

**AUGSA Council Meeting Minutes**

June 17, 2025 – 6:00 pm MST

Microsoft Teams

**Council Attendance****Executive Committee:** Dave Roy (President), Kia Buchanan (VP Academic), Judy Parnell (VP External)**Faculty of Business Representatives:** Dennis Delgado**Faculty of Health Disciplines Representatives:** Erica Wong**Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences Representative:** Hyeyung Park**Faculty of Science and Technology:** Gagan Jhajj, Paul Ackah**Graduate Labour Relations Representatives:** D. Newman, G. Keshavarz**Staff:** Meaghan Sullivan (Executive Director)**Regrets:** Pawel Zygmunt, Emily Grady, Aliya Karmali

		<b>PRESENTER</b>	<b>ACTION</b>
<b>1.0</b>	<b>Call to Order</b>	President	The meeting was called to order at 6:04 pm MT.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Approval of Agenda</b>	President	<b>Motion 2.0: to approve the agenda as amended.</b> Moved: K. Buchanan Seconded: J. Parnell Motion carried without opposition.
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Approval of Previous Minutes</b>	President	<b>Motion 3.0: to approve the minutes of May 20, 2025.</b> Moved: P. Ackah Seconded: J. Parnell Motion carried without opposition.
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Reports and Presentations</b>		Reports were presented as distributed.
4.1	<b>President Report</b>	President	D. Roy explained there were a number of meetings in May and June to date. Key highlights included attendance at the 2025 AU Convocation



			in Athabasca, Alberta. D. Roy's appointment to the AU Board of Governors was approved by the Ministry of Advanced Education shortly before convocation. It was inspiring to see all the students walk across the stage and to be there to support them on behalf of AUGSA.
4.2	<b>VP Academic Report</b>	VP Academic	<p>K. Buchanan explained that there were several meetings she has attended on behalf of AUGSA across AU Councils and Committees.</p> <p>The Human Resources Committee met to discuss the Committee Terms of Reference as well as put together a plan for Health and Safety training as part of the onboarding process at AUGSA. The Committee Terms of Reference has been completed and will be presented at next months Council meeting.</p> <p>K. Buchanan has a meeting with the administrator of the recently implemented Athabasca University awards system, Val Olvers, to review the scholarship and awards system and provide feedback.</p>
4.3	<b>VP External Report</b>	VP External	<p>J. Parnell explained that the past month has been quite busy getting established. Major activities included attending the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations (CASA) Foundations, with another trip booked for CASA Policy &amp; Strategy Conference taking place in Calgary, Alberta, in July 2025.</p> <p>J. Parnell is currently reviewing the annual Membership Satisfaction Survey and has identified opportunities to streamline its format. The existing survey is lengthy, and plans are</p>



			<p>underway to restructure it into four shorter surveys focused on key categories such as graduate satisfaction, student needs, and alumni engagement. The new survey format will be implemented after the 2025 survey given the project launch for the 2025 is this month. Questions for the 2025 survey have been submitted to M. Sullivan, and suggested changes will be incorporated where feasible.</p> <p>J. Parnell is working on adding additional articles to the AUGSA newsletter; specifically, focus on incorporating an advocacy update and Council update.</p> <p>P. Ackah inquired about advocacy efforts in Ontario. J. Parnell clarified that current provincial advocacy efforts are focused on Alberta, in collaboration with other Alberta GSAs. She also noted that she is exploring potential avenues for Ontario representation; however, there is currently no established graduate student association or union at the provincial level. Outreach to individual Ontario universities is ongoing, though no formal arrangements have been confirmed.</p>
5.0	Financial Reports	Executive Director	<p>M. Sullivan presented the financial statements as circulated, noting that revenue is currently below budget projections. The Executive Committee plans to meet to review and adjust travel plans for the remainder of the year accordingly.</p> <p><b>Motion 5.0: to approve the financial reports as presented.</b> Moved: K. Buchanan Seconded: E. Wong</p>



