
AUGSA Council Meeting Minutes

August 19, 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, Pawel Zygmunt**Faculty of Health Disciplines Representatives:** Erica Wong, Aliya Karmali**Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences Representative:** Hyeyung Park**Faculty of Science and Technology:** Gagan Jhaggi, Paul Ackah**Graduate Labour Relations Representatives:** G. Keshavarz**Staff:** Meaghan Sullivan (Executive Director)**Regrets:** Emily Grady

		PRESENTER	ACTION
1.0	Call to Order	President	The meeting was called to order at 6:03 pm MT. D. Roy provided a land acknowledgement to honour the Indigenous peoples on whose lands we gather.
2.0	Approval of Agenda	President	Motion 2.0: to approve the agenda as amended. Moved: P. Zygmunt Seconded: E. Wong Motion carried without opposition.
3.0	Approval of Previous Minutes	President	Motion 3.0: to approve the minutes of July 15, 2025. Moved: J. Parnell Seconded: P. Zygmunt Motion carried without opposition.
4.0	Reports and		Reports were presented as distributed.



	Presentations		
4.1	President Report	President	D. Roy provided an overview of his report, which included a summary of recent meetings held across Athabasca University (AU), the Athabasca University Graduate Students' Association (AUGSA), and with external stakeholders, focusing on advocacy efforts. He informed the Council that he would be travelling to Alberta the following day to attend the Student Leaders Orientation hosted by the Ministry of Advanced Education. P. Ackah will also be attending the orientation to represent AUGSA and advocate on behalf of Athabasca University graduate students. Additionally, D. Roy noted that AUGSA met with the Advanced Education Engagement team in the past couple of weeks to discuss AUGSA's priorities in preparation for the upcoming orientation.
4.2	VP Academic Report	VP Academic	K. Buchanan explained there were several Athabasca University and AUGSA meetings attended over the past month. The ongoing search for funding for Human Resource training was highlighted as an area of focus, with efforts continuing to secure the necessary resources.
4.3	VP External Report	VP External	J. Parnell shared that it had been a particularly busy month with numerous meetings held across CASA (Canadian Alliance of Student Associations) and its subcommittees. National Advocacy: J. Parnell and A. Karmali attended the CASA Policy & Strategy Conference in Calgary from July



		21-27, 2025. During the conference, committee elections were held, and J. Parnell was elected to both the Graduate Advocacy Committee (GAC) and the National Advocacy Committee (NAC). This is a significant achievement, as it ensures that the priorities of graduate students at Athabasca University (AU) will be better represented on a national level. J. Parnell has also been involved with the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) group at CASA and met with the National Indigenous Advocacy Group (NIAC) to discuss the potential integration of Indigenous members into the AUGSA Council in the future, potentially as early as next year. Provincial Advocacy: The Council of Alberta Students (CAUS) presented to AUGSA's external representatives regarding the potential for AUGSA to become members. J. Parnell presented the pros and cons of CAUS membership, emphasizing concerns around fees and the absence of professional staff. However, CAUS has offered free membership for the first year, which led J. Parnell to recommend that AUGSA join CAUS for this period to gain a better understanding of its operations and to increase its provincial advocacy exposure. J. Parnell also highlighted other potential avenues for AUGSA to expand its provincial advocacy efforts, such as collaborating with other Alberta Graduate Student Associations (GSAs) or
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			even forming a new independent advocacy group. Discussion: • K. Buchanan asked about CAUS's fee structure. J. Parnell explained that CAUS has not yet established a formal fee schedule. • P. Ackah inquired about the model CAUS is using to calculate its fees. J. Parnell confirmed she did not have detailed information on this topic. • M. Sullivan shared that CAUS did have staff in the past, including a former Executive Director. However, there are concerns about whether CAUS still holds society status or can engage effectively with the government. • K. Buchanan emphasized the importance of considering AUGSA's capacity to contribute to the rebuilding process of CAUS. • J. Parnell responded that while AUGSA can support CAUS in an advisory role, it is unlikely to take on administrative tasks or roles. • D. Delgado asked if CAUS was exclusively for Alberta students. J. Parnell confirmed that CAUS is focused on Alberta, but that CASA continues to represent students across Canada. She also mentioned that the external advocacy representatives are exploring solutions for dedicated provincial advocacy in Ontario.
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			Motion 4.3: to become a temporary member of the Council of Alberta University Students (CAUS) for the remainder of the 2025-2026 term, on the condition that there are no membership fees, and that we re-evaluate the temporary membership on a quarterly basis. Moved: P. Ackah Seconded: H. Park Motion carried without opposition.
5.0	Financial Reports	Executive Director	Motion 5.0: to approve the financial reports as presented. Moved: D. Delgado Seconded: J. Parnell Motion carried without opposition.
6.0	Committee Updates		
6.1	Graduate Labour Committee	President	The Negotiations Committee met with the University on July 24th to review the letter of agreement and engage in discussions regarding the importance of a collaborative approach to decision-making. The committee reviewed non-monetary content for the collective agreement during the meeting. The meeting was productive, and there are plans to meet again. G. Jhajj participated in the meeting remotely from Japan. K. DeCoste was praised for their outstanding leadership, which has helped keep the committee focused and on track. G. Ackah expressed optimism, stating that he expects the committee will be able to achieve tangible outcomes soon. He noted that the



