

Foothills Graduate Association

University of Calgary



Representing Foothills-based Graduate Students

About FGA

FGA unites 15 Departmental Graduate Associations (DGAs) and 6 Research Institute Trainee Associations (RITAs) across the Foothills Campus and affiliates. Meeting monthly to share updates, raise concerns, and drive campus-wide initiatives for our diverse graduate community.

What do we do?

- Host large-scale community events
- Amplify grad voices to university leaders
- Champion wellness and better resources
- Help navigate academic challenges
- Support student-supervisor conflict resolution
- Elevate the Foothills grad experience

FGA Executive Board 2026-2027



Ariel MacKenzie
President



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VP General



Myriam Beaulieu
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Mackenzie Hancock
VP Finance



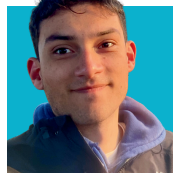
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Co-Chair
Mental Health &
Wellness Committee



Anna Hawkins
Co-chair
Equity, Diversity, &
Inclusion Committee



Katarina MacConnell
Co-Chair
Mental Health &
Wellness Committee

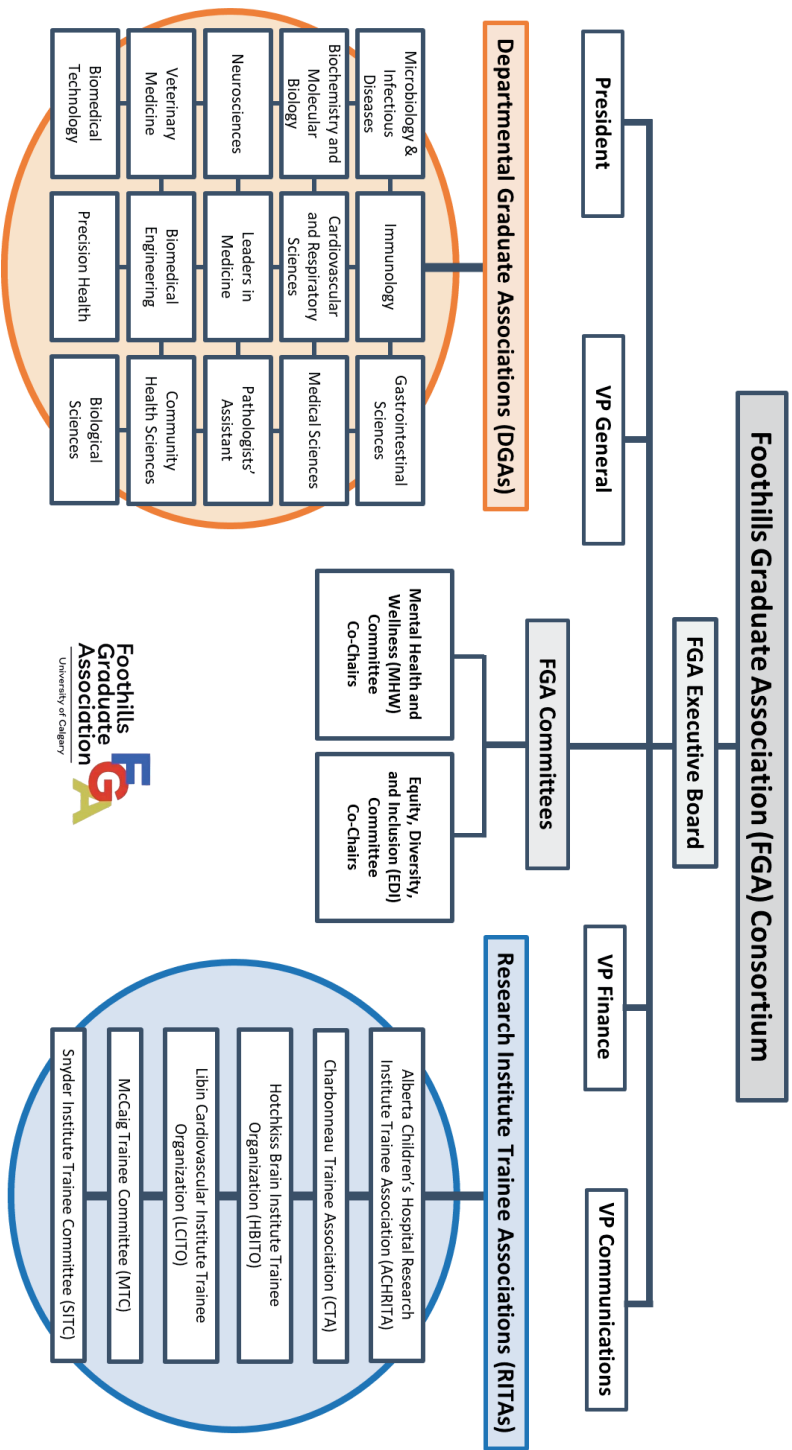


Malcolm Walling
Co-chair
Equity, Diversity, &
Inclusion Committee

Are you interested in volunteering &
gaining leadership experience?

