



MINUTES OF THE

The Fourth (January) Council Meeting

OF THE

2025/2026 Graduate Student

Association of Carleton University

29th January 2026

Time: 4:00 pm - 6:00 pm

Location:

<https://carleton-ca.zoom.us/j/96543874349?pwd=Djl7Ca2qvom0Y96EjWn3WaGsBIZ100.1>

Prepared by:
Vice - President Operations of GSA



ATTENDANCE RECORD:

Position	Member	Signature
President	Zeina Al Attar	
Vice President Finance	Oladapo Odumosu	
Vice President Academic	Temuulen Turbat (Elen)	
Vice President External	Hadi Hefzy	
Vice President Operations	Fatemeh Mohammad Zamani	
Chair	Ashley D'Souza	
Senate committees		
GRC		
GFB		
CUPE 4600		
BOG		
CUSA		
RRRA		
Departmental Representatives		
PSGSA	Vincenzo Poti	
	Briana Kroeker	
Migration and Diaspora Studies	Lutfunnessa Tania	
Music and Culture	Sara Beth Lyons	
SAGSC	Fayssal Yatim	
Law	Narges Qadirli	
Communication	Kate Ellis	
MPM	Lukas Redmond	



Agenda:

1. Call to order:

We, the members of GSA-Carleton are committed to following Indigenous legal traditions of acknowledging the sovereign waters, lands, and the Algonquin Anishinaabe Nation in the territory of the Kitchissippi Watershed, which includes the City of Ottawa. In doing so, we are also acknowledging the illegalities of our presence under Indigenous legal traditions, and acknowledging the ongoing and violent methods of settler colonialism. This acknowledgment is but a first step in accepting our responsibility to correct these injustices through action and furthering the education of ourselves and others.

2. Asking everyone to fill the attendance form by this [link](#).

a. Announcement of Proxies

With 21 people present who could vote, and a quorum of nine, the meeting could proceed.

3. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Moved: Zeina

Seconded: Kate

Motion carried unanimously.

4. APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

[November council meeting minutes](#)

5. UPDATES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

5.1 These updates based on raised issues in previous meeting:

5.1.1 Public Interest Research Group (PIRG) Update (Presented by the chair of the board).

- The GSA confirmed that all levy funds collected for PIRG for the 2025 financial year would be released. Cheques were prepared and made available for collection at the GSA front office on Friday, December 5, 2025.
- PIRG was informed that it was required to provide the GSA with a copy of its signed audited financial statements for the 2025 financial year, as required under Carleton University's Fees and Services Agreement. PIRG submitted the audited statements on January 5, 2026.



- For the fiscal year ending April 30, 2026, Carleton University required PIRG to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the GSA. This requirement originated from the University. The MoU required PIRG to submit annually an operating budget, a year-end financial report, and a program and impact report. PIRG was also required to maintain financial records for review or audit.
- The GSA's legal counsel shared the draft MoU with PIRG on January 7, 2026. PIRG's lawyer responded that PIRG would not sign the MoU in its proposed form and raised concerns regarding the release of funds.
- Following this exchange, PIRG's lawyer requested to see the agreement between the GSA and Carleton University related to the MoU requirement.
- For us at GSA signing the MoU is a non-negotiable requirement set by the University Administration. Carleton would not release levy funds if the MoU requirements were not met and would instead refund students.

5.1.2 Executive Director Update.

The GSA still has no executive director. The hiring committee is working hard on filtering resumes of applicants. Zeina Al-Attar is the current interim executive director.

5.1.3 Board of Director Nomination Update (Presented by the chair of the board).

Until ONCA is finalized, board members shall not be employed or otherwise remunerated by the GSA (including those on approved leave – as they are still employed and affected by union negotiations) unless remuneration is approved by the board (remuneration for council/committee and board roles would be acceptable).

5.1.4 Institute of African Studies (IAS) Update (Presented by the chair of the board).

- The GSA is unable to comment on decisions made in 2019–2020, as no records were found explaining the rationale at that time and we don't have the institutional memory.
- Since internal GSA records did not provide sufficient clarity, the GSA contacted the University for guidance. Any decision carried financial and liability implications and needed to be defensible under audit, including matters such as issuing bank letters and ensuring proper governance. The objective is not to block representation, but to ensure decisions were supported by a clear and documented rationale, while noting that all students are permitted to attend Council meetings as observers.
- The initial University contact did not have an answer, and the matter was escalated to Karen Speers, Director of Student Life, who oversees the relevant policy.



- The University's Recognition of Student Groups policy had recently been reviewed and approved. Until this time, the updated policy had not yet been shared with the GSA. As soon as it is ready they will share it with us.
- The policy primarily governs space-booking privileges through the Student Experience Office. Accreditation requires a current constitution and signatures from ten student members, and does not include insurance or banking assistance.
- Applications are reviewed annually by a committee at the end of September, and accreditation is valid from October 1 through September 30 of the following year.
- Graduate student groups seeking accreditation should reach out to the Student Experience Office at seo@carleton.ca.

