

UMGPS Council Meeting Documents Index Page

Wednesday, April 22nd, 2026, – 5:30PM - Zoom

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UMGPS Council Meeting Agenda

Wednesday, April 22nd, 2026 – 5:30 PM – Zoom

1. Call to Order

2. Traditional Territories Acknowledgement

The University of Manitoba campuses and research spaces are located on original lands of Anishinaabeg, Ininiwak, Anisininewuk, Dakota Oyate, Dene and Inuit, and on the National Homeland of the Red River Métis. University of Manitoba recognizes that the Treaties signed on these lands are a lifelong, enduring relationship, and we are dedicated to upholding their spirit and intent. We acknowledge the harms and mistakes of the past and the present. With this understanding, we commit to supporting Indigenous excellence through active Reconciliation, meaningful change, and the creation of an environment where everyone can thrive. Our collaboration with Indigenous communities is grounded in respect and reciprocity and this guides how we move forward as an institution.

3. Approval of the Agenda

MOTION: BIRT the UMGPS Council approves the agenda for the April 22nd, 2026, UMGPS Council Meeting as presented.

4. Approval of the Minutes

The minutes of March 25th, 2026, UMGPS Council Meeting were pre-circulated via email prior to this meeting.

MOTION: BIRT the UMGPS Council approves the minutes of March 25th, 2026, UMGPS Council Meeting as presented.

5. Committee Reports

5.1. March Committee Reports (Appendix II)

6. HSGSA Report

6.1. March-April HSGSA Report (Appendix III)

7. Senate Report

7.1. March-April Senate Report (Appendix V)

8. Executive Reports

8.1. March-April Reports (Appendix II)

9. Departmental Reports

10. Unfinished Business

11. New Business

11.1 Discussion: Alumni Representation on Board of Directors for UMGPS

12. Announcements

- a. **Next Council Meeting:** May 27th, 2026 – 5:30PM - Zoom
- b. **May Newsletter:** If anyone has anything they want to share for the newsletter, e-mail marketing@umgps.org

13 Adjournment

Appendix II:

UMGPS Committee Reports March 1st – April 30th, 2026

Executive Committee

Chair: Timilehin Oluwajuyitan (UMGPS President)

Meeting Dates: March 24th, 2026

- Approval of new UMGPS clubs.
- Discussions and update career workshop planning.
- Discussions and updates on AVPI equity and inclusion.
- Discussions and updates on the UMGPS tax clinic.
- Discussions and updates on the UMGPS/ HSGSA gala event.
- Discussions and updates on the UMGPS executive transition.
- Discussions and updates on HSGSA academic and social events.
- Discussions and updates on the postdoctoral fellow research showcase day.

Board of Directors

Acting Chair: Timilehin Oluwajuyitan (UMGPS President)

Meeting Dates: April 1st, 2026

- Update on UMGPS finance

Governance & Strategy Committee

Chair: Timilehin Oluwajuyitan (UMGPS President)

Meeting Dates: January 8th, 15th, Feb 5th, 19th, 26th March 5th March 19th and April 2nd, 2026

- Modification of the UMGPS By-law
- Discussions and update UMGPS lawyer remarks on motion approved in January 2026 AGM.

Vice-President Events & Clubs – Diwan Oulai

Meeting Dates: March 26, 2026

- No event was held
- Club funding applications and Club registration
- Tax Clinic for UMGPS/HSGSA
- Hosted Governance & Strategy Committee meeting March 19th

Vice-President Academic & Senator – Lamia Mahzabin

Yet to be received.

Vice President External Affairs & Senator – Armin Aghajani

Yet to be received.

Vice-President Equity, Inclusion, & Diversity – Peggy Wu

- Attended the 2026 Gala as a volunteer.
- Attended the UMGPS Governance and Strategy Committee meetings.
- Conducted a transition meeting with incoming successor Kyra to support a smooth handover of the VPEI portfolio.
- Raised concerns regarding the International Graduate Student Scholarship (IGSS) eligibility criteria and engaged with the Graduate Awards Office to advocate for more equitable consideration of graduate-level performance and diverse grading systems across institutions.