Email fga@ucalgary.ca for more details!

How is FGA Structured?



Check these out!



Zen Den

A neurodivergent friendly space for graduate students to relax and de-stress



Student Advocacy & Wellness Hub

Free professional mental health services and wellness resources for graduate students



Feasby Student Lounge

A multi-purpose space to meet with friends for group activities, games, and lunch

Do not miss FGA Socials!

The third Friday of each month
11:30 am - 12:30 pm
HRIC/HMRB Atrium



FGA's Finance & Budgeting Guide

ESTIMATED COSTS

Annual

Expense	Annual (CAD)
Tuition (thesis-based, 3 terms)	\$3,676.05
Student Fees	\$1,595.33
Housing — 1-bed apt, avg.	\$19,800.00
Tenant Insurance	\$300.00
Utilities (heat, hydro, water)	\$2,640.00
Internet	\$1,020.00
Food & Groceries	\$5,400.00
Mobile Phone	\$780.00
Student Health Plan	\$381.60
Student Dental Plan	\$334.96
Transportation (car)	\$3,384.00
Campus Parking (2 semesters)	\$470.80
Contingency (15%)	\$5,823.87
TOTAL ESTIMATED	\$45,606.61

* Assumes 1-bedroom apartment, Canadian/PR, thesis-based program

Monthly

Category	Est.
Rent (1-bed)	\$1,650
Utilities	\$220
Internet	\$85
Tenant Insurance	\$25
Groceries	\$450
Phone	\$65
Transport	\$282
Health & Dental	\$60
Tuition & Fees (avg)	\$439
Contingency/Savings	\$485
TOTAL / MONTH	\$3,761

KNOW YOUR INCOME SOURCE

- Stipend / Teaching Assistantship (TA)
- Research Assistantship (RA)
- External scholarships (NSERC, SSHRC, CIHR)
- Internal bursaries & emergency funds
- Part-time work (check study permit if applicable)
- Government student loans (domestic students)

CALGARY RENT (2025)

Unit Type	Avg. Monthly (CAD)
Shared room	\$800 – \$1,000
Bachelor / Studio	\$1,300 – \$1,500
1-bedroom apt	\$1,500 – \$1,700
2-bed (per person, shared)	\$1,000 – \$1,100
2-bedroom (entire unit)	\$1,700 – \$2,000

KEY DEADLINES

Month	Action
Sep	NSERC CGS-M / PGS-D opens
Oct	NSERC institutional deadline; AGES
Nov	CIHR; internal awards close
Mar	File taxes; GSA Tax Clinic
Apr	Tax deadline (Apr 30)
May	Summer TA/RA contracts

Set calendar reminders 4–6 weeks before deadlines.

EMERGENCY/SUPPORT

- GSA Emergency Bursary — urgent expenses
- University Emergency Loan (interest-free)
- Campus Food Bank — free & confidential
- Supervisor/dept if funding situation changes

USEFUL LINKS

canada.ca/en/revenue-agency — CRA taxes
alberta.ca/rental-housing — Tenancy rights
gasbuddy.com — Cheapest gas near you
flipp.com — Grocery flyers & price matching
mobilesyrup.com — Best phone plan deals
redflagdeals.com — Canadian deals forum
wealthsimple.com — TFSA/FHSA investing

HOUSING

Always ask which utilities are included. Gas heat in Calgary winters can add \$80–\$150/month.

- 1-bedroom average: \$1,500–\$1,700/month
- Tenant insurance: \$200–\$400/year (recommended)
- Alberta max deposit: 1 month's rent
- Bring \$3,500–\$4,500 for first+last+deposit
- AB Tenancy rights: alberta.ca/rental-housing

UTILITIES

Monthly average for a 1-bedroom apartment:

- Electricity: \$60–\$100
- Natural gas: \$80–\$150 (higher in winter)
- Water: \$30–\$50 (often included)
- Internet: \$70–\$100/month

Total budget: ~\$220–\$300/month

Set thermostat to 18–20°C — save on gas.