5.1.5 Iranian Initiative Update (Presented by VPX)

I want to provide the Council with a brief update on actions the GSA has taken in response to the situation in Iran and concerns raised by Iranian graduate students.

First, we acknowledge the significant fear, grief, and distress experienced by Iranian students, particularly due to communication blackouts and uncertainty about the safety of family members. These impacts have been both emotional and academic, and they have guided our response.

From the outset, we prioritized access to mental health support. On January 8, the GSA published a social media post specifically addressing the mental health impacts on Iranian students and highlighting available support. On January 16, we published an official statement on our website expressing solidarity, acknowledging both emotional and academic impacts, and calling for compassion and flexibility from instructors.

On January 21, the GSA hosted a community-focused support gathering for Iranian students. This was intentionally framed as a supportive, non-political space focused on wellbeing, peer connection, and care.

In terms of advocacy and external engagement, the GSA formally reached out to CFS Ontario to request coordinated provincial and national action in support of Iranian students. We also contacted Carleton University's main Instagram account to request explicit acknowledgment and amplification of Iranian students' experiences. We coordinated outreach with CUPE 4600, CUASA, and relevant campus departments to extend the reach of GSA messaging.



At the Student Leaders' Lunch with senior University leadership, the GSA raised, verbally, the need for academic accommodation and admissions flexibility for both incoming and current students affected by the situation in Iran. This included discussion of deadline extensions, flexibility around missed communications, temporary suspension of automatic file closures, and consideration of application fee reviews or waivers. No decisions were made at that table, but these concerns were clearly communicated.

In addition, members of the GSA Executive met with Catherine McKenney and Yasir Naqvi to raise concerns about the impact of the situation on Iranian students, including mental health strain, academic disruption, and barriers facing applicants. Follow-up emails were sent after these meetings to reiterate key points and request continued engagement.

Finally, the Executive is currently in the planning phase to expand Winter-term grants and awards, including the Emergency Grant and the GSA Grant for Students Impacted by Conflict, Crises, and War.

We fully recognize that these measures do not match the gravity of the situation in any shape of form. They reflect what the GSA is able to do within its mandate and capacity, and we continue to look for responsible ways to do more. We remain committed to continuing this work.

6. ANNOUNCEMENTS

ORDER OF THE DAY:

7. NEW BUSINESS:

No new business as announced by chair

8. EXECUTIVE REPORT

Moved: K. Rumig

Seconded: L. Grieco-St-Pierre

Motion carried unanimously.

President - Zeina Al Attar

- Chaired weekly Executive team meetings and participated in monthly Board meetings.



- Met monthly with the Associate Vice-President for Student Affairs and Student Life, and attended monthly lunch meetings with senior university leaders, including the University President, the Provost, and the Vice Provost.
- Presented during the Graduate Student Winter Orientation.
- Presented GSA for CUASA and facilitated CUASA's President participation in the GSA Executive Meetings.
- Attended monthly Senate meetings and participated in the monthly meetings of the Executive Committee of Senate.
- Participated in monthly Athletics Board meetings and in the Ancillary Fee Committee meetings.
- Attended Dedicated Access Fund Committee meetings
- Worked on grants and awards.
- Worked on ONCA compliance.
- Participated in interviews for the Sexual Assault Outreach Coordinator.

VP Finance - Oladapo Odumosu

- Completed the most recent batch of Fall 2025 Grants and Awards applications and will get acceptance emails out.
- Since September 2025, processed around \$120,000 CAD worth of grants and awards.
- Continue to stay on top of finances
- Attend executive and board meetings
- Attend meetings with university leadership as needed.
- Announcement of new portal opening for Winter 2026 grants and awards on February 1st until April 8th, which is the last day of classes.
- Mike's place has a good trivia program going on and extended hours this semester compared to the fall semester 2025.
- Exploring ideas to support the revenue there, like another game night.

Robert – Question

1. Question regarding the grants portal opening, confirming that it is February 1st.
2. Question regarding grants for the Fall 2025 term: are clubs who applied for grants expected to hear back next week? Will an email be sent to Council members?

Dapo – Response

There is a 90% chance applicants will hear back the next day. An email will be sent to the applicant listed on the file.



Omar – Question

Every association is allowed \$800 in grants, and the window to apply runs from October to December. Will there be another window to apply for grants for the current semester, or is it only once?

Dapo – Response

The policy manual allows grants of up to \$800, but that limit is subject to availability of funds and budgeting constraints. Yes, there are two cycles. The second cycle will open February 1, 2026, for students and organizations to submit applications for grants and awards.