			bargaining process thus far has been positive and constructive. J. Parnell offered to discuss the topic of grant applications at a later date if it would be beneficial to the committee.
6.2	Engagement Committee	Chair, Graduate Labour Committee	J. Parnell explained that Alberta Graduate Provincial Advocacy Council (abGPAC) society dissolution is progressing. Additionally, the AUGSA Membership Satisfaction survey is in progress as planned.
6.3	External Advocacy Committee	VP External	No further updates.
6.4	EDI Committee	VP External	The EDI Committee discussed plans to formalize events but is currently exploring cost and funding options to ensure successful execution. Any initiatives not completed this year will be incorporated into a 4-year EDI strategic plan. Additionally, the committee intends to establish an online resource center to provide ongoing support and information related to EDI initiatives.
6.5	Strategic Planning Committee		D. Roy shared that one of the key priorities for the past month has been completed: the planning for the 20th Anniversary of AUGSA. As part of the anniversary celebrations, the new AUGSA Graduate Student Entrance Award has been established. J. Parnell expressed gratitude to the Engagement Committee for their hard work and contributions to making the award a reality. The award is available to both Master's and Doctoral students.



7.0	Event Updates	Executive Director	Athabasca University Graduate Student Research Conference (GSRC): The planning for the GSRC is underway, with the Call for Abstracts now open. M. Sullivan encouraged all Council Members to help spread the word and raise awareness about the conference. She emphasized the importance of encouraging graduate students to either submit an abstract or plan to attend the conference. AUGSA Annual Membership Satisfaction Survey: The AUGSA Annual Membership Satisfaction Survey has currently received approximately 150 responses. M. Sullivan urged all Council Members to complete the survey and share it within their cohorts to ensure a wide range of student voices are represented. The feedback collected from the survey will play a crucial role in AUGSA's advocacy efforts and help guide strategic decision-making.
8.0	Other Business	M. Sullivan	AUFA Meeting Request: M. Sullivan shared that AUFA has requested a meeting with AUGSA to discuss events taking place at the University that may have an impact on AUGSA. K. Buchanan, D. Roy, J. Parnell, and G. Keshavarz expressed interest in attending the meeting. Deans' Meet and Greet: P. Zygmunt suggested that AUGSA Council invite Deans to the next AUGSA meeting for a meet and greet, offering an opportunity for informal networking and discussion.
9.0	New Business	President	No new business at this time.



10.0	Old Business	President	IEEE Initiative Update P. Ackah shared that he had a meeting with the IEEE Executive last month, during which they provided guidance on how to set up the IEEE initiative at Athabasca University (AU). P. Ackah will be scheduling a follow-up meeting to further discuss the project, and all members are welcome to join. D. Roy requested to be included in this meeting.
11.0	Adjournment	President	Motion 11.0: to adjourn the meeting at 7:23 pm. Moved: P. Zygmunt Seconded: E. Wong Motion carried without opposition.

Dave Roy, Chair

Meaghan Sullivan, Executive Director

Date of Approval