			Motion carried without opposition.
6.0	<b>Committee Updates</b>	President	<p><b>Motion 6.0: to approve the following sub-committee Terms of References as recommended by the respective AUGSA sub-committees:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Finance Committee,</b></li> <li>- <b>Strategic Planning Committee,</b></li> <li>- <b>Engagement Committee, and</b></li> <li>- <b>Governance Committee.</b></li> </ul> <p>Moved: D. Delgado Seconded: K. Buchanan Motion approved without opposition.</p>
6.1	<b>Strategic Planning Committee</b>	President	<p>The committee reviewed and recommended for approval by Council the Committee Terms of Reference.</p> <p>The committee reviewed and recommended the 2025-2026 Strategic Plan for approval by Council. D. Roy provided an overview of the proposed 2025-2026 Strategic Plan.</p> <p><b>Motion 6.1: To approve the 2025-2026 Strategic Plan as recommended by the Strategic Planning Committee.</b></p> <p>Moved: H. Park Seconded: J. Parnell Motion carried without opposition.</p>
6.2	<b>Governance Committee</b>	President	<p>The committee reviewed and recommended for approval by Council the Committee Terms of Reference.</p> <p>The committee is working on the investment policy in collaboration with the Finance Committee. The investment policy is scheduled</p>



			<p>to be presented to AUGSA Council on July 15<sup>th</sup>, 2025.</p> <p>D. Roy explained to Council that with the governance shift, we have an outdated Council Policy Manual posted on our website. The policy manual was for the Policy Governance structure AUGSA formerly was adhering to. The manual should be archived now that we are in a new term with an Executive and Council structure.</p> <p><b>Motion 6.2: To approve the archiving of the Policy Governance Council Policy Manual as recommended by the Governance Committee.</b></p> <p>Moved: H. Park Seconded: P. Ackah Motion carried without opposition.</p>
6.3	<b>Finance Committee</b>	President	<p>The committee reviewed and recommended for approval by Council the Committee Terms of Reference.</p> <p>The committee plans to review the investment policy in early July in collaboration with the Governance Committee. The project schedule aims to bring the investment policy to the AUGSA Council on July 15<sup>th</sup> for approval, pending work progresses as planned. Interviews of Investment Advisors are tentatively planned to commence as early as August 2025.</p>
6.4	<b>Human Resources Committee</b>	VP Academic	<p>The committee has reviewed and approved for recommendation the Committee Terms of Reference, but it will be submitted to Council at the July 15<sup>th</sup>, 2025, Council meeting for approval.</p> <p>The committee is reviewing Health and Safety training options to incorporate into AUGSA's annual onboarding process. Planning is in</p>



			progress, with budget considerations to be assessed once quotes are received.
6.5	<b>Engagement Committee</b>	VP External	<p>The committee reviewed and recommended for approval by Council the Committee Terms of Reference.</p> <p>The committee is planning AUGSA's 20th anniversary celebration, including a proposed initiative to establish the <i>AUGSA Graduate Entrance Award (AGEA)</i> for incoming Athabasca University graduate students. This \$1,000 annual award would be endowed to ensure ongoing distribution in perpetuity.</p> <p>Although unbudgeted, this initiative may be partially offset by a refund expected from the dissolution of the Alberta Graduate Provincial Advocacy Council (abGPAC), as noted by J. Parnell. The intent is to direct those funds to the AU endowment to support AGEA.</p> <p>In addition, the Committee is considering a longer-term strategy involving an annual giving campaign to grow the fund and expand student support.</p> <p>This initiative addresses the current absence of entrance awards for AU graduate students. It also reflects AUGSA's commitment to advocacy, early student engagement, and leadership in fostering alumni involvement and student support. AUGSA remains focused on investing in students, modelling philanthropic leadership, and strengthening advocacy for financial aid.</p>



