



# General Meeting

## Notice of Meeting

Date: Thursday September 24, 2015

Time: 4:30 PM – 6:00 PM

Place: RCH 307

### AGENDA

Time		Page	Action
4:30	1. Approve Agenda		Decision
4:35	2. Chair's Remarks		Information
4:40	3. GSA Projects Update		Information
4:55	4. Get out the Vote Campaign Update		Information
5:10	5. Fall 2015 GSA/GSO Town Hall Events		Information
	6. GSA Association Fee Increase		
5:25	<b>BIRT the GSA members approve the Association Fee increase to \$20.50 per term beginning January 1, 2016.</b>	2	Decision
6:00	7. Adjournment		Decision

Matthew Perrone,  
GSA Student Affairs Officer

September 10, 2015

## Graduate Student Association – University of Waterloo (GSA-UW) Association Fee

The GSA is calling a general meeting of its members to vote on a fee increase as recommended at the 2013 AGM for approval by members. This fee increase comes from the recommendation of the GSA Board, based on careful consideration of the current services and future goals of the organization. The following document serves to update members on the current financial situation of the GSA, and to provide rationale for the fee increase. **The proposed fee will increase from \$18.50 per term, to \$20.50 per term, which represents a 10% + CPI increase.**

In 2014/2015 the GSA collected \$275,120 in revenue through its association fee. Additional income comes from Graduate House profit, but is hard to predict and the GSA strives to be able to support all of its services through its direct student fee.

### Services of the GSA

- OGSA representation – UW was the founding member of the Ontario Graduate Students Alliance, a provincial lobby organization founded to lobby for graduate students. The OGSA is still in its infancy but currently has a number of member schools, and is working on lobbying on the provincial university funding reform.
- CASA representation – UW is a member of the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations. CASA is a federal lobby group that trains representatives from each school to lobby on the hill, and to develop lobby policy. This year through CASA, the GSA is running a Get out the Vote campaign on the UW campus to promote the youth vote in the 2015 Federal election.
- GSA events – the GSA hosts many events over the course of the year, from academic and information events to social events at the Graduate House. The majority of the GSA events are run through the Graduate House, which is the social hub for graduate students on campus.
- Orientation – the GSA advocated for a campus wide graduate orientation and was successful in creating this as a campus priority. This year marks the third campus wide graduate orientation where students can tour the campus, learn about crucial services and support systems on the campus and get a chance to meet other incoming students.
- Representation on all major University committees and the UW Board of Governors – various members of the GSA Executive Officers sit on a wide range of committees from the Senate, to the Board of Governors, to the Graduate Student Relations Committee and many, many more.
- Dedicated student leaders working to further the services of the organization and advocate for students – the GSA Executive take on projects every year to try to improve the graduate student experience on campus. This year's Executive team is working on advocating for changes to the management of graduate student office and social space, the institution of a robust TA policy and building the foundation to create an Ombudsman's office on campus.

- Legal Aid – The GSA offers a monthly legal aid clinic, where students by appointment can meet with a lawyer on a wide range of issues (excluding immigration) for no cost to the student.
- Tax Aid – Once a year during tax season the GSA offers a tax clinic for students to get help with their taxes for no additional cost to the student.
- Departmental GSA support – the GSA offers termly donations to departmental GSA organizations and graduate student clubs to support academic and social events.
- GSA Travel and Conferences – The GSA has two External Affairs officers who travel provincially and federally to attend conferences for CASA and the OGSA. The GSA is also a member of the GU15 group – a gathering of the graduate student associations of the U15 Canadian research intensive schools.
- Administration of the Health and Dental Plans – the GSA negotiates and administers the student Health and Dental plans for students (more info at [www.ihaveaplan.ca/](http://www.ihaveaplan.ca/)). The actual fee for each plan is separate from the GSA fee, but the GSA uses staff hours to manage the plans and work with the company to ensure students are getting the coverage they desire from the plan.
- Administration of the U-PASS Bus pass – the GSA negotiates with the GRT to produce contracts to allow the Watcard to be used as a bus pass on all GRT transit. This past year the GSA negotiated a new five-year contract with the GRT that will span the introduction of the LRT which is locked to a 5% increase per year.
- Student Advocacy – any student can come to the GSA office and make an appointment with the GSA General Manager to discuss any issue they have on campus. The GSA provides a staff member who will coach the student on policy and meeting preparation and who will also attend meetings with the student.

For an overview of a current break down of the GSA's expenses (unaudited), the financials have been broken up in to broad categories and displayed in Figure 1.

