Welcome Observers	D. Roy	Welcome general member S. Solymosi to the Council Meeting.
3.0	Approval of Agenda	D. Roy	Motion 2.0: to approve the agenda as presented. Moved: E. Grady Seconded: S. Ahmed Motion carried without opposition.
4.0	Approval of Previous Minutes	D. Roy	Motion 3.0: to approve the minutes of December 17, 2024, as presented. Moved: Y. Wang Seconded: P. Ackah Motion carried without opposition.
5.0	Reports and Presentations	Council	Reports were presented as distributed. B. Hollett shared that the Athabasca University (AU) General Faculties Council (GFC) meetings are open to all students and a special link is provided to observers who wish to join the meeting. B. Hollett also explained that the AU



		<p>COVID Compassionate Grading Policy is under review with potential plans for extension.</p> <p>P. Ferguson informed the AUGSA Council that there are opportunities for involvement on the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations (CASA) Federal Policy Committee. M. Sullivan provided a supplementary update that AUGSA has been approved by the CASA Board of Directors to join as Full Members of CASA. This will be voted on at CASA's e-plenary meeting on January 31st.</p> <p>S. Ahmed explained that there is an upcoming advocacy meeting with the Dean of the Faculty of Health Disciplines on January 23, 2025. P. Ferguson, S. Ahmed, and M. Sullivan met to discuss the advocacy priorities specific to the Faculty of Health Disciplines (FHD) that they intend to bring to this meeting with the Dean.</p> <p>S. Ahmed noted that there have been no Mental Health Committee Meetings at the University since the beginning of the AUGSA Council Term (May 1st, 2024).</p> <p>D. Roy discussed creating small advocacy committees to further advocate on the graduate student priorities derived from the 2024 Student Survey. One specific committee could be regarding course content.</p> <p>D. Roy met with the President of the Athabasca University Students Union (AUSU) and plans to further arrange a Council-to-Council meeting with the AUSU Council.</p>
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6.0	Financial Reports	M. Sullivan	<p>The financial reports were presented showing a small surplus for the 2024 fiscal period.</p> <p>AUGSA is currently undergoing the annual audit process, and the audited financial statements can be expected in the upcoming weeks. M. Sullivan will be meeting with the Finance Committee and</p>



			<p>Council to review the draft statements once they are ready.</p> <p>P. Ferguson requested clarification on the fees related to CASA membership. M. Sullivan explained that AUGSA will receive a pro-rated invoice for January 1st, 2025, to April 31st, 2025. This fee will be added to the 2025-2026 invoice. CASA’s fee cycle is from May 1 to April 30.</p>
7.0	Committee Updates	M. Sullivan	<p><u>Elections & Referenda Committee</u></p> <p>The chair of the Elections & Referenda Committee is AUGSA’s Chief Returning Officer (CRO). Committee members are needed but must not be running in the upcoming AUGSA election. M. Sullivan requested two volunteers from the Council who are (a) not running in the 2025-2026 elections and (b) have time to volunteer to an additional committee.</p> <p>Yi Wang volunteered to be a member of the committee. Another volunteer call will be put in the AUGSA newsletter for up to two (2) members-at-large who are also not running for Council.</p> <p>Motion 8.0: to approve the appointment of Y. Wang to the Elections and Referenda Committee.</p> <p>Moved: P. Ferguson Seconded: B. Hollett Motion carried without opposition.</p> <p><u>Governance Committee</u></p> <p>The Governance Committee plans to meet in the upcoming weeks to make a plan for reviewing</p>



			and revising the remaining operating policies for May 1 st , 2025.
8.0	Upcoming Events	M. Sullivan	<p><u>Elections</u></p> <p>The 2025-2026 AUGSA Elections timeline, nomination form, and policies have been made available on the AUGSA website. The elections will begin slightly earlier this year, with nominations opening on January 31st for Executive Committee positions. As AUGSA progresses through the election process, the subsequent process of appointing a graduate student representative to the Athabasca University Board of Governors will begin.</p> <p><u>Executive Transition</u></p> <p>The 2025-2026 AUGSA Executive Transition is scheduled to be in person in Canmore, Alberta from April 25th to 28th, 2025, but this date may change. Incoming and outgoing Executive Committee Members are expected to attend. A survey will be sent out to the AUGSA Council seeking feedback that could support improving the quality of the AUGSA Executive Committee transition. Additionally, the Council should begin planning its handover document, which would include a list of priorities and/or initiatives to be provided to the incoming Executive Committee and Council to help the 2025-2026 strategic planning process.</p> <p><u>Council Onboarding</u></p>



		<p>The 2025-2026 AUGSA Council onboarding process will be virtual and take place on MS Teams in early May with the official date still to be determined. The first 2025-2026 Council Meeting is scheduled for 6:00 pm MT on Tuesday, May 20th, 2025.</p> <p><u>2025 Graduate Student Research Conference</u></p> <p>The 2025 Graduate Student Research Conference (GSRC), themed 'Research for a Changing World', is confirmed for November 7th – 9th, 2025. This hybrid conference is taking place at the DoubleTree by Hilton in Edmonton, Alberta, and is facilitated online using the Whova application platform. Upwards to 75-80 students will be able to present with 50 spaces reserved for AU graduate students and additional space open to graduate students from the University of Lethbridge and Concordia University of Edmonton. Up to ten (10) undergrads from Athabasca University will be encouraged to attend and present as well.</p> <p><u>FGS Open Forum</u></p> <p>The Athabasca University (AU) Faculty of Graduate Studies (FGS) has requested M. Sullivan to help form a student panel of four (4) members (one per faculty) to take part in the online FGS Open Forum happening on March 17th, 2025. The following individuals agreed to form the panel:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Yi Wang (FB)2. Sarrah Ahmed (FHD)
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			<p>3. Emily Grady (FHSS) 4. Paul Ackah (FST)</p> <p>The panel will meet with M. Sullivan to discuss the panel, title, guiding questions, and supporting information before connecting the team with the Panel Moderator, Meenal Shrivastava, in FGS.</p> <p><u>Convocation</u></p> <p>In partnership with the Athabasca University Students Union (AUSU), AUGSA has traditionally gifted a piece of artwork to the annual Athabasca University (AU) convocation gift box, which is distributed to graduates. Any contributions to these boxes were sent to the University around April 1st. It was agreed to continue with this tradition for the Graduating Class of 2025. The Council liked the idea of finding an artist from the Athabasca region if possible. P. Ferguson agreed to take the lead on the art selection process.</p>
8.0	Old Business	D. Roy	No old business discussed at this meeting.
10.0	New Business	D. Roy	No new business discussed at this meeting.
11.0	Other Business	K. DeCoste	AUGSA plans to run a social media engagement campaign, which includes prizes. A newsletter is scheduled to be distributed to AUGSA members. The Council is encouraged to share communications on this initiative with graduate students.
12.0	Adjournment	D. Roy	<p>Motion 13.0: to adjourn the meeting at 7:37 pm. Moved: B. Hollett Seconded: P. Ackah Motion carried without opposition.</p>





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Dave Roy, Chair

Meaghan Sullivan, Executive Director

Date of Approval



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