

**GRADUATE STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL****AGENDA****May 7<sup>th</sup>, 2025****2:00-4:00pm /OM2-138 or ZOOM**

## Attendees:

Ahmed, Amira	X	Hunter, Elyssa		Sandler, Michael	X
Akter Moli, Mhamoda		Huang, Dominic (Zhongda)		Shatzko, Amanda	X
Bashmakova, Iana		Jalilvand, Iman		Shelton, Bronte	
Baranov, Jo		Jelassi, Joud		Sowdagar, Sahar	
Crawford, Carolyn	X	Khamseh, Mojdeh Rezaei		Steele, Andrew	
Dieudonne, Nweke		Lagman, Shirley		Thind, Shavneet	
Dow, Alec		Manrique Hernandez, Johanna	X	Al Barazi, Mariam	
Eaton, Riley		Ruboooga, Emily		Tu, Lixin	
Shipley, Paul	X	Roberts, Deanna	X	Pratt, Daniela	X

*X – In attendance***1. Chair's Remarks (Paul)**

Paul welcomed everyone back and thanked our presenters for coming.

**2. SUO Advocate, Ombuds, and Equity Advisor (Rachel Fortin, Cindy Leonard and Kara Ellison – human rights advising team)**

Rachel Fortin (SUO Student Advocate), Cindy Leonard (Ombuds Officer), and Kara Ellison (Equity Advisor, EIO) attended to share information about their respective roles and how



they support students. Slides from their presentation are attached for reference and include all of their information on the second to last slide.

### **3. Other Business**

#### **AI use in Graduate Studies**

The group discussed the appropriate use of AI tools in academic work. While the conversation is ongoing, students were reminded that there is a current policy outlining the acceptable use of generative AI at UBC Okanagan, which can be found here: [Graduate Education and Generative AI](#).

#### **Graduate Student Funding and Support Concerns**

A separate discussion was held regarding the growing concerns around funding reductions for graduate students. Attendees noted the impacts of decreased TA positions and the stress this places on students, particularly international students.

Some key highlights were:

- PhD students face rigid timelines with limited flexibility for life or health-related delays.
- PhD funding typically ends after year 4, making completion more difficult for some.
- IDPT support, which helps offset international tuition costs, also ends after four years.
- OGRS funding is still available in year 5.

Despite an increasing number of students, the fixed TA budget has remained unchanged, leading to smaller funding allocations per student. Concerns were also raised about the decline



in scholarship opportunities, particularly for international students. Paul emphasized that cutting TA positions is a short-sighted approach and reassured the group that strong advocacy efforts will continue to support students.