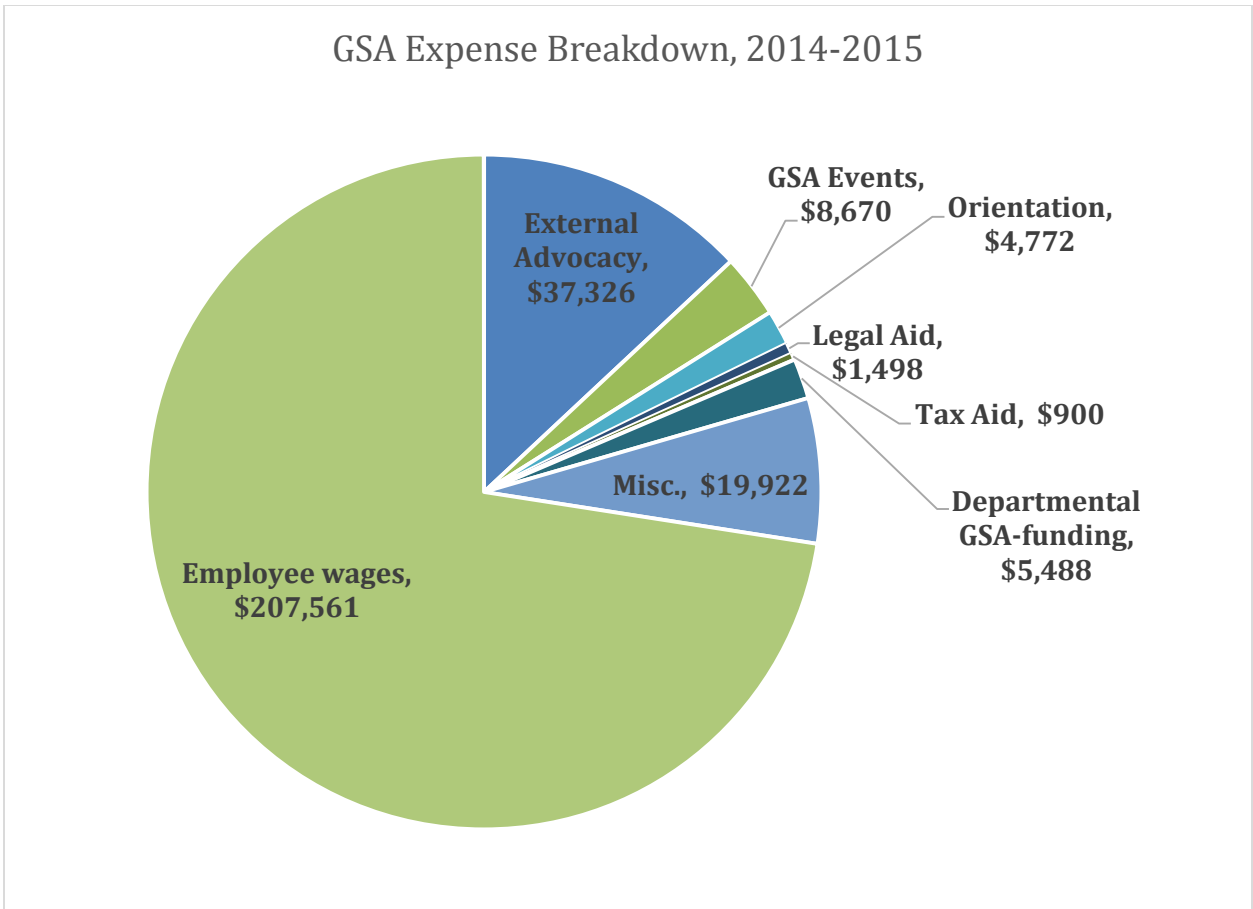


Figure 1. Visual representation of the 2014-2015 expenses broken down by category

The external advocacy line item includes all membership costs of the OGSA and CASA as well as the costs to send our student delegates to these meeting each year, as well as the other external groups the GSA participates in, such as the GU15. The GSA events item currently covers social events sponsored by the GSA, but in future budgets this line item is being moved in to the Graduate House budget, and thus moving forward will not be reflected in the GSA’s association budget. The salary line item contains executive salaries as well as the GSA General Manager and the GSA office receptionist positions. The miscellaneous category contains office expenses, discretionary accounts and many other smaller expenses that were not significant enough on their own to count as a separate category.

The GSA fee is currently set at \$18.50 a term, and although it covers all of the above services, the fee has not increased proportionally with the level of service and associated costs.

**Be It Resolved That the GSA members approve the Association Fee increase to \$20.50 per term beginning January 1, 2016.**