Appendix III:

HSGSA Report

March 1st – March 31st, 2026

From: Ashraf Kadar Shahib (HSGSA President)

To: UMGPS Members

- Over the months of January and March, my work primarily focused on fulfilling committee obligations and ensuring the smooth administrative functioning of the HSGSA.
- At the governance level, I chaired and attended routine HSGSA Executive and Council meetings, as well as the HSGSA Annual General Meeting.
- I also actively represented the HSGSA at the broader university level by participating in UMGPS Executive meetings, Governance and Strategy Committee meetings, the UMGPS Town Hall, and the UMGPS AGM.
- Furthermore, I maintained attendance at regular MHRE meetings, FGPS Council meetings, FGPS Executive meetings, and Gala Committee meetings to support ongoing event planning.
- In addition to committee work, I dedicated time to special initiatives and administrative duties to support the graduate student body.
- This included organizing the HSGSA Pickleball Tournament, evaluating applications for the Continuing Education Grant, and preparing and reviewing PCL Nominations across both months.
- I also continuously worked on the preparation of various organizational documents to support council operations.
- Regarding my time commitment, I dedicated a total of 72 hours to HSGSA duties in January and 90 hours and 30 minutes in March. During both months, I maintained 10 regular office hours.
- Finally, I am pleased to report that I missed no scheduled meetings during this two-month reporting period.

Appendix IV:

Postdoctoral Affairs March Report

Vice-President Postdoctoral Affairs – Dr. Nazanin

PDFA Council Report – March 2026 Submitted by: Nazanin Vafaei

- **Election Process (PDFA Executive Transition)** During this period, I was actively involved in supporting the upcoming PDFA elections. This included:
 - a. Communicating with postdoctoral fellows to encourage participation and nominations
 - b. Engaging with potential candidates and discussing roles and responsibilities
 - c. Supporting the nomination process to ensure a smooth and transparent transition for the next PDFA executive team
- **Research Showcase Awards – Follow-up and Financial Processing** I continued to follow up on the financial processing of awards from the 2025 UM Postdoctoral & Graduate Research Showcase.
 - a. The award documentation had been signed in December; however, it came to our attention that some recipients had not yet received their payments
 - b. I initiated communication with the relevant individuals (PDFA/UMGPS team) to clarify the status and help resolve delays
 - c. Ongoing coordination is in place to ensure that all awardees receive their funds as soon as possible
- **Meetings, Branding, and Gala Preparation**
 - a. Attended PDFA/UMGPS meetings and contributed to ongoing discussions
 - b. Provided feedback on logo design and branding materials
 - c. Participated in planning discussions for the upcoming UMGPS Gala
- **General Coordination and Communication**
 - a. Maintained communication with PDFA executives and relevant university contacts to support ongoing activities
 - b. Responded to inquiries from members regarding PDFA initiatives and processes

Appendix V:

March Senate Report

Meeting Dates: March 4th, 2026

Meeting Minute Link: https://umanitoba.ca/governance/sites/governance/files/2026-03/2026_03_04_senate_minutes_0.pdf

Key Highlights

- The Senate meeting was held with broad participation from university leadership, faculty, and administrators.
- No closed-session or routine concurrence items were discussed.

Memorial Tributes

- Senate honored:
 - Dr. Tom Booth (Biological Sciences)
 - Prof. Ernest Bridges (Electrical Engineering)
 - Dr. Barry Lavallee (Indigenous health and medical education)

Academic & Program Updates

- Proposal to increase Bachelor of Social Work admissions by 25 seats to meet growing demand, especially for northern and Indigenous communities.
- Expansion depends on additional provincial funding.

