

Graduate Student Committee

Report to the CASCA Board — May 2020

1- GSC Membership

The 2019-2020 Graduate Student Committee (GSC) consists of fourteen 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
Martine Lokken	SC rep.	University of Toronto
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

GSC representatives consulted their respective departments to help inform the GSC on the graduate community's interests. The 2020 Graduate Student Workshop (GSW) will feature two sessions: (1) a workshop on wellness and mindfulness, and (2) a science communication workshop.

3- Governance — Mandate

The GSC drafted a governance document that defines the values and overarching philosophy guiding the GSC's planing. The document includes terms of reference for the GSC positions and a mandate for the committee. The governance document was shared with the CASCA board to ensure that it aligns with CSACA's mandate and bylaws. Following the board's response, the GSC plans to estate the document as the official GSC governance handbook.

4- Membership & CASCA Graduate Student Membership

The GSC continues to face challenges in member recruitment. The GSC's communications campaign aims to alleviate future recruitment challenges by highlighting the GSC's brand and goals. As we focus on developing better recruitment methods, maintaining and increasing the GSC's diversity continues to be a priority for the current GSC.

6- Communication

- **CASCA Website:** Following the migration of the CASCA website, we recommend that the committee returns to developing the GSC's webpage to align with the graduate students' needs. The current webpage is in desperate need for a refresh. We recommend that the website be considered a top priority for the 2020-2021 GSC.

- **Social Media Presence:** The GSC's social media campaign launched with great success. The GSC is active on Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter. Our follower base is rapidly and consistently growing. Although we are currently limited in our interactions with our audience, our flagship program GRADhighlights has seen great success. Additionaly effort has been made to engage with the community: For example, the GSC continuously highlights and supports contributions from Canadian Astronomy on social media. In addition, we partook in the astronomy day #AstronomyAcrossCanada campaign. We recommend increasing the GSC's

interaction with the membership through the development of new programs and better targeted social media campaigns.

- **GRADhighlights:** GRADhighlights has been a success for graduate students and the GSC. Communication with the appropriate parties are underway to feature GRADhighlights on the CASCA website, and *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 working group has made further progress although the survey will unfortunately be delayed due to the ongoing pandemic. The survey is in the late stages of development. We recommend that discussions with the EIC and the CASCA board resume in 2020-2021.

Maan H. Hani
Chair, GSC

11 May, 2020