VP Academic (VPA) - Temuulen Turbat (Elen)

- Attended all weekly GSA Executive meetings and contributed to planning and updates.
- Attended monthly Senate meetings and the Graduate Council meetings.
- Held monthly check-ins with Graduate Studies regarding graduate student academic and administration related matters.
- Met with students regarding academic-related issues, like tuition, supervisors, supervisor deadlines, and supervisor relationships.
- Participated in the hiring processes for the OAs, including shortlisting and interviews.
- Participated in the hiring processes for the Sexual Assault Outreach Coordinator, interview and onboarding. Working with EDI team to help with onboarding and guidance to help with more resources.
- Working with the President on the upcoming events planning.
- Worked on the Professional Development Support program with the committee members.
- Participated in Winter Welcome Week events and supported the team.
- Process improvement for GSA job applications process through custom format forms.

VP External (VPX) - Hadi Hefzy

- Attended all weekly GSA Executive meetings and actively took part in planning discussions, sharing updates, and following up on action items across the Executive team.
- Worked on ONCA compliance.
- Participated in interviews for the Sexual Assault Outreach Coordinator position, interviews for Mike's Place staff, as well as the OAs and contributed to discussions on candidate evaluation and selection.
- Actively participated in Winter Welcome Week events and supported the delivery of activities, coordination on the ground, and student engagement throughout this.
- Led and supported promotional work for Winter Welcome Week, including designing, preparing, and sharing event posters and digital promotional materials.



- Designed and prepared brochures and an events calendar for Winter Welcome Week to help students easily understand and navigate the scheduled programming.
- Provided support across all GSA events during this reporting period, including on-site assistance and coordination as needed.
- Attended a meeting organized by the GSA President with CUASA representatives, where we discussed collaboration and explored opportunities for closer coordination between the GSA and CUASA.
- Managed and contributed to the design and growth of GSA communications and social media, with a focus on improving visibility, clarity, and student awareness of GSA services and events.
- Led the design and management of the GSA Student Discount Card initiative, including outreach and conversations with representatives from the University of Ottawa Graduate Students' Association to explore collaboration and potential joint implementation of the program.
- Supported and carried out promotional activities for the hiring of the Executive Director.

VP Operations (VPO) - Fatemeh Mohammad Zamani

- Attended weekly Executive Team meetings and monthly Board meetings, contributing to decision-making and organizational planning.
- Collaborated with Office Administrators and staff to address operational issues, improve service delivery, coordinate administrative schedules, and oversee all matters related to the GSA office, lounge, and graduate student needs.
- Met with MPP Catherine McKenney and MP Yasir Naqvi to discuss issues related to the current situation in Iran and informing them about the Iranian students' concerns.
- Participated in GSA committee meetings.
- Participated in monthly meetings with Carleton Graduate Studies to support ongoing collaboration and communication.
- Served as a committee member in ONCA-related meetings, focusing on compliance with ONCA legislation in preparation for the renewal and alignment of the GSA's governing documents.
- Led, coordinated, and delivered all Winter Welcome Week events, introducing the GSA to graduate students and promoting available services.
- Scheduled and trained new OA staff to enhance service quality and student support.
- Prepared documentation and organized Council meetings.
- Met with the President of CUASA to explore opportunities for improved collaboration and cooperation.

Vote: Approved



9. OTHER REPORTS

- a) Senate & Senate Committees -
- b) Graduate Residence Caucus (GRC) -
- c) Graduate Faculty Board (GFB) -
- d) Canadian Union of Public Employees 4600 (CUPE 4600) -
- e) Board of Governors (BOG) -
- f) Carleton University Students' Association (CUSA) -
- g) Questions

10. OTHER BUSINESS

Appendix A: Call for the grant and awards committee.
Omar Hassan approved to sit on grants and award committee

Appendix B: Call for the new board members.

Appendix C:

Appendix D:

Appendix E:

11. STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS

12. DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS

- Department of English Language and Literature
- Department of French
- Department of Geography and Environmental Studies
- Department of History
- Department of Psychology
- Department of Sociology and Anthropology
 - Fayssal Yatim invited students to apply for the SAGSC student conference.
- Institute for Comparative Studies in Literature, Art and Culture
- Institute of Interdisciplinary Studies
- Pauline Jewett Institute of Women's and Gender Studies
- School for Studies in Art and Culture
- School of Linguistics and Language Studies
- School of Indigenous and Canadian Studies
- Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering
- Department of Electronics
- Department of Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering
- Department of Systems and Computer Engineering
- Azrieli School of Architecture and Urbanism



- Industrial Design
- Information Technology
- Sustainable and Renewable Energy Engineering
- Arthur Kroeger College of Public Affairs
- Department of Economics
- Department of Law and Legal Studies
 - Working on different committees for this year's GLSA department conference. Will be in touch with GSA for further assistance with funding and sharing information
- Department of Political Science
- Institute of European, Russian and Eurasian Studies
- Institute of Political Economy
- Norman Paterson School of International Affairs
- School of Journalism and Communication
- School of Public Policy and Administration
- School of Social Work
- Department of Biology
- Department of Chemistry
- Department of Earth Sciences
- Department of Health Sciences
- Department of Neuroscience
- Department of Cognitive Science
- Department of Physics
- Department of Migration and Diaspora
- Department of Music & Culture, SSAC
- School of Computer Science
- School of Mathematics and Statistics