Overview of the Graduate Student Association.

University of Guelph Graduate Student Orientation, Fall 2020

Transcript]

[Slide 1]
Welcome Graduate Students! We are thrilled that you are beginning this journey with us at the University of Guelph. We are the University of Guelph’s Graduate Students’ Association and we would like to tell you a little bit about what we do and how we can support you during your studies.

[Slide 2]
The GSA is the sole representative body of graduate students at the University of Guelph and we act as a liaison between graduate students and the University Administration. Our mission statement is to advance the academic, social and professional development of graduate students by providing resources, services, events and support to all graduate students on campus.

[Slide 3]
Some of the services that you have access to as a graduate student that are provided through the GSA include representation or advocacy on campus, confidential peer support for academic conflicts, a graduate student specific space for counselling services, the universal bus pass, health and dental plan, travel grants and child care bursaries, activities grants for student initiatives, regular social and professional development events and the grad lounge, also known as The Fifth: GSA Rooftop Patio and Lounge, and many more!

[Slide 4]
Welcome Graduate Students! My name is Nicole Berardi and I am the Graduate Student Association President & CEO this year. As GSA President, it is my job to help determine the vision and goals for the GSA with the help of the Executive Team, Board of Directors and of course, graduate students at large. I meet regularly with University administration to discuss issues graduate students are facing. I generally oversee the organization and deal with student issues as they arise. During your time as a graduate student, please do not hesitate to reach out with any thoughts, questions or concerns. I look forward to connecting and have a great year!

[Slide 5]
Hello My name is Mohsen Yoosefzadeh Najafabadi, the GSA Vice President Internal for the this academic year. My main responsibility as VP Internal is to build and maintain the
communications between graduate students and GSA, and be the voice of graduate students at different university committees.

[Slide 6]

Hello Everyone, I am Akshay Chadha and I am the current GSA VP Finance for the academic term 2020-2021. GSA also known as Graduate Student Association is an organizational body which advocates for rights of grad students at our campus. As GSA VP Finance some of my main responsibilities include:

1. Preparing a budget on semesterly basis.
2. Oversee financial account and balances.
3. Attending and chairing some of the committees that I have been assigned to, for example, the student health and dental plan, the Fifth sustainability committee etc.

I would like to encourage all of you to join GSA in some way or another. Maybe you can also represent your department as a General Director as I did since January 2018 for the Department of Computer Science. If you have any queries or questions about GSA or if you just want to get in touch, feel free to get in contact with us. GSA would like to hear from you.

Thank you so much, have a good one. Bye Bye!

[Slide 7]

Hello everyone! My name is Britta McBride and I am the Graduate Students’ Association Vice President External and co-chair of the Student Transit Committee for the 2020-2021 academic term. Welcome to the University of Guelph!

[Slide 8]

Now to tell you a little bit about how the GSA operates. The GSA Board of Directors is comprised of the Executive Team, and General Directors. General Directors are elected each year and there are seats for two representatives per department. The GSA has recently also added two additional seats each for Indigenous Students, International Students and LGBTQ2SIA+ student representatives. General Directors act as a liaison between their department and the GSA. GSA board meetings take place monthly and all GSA members are welcome to attend. The board meetings always take place on a Wednesday at 5:30 pm. Our next meeting is September 23rd. While our board meetings normally take place in person, due to the pandemic, meetings will be held virtually through Microsoft Teams for the time being. For more information and additional board meeting dates, visit the GSA website.
If you want to get involved with the GSA as a General Director, nominations are open mid-September. All graduate students will receive a ‘Call for Nominations’ email. The process is done through self-nomination, meaning that if you are interested you can put your name forward. It is a great opportunity to get involved, stay up to date and engaged with things going on at the University of Guelph, and enrich your graduate student experience. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to reach out!

During your time as a graduate student you will receive monthly updates from the GSA through our newsletter, which is sent out towards the beginning of each month. The newsletter will be sent by the graduate student or students that are elected as your department representatives. The newsletter will provide you with updates from the GSA Office, The Fifth, events from the GSA around campus, information on the bus pass and other services provided through the GSA. If there is something you would like to submit to be considered for the newsletter, send an email to gsaact@uoguelph.ca by the 1st of each month.

We also want to share with you an upcoming GSA event! On August 26th, 2020 we are hosting a virtual conference! This conference will showcase graduate student research from across campus. It will be a great opportunity to see some of the amazing research happening at U of G.

We wish you all the best as you begin your studies at the University of Guelph and we encourage each of you to stay in touch! Follow our social media pages for the most up to date information on all things GSA including upcoming events! Good luck and have a great year!