

2025 Annual General Meeting Minutes

April 3rd, 2025

Meeting

Date: April 3rd, 2025

Time: 04:30 P.M to 06:30 P.M EST

Place: Hybrid (Online via Microsoft Teams and in-person in SLC-3216 Grad Lounge)

AGM Chair: Nicholas Cheng, Board Director

Minutes Taker: Natalie Lok Yee Tong, GSA Minute Secretary



**GRADUATE STUDENT
ASSOCIATION**

UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO



AGENDA

Time estimate, mins	Agenda	Action
5	1. Call to order, establishing a quorum, rules of order, opening remarks	Information
5	2. Approval of AGM agenda * BIRT the AGM agenda is approved.	Decision
5	3. Floor nominations for director position a. Call for nominations	Decision
5	4. Approval of minutes of the previous AGM** BIRT minutes of the Annual General Meeting on April 3, 2024, are approved.	Decision
10	5. Auditors Report: 2023-2024 Audited Financial Statements**	Information
5	6. Appointment of GSA-UW auditors for 2025-2026** BIRT the GSA-UW appoints MNP LLP as the official financial auditors for the 2025-2026 financial year.	Decision
10	7. Confirmation of changes to the by-laws** BIRT the proposed amendments to By-law #6 are confirmed.	Decision
5	8. Ratification of appointments a. The board's appointment of Julian Surdi as Corporate Secretary and Treasurer for the term of May 1, 2024, to April 30, 2025. b. The board's appointment of Julian Surdi as Chief Returning Officer for the term of May 1, 2024, to April 30, 2025. c. The board's appointment of Kaylee Biggart as Chair of the Board for the term of May 1, 2024 to April 30, 2025. d. The board's appointment of Neela Hassan as President and Chief Executive Officer for the term of May 1, 2024, to April 30, 2025. e. The board's appointment of Meray Sadek as Vice President Administration for the term of August 19, 2024, to August 31, 2025. f. The board's appointment of Thabie Lechesa as Vice President Advocacy for the term of July 29, 2024, to August 31, 2025. g. The board's appointment of Chriselle Benjamin-Jerome as Vice President Communications for the term of March 28, 2024, to August 31, 2024. BIRT the following ratifications of appointments for the 2024-2025 year be approved.	Decision

25	<p>9. Elections of new Directors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Self-introduction of candidates b. Voting for candidates <p>Election of up to two (2) candidates as Directors for the term beginning May 1, 2025, and ending April 30, 2027.</p>	Information
40	<p>10. Reports</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. GSA President** b. GSA Board Chair** c. GSA Council Speaker** d. GSEF** 	Information
5	11. AGM election results	Information
1	12. Meeting adjournment	Decision

**BIRT* means “Be it resolved that”

** Documents can be found on the [GSA AGM 2025 webpage](#)

Members have the right to vote by proxy. Proxy forms were emailed to the members. For any questions regarding proxies and voting contact the GSA Chief Returning Officer at gsa-cro@uwaterloo.ca

MINUTES

1. Call to order, establishing a quorum, rules of order, opening remarks 16:36

2. Approval of AGM agenda 16:39

BIRT the AGM agenda is approved unanimously.

3. Floor nominations for director position 16:39

a. Call for nominations

There are currently two vacancies in the Board. The GM addressed the meeting to explain how to apply to be a director and related responsibilities.

4. Approval of minutes of the previous AGM 16:41

Floor opens to questions and comments regarding minutes of 2024 AGM.

BIRT minutes of Annual General Meeting April 3, 2024, are approved.

5. Confirmation of changes to the by-laws 17:46

Nicholas provided a brief introduction and changing factors of the proposed changes to by-laws. Floor opened for discussion.

There is concern that the GM role is accumulating too many responsibilities, which may create challenges if the position becomes vacant, or the workload significantly increases. While GM is trusted in the role, the structural issue remains regarding long-term sustainability. Concern was raised that the proposed change removes critical oversight and engagement by the board in the election process at the AGM. It was suggested that a current director should serve as the CRO to ensure board oversight and avoid placing additional stress on GSA employees.

The GM explained that the proposed change aimed to offload work from casual staff with limited hours. Previously handled by the elections coordinator, shifting this role to a full-time position would ensure better capacity and oversight. The GM also expressed concern about restricting them from serving as the CRO, as this could burden a director or casual staff, increasing the risk of errors. In response to this, it was noted that many responsibilities now assigned to the GM were previously handled by individual directors. Tia emphasized that the first consideration should be whether a director can reasonably take on a responsibility before assigning it to an employee. Tia cautioned against gradually shifting too much governance away from the board to staff, as this could erode the board's oversight role. Tia urged careful consideration of future implications when making bylaw changes.

BIRT the proposed amendments to By-law #6 are confirmed.

6. Auditor's report: 2023-2024 Audited Financial Statements 16:55

Accountant Bob spoke to the Auditor's report for the fiscal year ending on August 31, 2024, highlighting information from the independent Auditor. Accountant presented briefly on financial statements, including details on Graduate House, students' Health Plans, GSA's hard assets and GSA's association funds. Auditor's report is shared in the AGM meeting package. Floor opens for questions or comments regarding the Auditor's report.

7. Appointment of GSA-UW auditors for 2025-2026 17:04

BIRT the GSA-UW appoints MNP LLP as the official financial auditors for the 2025-2026 financial year. The motion passed unanimously.

8. Ratification of appointments **17:05**

- a. The board’s appointment of Julian Surdi as Corporate Secretary and Treasurer for the term of May 1, 2024, to April 30, 2025.
- b. The board’s appointment of Julian Surdi as Chief Returning Officer for the term of May 1, 2024, to April 30, 2025.
- c. The board’s appointment of Kaylee Biggart as Chair of the Board for the term of May 1, 2024 to April 30, 2025.
- d. The board’s appointment of Neela Hassan as President and Chief Executive Officer for the term of May 1, 2024, to April 30, 2025.
- e. The board’s appointment of Meray Sadek as Vice President Administration for the term of August 19, 2024, to August 31, 2025.
- f. The board’s appointment of Thabie Lechesa as Vice President Advocacy for the term of July 29, 2024, to August 31, 2025.
- g. The board’s appointment of Chriselle Benjamin-Jerome as Vice President Communications for the term of March 28, 2024, to August 31, 2024.

BIRT the following ratifications of appointments for the 2024-2025 year be approved.

9. Elections of new Directors **17:07**

- a. Self-introduction of candidates

Andrea Chakma and Mohammad Chalaki introduced themselves. Voting link is shared.

- b. Voting for candidates

Election of up to two (2) candidates as Directors for the term beginning May 1, 2025, and ending April 30, 2027.

10. Reports **17:13**

- a. GSA President

The President provided an update on the GSA in 2024-2025, ongoing partnerships, 2024-2025 initiatives and accomplishments, Grad House’s renovations and new initiatives and current priorities.

Concern was raised regarding more frequent promotions, and the GSA team responded with previous data, indicating that biweekly emails led to less engagement.

- b. GSA Council Speaker

The Council Speaker provided an update about Council’s development in the previous year.

- c. Chair of the GSA Board

The Board Chair provided an update about Board’s general structure, responsibilities, relations with the GSA, successes and existing challenges.

- d. Graduate Student Endowment Fund (GSEF)

Taronish Kotwall, GSEF Representative, presented an update. She introduced the purposes of GSEP, structures, funding process, upcoming changes and initiatives. Contact info is shared.

11. AGM election results **17:51**

Chair received results from Board of Directors. Both candidates are elected into the director positions.

12. Meeting adjournment **17:53**