			<p><b>Motion 6.5: To approve the AUGSA Graduate Entrance Award project in celebration of AUGSA's 20th birthday, including the financial commitment of up to \$40,000 (unbudgeted), as recommended by the Engagement Committee.</b></p> <p>Moved: H. Park Seconded: K. Buchanan Motion carried without opposition.</p>
6.6	<b>EDI Committee</b>	VP External	The EDI Committee will be meeting next week to review its workplan and Terms of Reference.
6.7	<b>Graduate Labour Relations Committee</b>	D. Newman	D. Newman reported that the Labour Relations Committee is currently reviewing the collective agreement, with particular focus on monetary items. The University has indicated it will present only the non-monetary components of its proposal initially. The next meeting to exchange proposals is scheduled for July.
6.8	<b>External Advocacy Committee</b>	VP External	The External Advocacy Committee will be meeting at the end of this week, or next week, to begin external advocacy planning, which includes discussions surrounding provincial and federal advocacy for the 2025-2026 period.
<b>7.0</b>	<b>Schedule AGM</b>	President	The date for the AUGSA Annual General Meeting (AGM) is July 15, 2025, at 6:00pm MST. AUGSA will host its AGM, followed by a short AUGSA Council meeting to approve business, including policy updates and the remaining Terms of References. M. Sullivan encouraged all Council Members to bring fellow graduate student members to ensure AUGSA achieves quorum. Notice of AGM goes out 21 days in advance of the meeting. AUGSA Council would like to send out a door prize, which would be a \$25.00 Amazon gift card. This will be added to the notice in the AUGSA newsletter.
<b>8.0</b>	<b>Event Updates</b>	President	P. Ackah explained it was an honour to be a part of convocation, helping with the Prompty



			<p>initiative, and getting to meet graduate students. The AUGSA table was strategically located, and he was pleased to meet fellow AUGSA representatives.</p> <p>D. Roy explained that himself and P. Ackah received a tour of the Athabasca University campus from M. Sullivan. It was an honour to visit the campus and feel connected to the AU community.</p> <p>H. Park shared that she enjoyed meeting with M. Sullivan and provided a recap of convocation day, which ran from 7:00 AM to 7:00 PM. She noted that the event was well-organized and well-attended. While the use of Prompty was a positive addition, areas for improvement were identified. H. Park also drew parallels between Prompty and the NearPeer platform currently used by the Faculty of Graduate Studies. She raised important considerations regarding data privacy and ownership and suggested that AUGSA explore the potential development of its own app.</p>
9.0	Other Business	P. Ackah	<p>P. Ackah noted difficulty in scheduling a meeting to discuss NearPeer preparation. J. Parnell requested that P. Ackah review a related email outlining concerns raised by members of the Engagement Committee. K. Buchanan asked to be included in all NearPeer communications, as the initiative intersects with the VP Academic portfolio.</p> <p>P. Ackah provided an update on the IEEE initiative he is leading to increase awareness and access to IEEE funding for AU graduate students. He has recently contacted his network to explore</p>



			connections with graduate students at the University of Calgary and the University of Alberta, though responses are still pending. A meeting related to the project is scheduled for this Thursday, which P. Ackah plans to attend.
<b>10.0</b>	<b>New Business</b>	H. Park	H. Park raised concerns regarding equitable business practices in the hiring of Research Assistants at Athabasca University. M. Sullivan noted this has been an ongoing advocacy issue and suggested the feedback be shared with the Labour Relations Committee, highlighting that the University has previously committed to organization-wide training to improve equitable hiring. D. Newman agreed to bring this matter forward to the Labour Relations Committee for further consideration.
<b>11.0</b>	<b>Old Business</b>	K. Buchanan	<p>K. Buchanan presented a proposal to implement a mentorship program within the Faculty of Health Disciplines, specifically targeting the Nurse Practitioner (NP) program. The initiative aims to provide graduate students with mentorship experience, fostering a cycle of support that benefits both the program and the wider university community.</p> <p>The proposed structure includes two co-leads and several confirmed mentors. K. Buchanan is requesting \$1,000 in support from AUGSA, to be distributed via Cardly.net gift cards: \$150 for each co-lead and \$50 for each mentor. The funding request is for the inaugural year only.</p> <p>This program may serve as a pilot for a broader, university-wide mentorship initiative, aligning with graduate student priorities and AUGSA's advocacy goals.</p>



			<p>P. Ackah expressed support for the initiative and emphasized the importance of identifying sustainable funding options moving forward. J. Parnell noted the program's potential to serve as a model for other faculties. K. Buchanan confirmed a willingness to share outcomes and insights following implementation.</p> <p><b>Motion 11.0: to approve \$1000.00 (unbudgeted) in the form of gift card distribution to support the Nurse Practitioner (NP) mentorship program.</b>  Moved: J. Parnell  Seconded: P. Ackah  Abstain: 1 (K. Buchanan)  Motion carried.</p>
<b>12.0</b>	<b>Adjournment</b>	President	<p><b>Motion 16.0: to adjourn the meeting at 7:48 pm.</b>  Moved: D. Delgado  Seconded: E. Wong  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