TRANSPORTATION

Calgary avg. fuel: \$1.20–\$1.50/litre (2025)

- Car insurance (Calgary): \$1,500–\$2,000/year
- Calgary Transit monthly pass: \$115–\$124
- U-Pass: check if included in student fees
- No car = saves \$4,000–\$6,000+/year

Use GasBuddy app for cheapest stations.

PHONE

Budget avg: \$65/month (\$780/year)

- Budget plans (Koodo, Chatr): \$25–\$45
 - Mid-tier (Fido, Virgin): \$45–\$70
 - Major carrier (Bell/Rogers/Telus): \$65–\$100+
- Check MobileSyrup & RedFlagDeals for promos.

FOOD & GROCERIES

Budget avg: \$450/month (\$5,400/year)

- Frugal (meal prep): \$75–\$90/week
 - Average: \$90–\$115/week
 - Comfortable: \$115–\$150/week
- Discount grocers: No Frills, FreshCo, Walmart. Use Flipp app to price-match flyers.

TAXES

File by April 30 each year.

- Free filing: Wealthsimple Tax, TurboTax Free
- Keep: T4, T4A, T2202 (tuition) slips
- Claim: Tuition Tax Credit, Moving Expenses
- CVITP: free in-person help (income <\$20K)
- GSA runs a free Tax Clinic every March/April.

CREDIT & BANKING

- Use a no-fee student chequing account
- Get a no-fee student credit card
- Pay the full balance every month
- Keep credit utilization under 30%
- Check credit score free: Borrowell or Credit Karma

Good score (680+) needed to rent an apartment.

SAVINGS ACCOUNT

TFSA — Tax-Free Savings Account

- \$7,000/year limit; all growth tax-free
- Withdraw anytime, no taxes owed
- Open at Wealthsimple (free)

FHSA — First Home Savings Account

- \$8,000/year; \$40,000 lifetime limit
 - Contributions are tax-deductible
 - Tax-free if used for first home purchase
- Start TFSA first — most flexible.

HEALTH & WELLNESS

Student Health Plan: \$381.60/year

Student Dental Plan: \$334.96/year

Total: \$716/year (~\$60/month)

- Can opt out if you have equivalent coverage
- Plan covers prescriptions, vision, physio
- Mental health: University Counselling (free)
- Alberta Mental Health: 1-877-303-2642
- Campus gym: \$25–\$50/month (check if included in fees).

Mental Health & Wellness Committee

WHAT WE DO

We're here to support your wellbeing throughout your graduate journey. Through events, workshops, and wellness initiatives, we help you **build community**, **develop practical skills** for navigating graduate school, **improve access to wellness resources**.

EVENTS TO LOOK FORWARD TO



CRAFTERNOONS

EVERY THIRD THURSDAY!

Take a break and get creative! Join us every third Thursday for a fun, free crafting activity. Find new hobbies, socialize, and relax.



LUNCH & LEARNS

Build your graduate school mental health toolkit! Join us each month for practical workshops led by campus experts and guest speakers on stress management, resilience, productivity, and more.



WELLNESS EVENTS

Keep an eye out for fitness activities, giveaways, therapy dogs, and other wellness events throughout the year!

WANT TO GET INVOLVED?

Join the committee and make a positive impact on graduate student life while gaining experience!

Help run events, social media, restock the Zen Den, and more!

Commitment is monthly meetings (time/dates tbd)

Interested?

Stop by one of our events or reach out!

wellness.fga@ucalgary.ca

Navigating Mental Health in Grad School

Grounding Exercises

To help in times of overwhelm, or to centre yourself before a big presentation/meeting

5-4-3-2-1

Take a moment to look around and observe...



5 things you can see



4 things you can touch



3 things you can hear



2 things you can smell



1 thing you can taste

Hand tracing



Trace along your fingers, breathing in as you go up, and breathing out as you trace down.

Sour Candy



Keep some sour candy (ie warheads) in your backpack. Sucking on sour candy and focusing on the taste can help centre your brain, and focus you in the present.

Talking to your supervisor

Establishing a positive working relationship with your supervisor, and setting clear boundaries can make a world of difference for your mental health throughout grad school. Some tips for doing this includes:

- **Set expectations early.** Discuss working hours, response times, vacation, weekend work, meeting frequency, authorship, feedback, and how urgent requests will be communicated.
- **State boundaries as commitments, not apologies.** For example: "I'm unavailable this weekend, but I can complete this by Tuesday."
- **Communicate what helps you succeed.** Be clear about how you prefer to receive feedback, where you need guidance, and what support would be useful.
- **Speak up about unrealistic expectations.** You understand your workload and day-to-day project demands. If a timeline is not feasible, explain why and suggest an alternative.
- **Remember that asking for help is part of learning.** Your supervisor's role includes training and supporting you. Asking questions does not make you burdensome or annoying.

