

Graduate Student Committee

Report to the CASCA Board — Fall 2019

1- GSC Membership

The 2019-2020 Graduate Student Committee (GSC) consists of thirteen members representing nine universities. The current members of the graduate student committee and their university affiliations are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. The 2019-2020 GSC members and their associated host universities.

Executive		
Maan Hani	Chair	University of Victoria
Carter Rhea	Vice-Chair	Université de Montréal
Representatives on other committees		
Clare Higgs	EIC rep.	University of Victoria
Michael Chen	EPO rep.	University of Victoria
Members		
Melissa Marquette		McGill University
Dhruv Bisaria		Queen's University
Kenny Van		University of Alberta
Mainak Singha		University of Manitoba
Amanda Cook**		University of Toronto
William Thompson		University of Victoria
Kristi Webb		University of Waterloo
Michael Chapman		University of Waterloo
Megan Tannock		University of Western Ontario

****** Interim representative until membership is renewed or an alternative is selected.

2- The Graduate Student Workshop & the Annual General Meeting

The 2019 Graduate Student Workshop (GSW) featured three sessions: (1) a workshop on allyship, (2) a science communication workshop, and (3) a career panel. Following CSACA2019 the GSC surveyed the graduate student body for feedback on their experience during the workshop.

During the Fall of 2019, the GSC representatives consulted with their respective departments to help inform the GSC on the community's interests. The GSC has started brainstorming ideas for an engaging and informative workshop at the 2020 Annual General Meeting (AGM) based on the community's responses. The GSC will start a joint collaboration with the AGM's LOC early in the 2020.

3- Governance — Mandate

During the 2018-2019 term, the GSC drafted terms of reference for its members, and outlined a short-range strategic plan to facilitate continuity and guide the committee's goals in following years. Complementing the efforts during the 2018-2019 terms, the GSC is currently brainstorming a mandate. The GSC's mandate would define the values and overarching philosophy guiding the GSC's long-range planning. The GSC will consult with the CASCA board in early 2020 to ensure the mandate aligns with CSACA's mandate and bylaws.

4- Membership & CASCA Graduate Student Membership

In the past several annual reports, the previous GSC chairs outlined the importance and need for diversity on the GSC. The GSC acknowledges the importance of better/diverse representation at all levels of governance, and the challenges involved in achieving such representation. Albeit diverse (by many metrics), the current GSC membership may not represent the diversity within the graduate student body. Maintaining and increasing the GSC's diversity continues to be a main goal for the current GSC.

In addition to increasing diversity, the GSC continues to face various challenges in member recruitment. The proposed communications campaign aims to alleviate future recruitment challenges by highlighting the GSC's brand and goals.

6- Communication

- **Language:** The majority of previous communication by the GSC to the membership was *not* bi-lingual. As such, the GSC failed to reach out to the *full* membership. Starting Fall2019, *all* communication by the GSC has been in both official languages.

- **Website:** Following the recent migration of the CASCA website, the GSC will return to developing the GSC's webpage to align with the graduate students' needs.

- **Social Media Presence:** The GSC's social media campaign (planned during the 2018-2019 term) will launch in January 2020.

- **GRADhighlights:** GRADhighlights, a proposed program during the 2018-2019 term, features recent/ongoing research by graduate students. The program will launch on the GSC's social media accounts in January 2020. The GSC continues to be interested in including the highlights on the CASCA website, and possibly *Cassiopeia* (CASCA's newsletter).

6- Graduate Student Survey

During the 2018-2019 term, the GSC started working on a graduate student survey which would provide a comprehensive view of the graduate student's needs, challenges, and state nationwide. The survey is in the late stages of development and is planned to launch in the Spring of 2020 following consultation with the EIC and the CASCA board.

Maan H. Hani
Chair, GSC

6 December, 2019