Some kind reminders

- Rest is not a reward for finishing everything, it's a necessity
- Every project, lab, supervisor, and timeline is different. Someone else's progress is not a fair measure of your own
- Setbacks, failed experiments, and unexpected delays are part of research, not evidence that you are incapable.

Student Wellness Guide

FOOTHILLS CAMPUS RESOURCES

REST & RECHARGE

Zen Den - HSC G214

Quiet, neuroinclusive space to relax and recharge. Free tea & coffee included!

Feasby Student Lounge - HSC G552

Study, eat, or socialize! Desks, comfy seating, ping-pong, foosball, & pool.

Multi-faith Rooms - HSC 1002 & 1004

Drop-in spaces for prayer, reflection, meditation and other faith practices.

COUNSELLING

SAWH Office - HSC G740

Confidential counselling, wellness programming, academic help, advocacy, & connection to campus resources. Drop in or email (sawhub@ucalgary.ca)

FOOD SUPPORTS

Grad Snacks - Zen Den

Free, nutritious snacks for grad students available 24/7.

Community Pantry - Hippocrates Mall

Take what you need, share what you can. Food, hygiene, & household essentials. Available anonymously.

Fresh Routes Mobile Market - Hippocrates Mall

Lower-cost fresh produce every Wednesday. 11 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Events & Workshops

Grad student tip: Keep an eye on campus events—there's often lunch involved!

FITNESS & MOVEMENT

Kitnetx Fitness & Wellness Centre - CWPH 1D01

Cardio, strength equipment, free weights, showers, lockers & fitness classes.

HSC Gym - HSC Basement

Squat rack, smith machine, benches, & more. Access with Kinetix membership or HSC gym access.

Kinetix access included with grad student with tuition!

+Fitness Events at lunch & FGA Run Club (Check insta for details!)

MORE SUPPORT ON MAIN CAMPUS

The Health and Wellness Clinic - MSC 370

Access medical appointments, counselling, mental health care, and wellness support on Main Campus.

UCalgary Recovery Community - Yamnuska Hall YS005

Peer-led support for anyone in recovery, seeking recovery, or exploring their relationship with substance use or addictive behaviours.

Fitness and Recreation - Access the Main Campus gym, pool, climbing walls, Olympic Oval & more.

Online Resources

NEED TO TALK TO SOMEONE?

GSA Student Wellness Program <https://gsa.ucalgary.ca/health-dental-services-2/>
Confidential counselling by phone or online for eligible graduate students. Access via GSA health & Dental website.

Hope for Wellness <https://www.hopeforwellness.ca>
Immediate telephone and online-chat support for Indigenous people across Canada, available 24/7 in English and French, with some telephone support available in Cree, Ojibway, and Inuktitut.

Togetherall <https://togetherall.com/en-ca/>
An anonymous online peer-support community with practical well-being tools, available 24/7. Students can check their access using their university email address.

PREFER TO START ON YOUR OWN?

BounceBack <https://online.bouncebackonline.ca>
A free, guided skill-building program for low mood, mild-to-moderate anxiety or depression, stress, and worry. It uses workbooks and support from a trained coach, and students can refer themselves online.

NOT SURE WHERE TO BEGIN?

Call or text “211”
A free, confidential service available 24/7 by phone, text, or online chat. Students can receive help locating mental-health, financial, housing, food, and other community supports.

MENTAL HEALTH EMERGENCY RESOURCES

Distress Centre: Free 24-hour crisis line

Call or text: 403 - 266 - 4357

Suicide Crisis Line (Free & 24/7)

Call or text: 988

There are many more resources available online - check the FGA website for a more comprehensive list!

If you are confused about which resource is right for you, or are unsure how to access them, please do not hesitate to contact us at wellness.fga@ucalgary.ca

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee

WHAT WE DO

We're here to help foster a more inclusive and welcoming graduate community throughout your academic journey. Through advocacy, education, engagement, and EDI initiatives, we work to improve accessibility, address barriers such as food insecurity, and support greater representation and belonging across our graduate community. Have questions, concerns, or ideas? Reach out to us to get involved or share how we can better support you.

UPCOMING INITIATIVES

Community Identity Showcase

Join us over lunch as guest speakers share perspectives from diverse communities and identities. Celebrate different cultures, explore barriers to equity and inclusion, and discover how we can create positive change in science and everyday life.

Breakfast Club

Join our new Breakfast Club pilot program as we work to bring free biweekly breakfasts to the CSM community. Come enjoy a meal, connect with others, and help us build a lasting campus tradition!

Accessible Design Project

In collaboration with the Dr. Fast Lab and GSA², we're mapping accessibility features across the Foothills Campus to help improve inclusive washrooms, expand public seating, and identify opportunities to make our campus more accessible for everyone.

JOIN OUR COMMITTEE!

Passionate about EDI? Interested in helping run, organize, and promote events?

Have ideas of your own? Join our committee and help create positive change, foster belonging, and make our graduate community more inclusive for everyone.

Your experiences and ideas matter. Help us identify barriers, improve campus inclusivity, and shape future EDI initiatives by sharing your feedback, concerns, or suggestions.

EDI Resources Across Campus

Beyond us, there are a variety of offices and supports available on campus!

FOOTHILLS CAMPUS

Precision, Equity, and Social Justice Office - PESJO serves as a centralized equity, diversity, inclusion, accessibility (EDIA) resource for the CSM.

- Offers several EDI related courses and workshops
- CSM Community Pantry & Fresh Routes Mobile Market
- Safe Reporting at CSM; Mistreatment resources, policies, and support



CWPH 7th Floor 7E21



pesjo@ucalgary.ca

Indigenous, Local, and Global Health Office - Through various collaborative initiatives with community partners, the ILGHO aims to advance social and health equity both at home and abroad.

- Help access opportunities to be involved in ILGH
- Connect to resources to enable or support student ILGH initiatives



HSC G802



csmengage@ucalgary.ca

Multi-faith Spaces - There are 2 multifaith spaces on Foothills campus. These rooms are open to everyone to drop in as needed.



HSC 1002 - Mixed Gender Space
HSC 1004 - Womens Only Space

EDI Resources Across Campus

MAIN CAMPUS

Womens Resource Centre - WRC is a safe, inclusive, and welcoming place for all members of the UofC community, helping them develop practical skills to support feminist theory learned in the classroom. Visit them to have a cool place to work, attend an event, or checkout their library with over 1700 books about women and gender issues!



482 MacEwan Student Centre



women@ucalgary.ca

Q Centre - The Q centre is a safe, comfortable and inviting space for the LGBTQA+ community on campus. They offer a library, peer support services, events, and a safe space to just hang out or do work.



210 MacEwan Student Centre



qcentre@ucalgary.ca

Graduate Student Ombuds Office - Ombuds office provides an effective and accessible service to all Graduate Students. They can help can help identify, address and hopefully remedy conflicts you may have with your Graduate Supervisor or Professors.



274 MacEwan Student Centre



ombuds@ucalgary.ca

Student Success Centre - Provides inclusive advising and academic support services. They have on-on-one, group, and peer programming to help you with anything from writing skills, studying, neurodivergent tools and strategies, scholarships, and more.



**Taylor Family Digital Library
3rd Floor**



success@ucalgary.ca

EDI Resources Across Campus

UCalgary Emergency Funding - Emergency financial assistance is available to all UofC students through the registrar's office for anyone experiencing an emergency expense or unplanned situation out of their control. This can be anything from a theft, medical emergency, car accident, and many more.



220 Hunter Student Commons



<http://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar>

Student Legal Assistance - SLA is an on-campus law clinic staffed by U of C law students who, with the assistance of volunteer advising lawyers, provide free representation and legal assistance to U of C students and Calgary area residents.



3390 Murray Fraser Hall



slacalgary.ca

Student Accessibility Services - SAS works to create an accessible, equitable and supportive learning environment that enhances each student's academic and personal development. Through SAS, students can request accommodations, meet with an advisor, book exams or quizzes, and apply for funding.



482 MacEwan Student Centre



access@ucalgary.ca

Calgary Fair Entry Program - Fair Entry Program is external to UofC but beneficial for many students as it allows you to access city services and programs at a lower cost. This program is open to low income Calgary residents, allowing them to access recreation facilities, internet plans, phone plans, television, residential parking, prescriptions, etc. at lower cost. The program also includes fee assistance for partner facilities such as the YMCA, Folk Fest, Calgary Marathon, TELUS Spark, and many, many more.



800 Macleod Trail, SE ; 2623 56 St, NE ; 333 Shawville Blvd, SE

There are many more supports available on and off campus, checkout the FGA website for a comprehensive list of supports for anything from smoking cessation to faith and spirituality, or contact us through email.

Connect with us!



General Inquiries

fga@ucalgary.ca



Mental Health & Wellness Committee

wellness.fga@ucalgary.ca



Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion Committee

edi.fga@ucalgary.ca



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fga@ucalgary.ca



Scan the QR code to visit our website