President's Report (Dr. Michael Benarroch)

- Budget uncertainty: Awaiting provincial funding and tuition decisions for 2026–2027.
- Concern over declining international student enrollment and revenue.
- Active advocacy for:
 - Faster study permit processing (IRCC)
 - Fairer international student allocation across provinces
- Research developments:
 - Up to 8 Canada Research Chair applications being submitted.
- International engagement:
 - New partnerships in India (engineering, health, public health).
- Encouragement for faculty to engage in media training and public outreach.

President's Report (Dr. Michael Benarroch)

- Budget uncertainty: Awaiting provincial funding and tuition decisions for 2026–2027.
- Concern over declining international student enrollment and revenue.

- Active advocacy for:
 - Faster study permit processing (IRCC)
 - Fairer international student allocation across provinces
- Research developments:
 - Up to 8 Canada Research Chair applications being submitted.
- International engagement:
 - New partnerships in India (engineering, health, public health).
- Encouragement for faculty to engage in media training and public outreach.

Operational & Administrative Updates

- Library storage agreement with University of Calgary nearing completion; first materials to be moved soon.
- Changes to summer residence bookings:
 - Internal university groups: no change
 - External groups: restricted to 50+ participants due to past issues

Major Approvals & Decisions

A. Department Renaming

- Approved renaming:
 - “Department of Pathology” → “Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine”

B. Academic Policy Changes

- Dean’s Honour Roll (Faculty of Arts):
 - Now it includes students with reduced course loads (min. 6 credit hours, GPA ≥ 3.75)
- Medical program policy updates:
 - Improved clarity on assessment timelines and definitions

C. Research Chairs (Updated Terms)

- Revised funding and eligibility for:
 - Chair in Metabolic & Endocrine Diseases
 - Chair in Rheumatology
- Includes:
 - Expanded eligibility (Assistant/Associate Professors)
 - Guaranteed research funding and protected research time

Freedom of Expression Statement (Major Item)

- Senate approved a new institutional Statement on Freedom of Expression:
 - It is aspirational (not enforceable policy)
 - Applies to students, staff, and those connected to the university
 - Aims to balance:
 - Open expression

- Respect for community concerns
- Clarifies that:
 - The university may regulate time, place, and manner of expression
 - The statement supports decision-making consistency

General Themes

- Financial uncertainty and reliance on government decisions
- Strong focus on:
 - Equity and accessibility in education
 - Global partnerships
 - Research competitiveness
- Continued tension between:
 - Freedom of expression
 - Community safety and inclusivity

Appendix VI:

End-of-Term Reports May 2025-April 2026

President & Senator: Timilehin Oluwajuyitan

Full listing of Committee, Council & Board:

- UMGPS Executive Committee (Chairperson) – Biweekly Meetings
- UMGPS Governance & Strategy Committee (Chairperson) – Biweekly Meetings (Fall/ Winter)
- UMGPS Council (Acting Chair) – Monthly Meetings (Fall/ Winter)
- UMGPS Board of Directors (Acting Chair) – Monthly Meetings
- UMGPS Academic Affairs Committee – Monthly Meetings (Summer and Fall)
- UMGPS Events and Club Committee – Monthly Meetings (Summer/ Fall/ Winter)
- UMGPS External Affairs Committee – Monthly Meetings (Summer/ Fall/ Winter)
- UMGPS Equity and Inclusion Committee – Monthly Meetings (Summer/ Fall/ Winter)
- UMGPS Gala Committee – Monthly Meetings (Summer/ Fall/ Winter)
- UMGPS Election and Referendum Committee – Monthly Meetings (Summer/ Fall/ Winter)
- FGPS Faculty Council – Monthly Meetings (Summer/ Fall/ Winter)
- FGPS Executive Committee – Monthly Meetings (Summer/ Fall/ Winter)
- FGPS Appeal Committee – Monthly Meetings (Fall/ Winter)
- FGPS Graduate Student Experience Committee – Monthly Meetings (Fall/ Winter)
- UM University Senate – Monthly Meetings (Summer/ Fall/ Winter)
- UMGPS/ UMSU Student Senate Caucus (Co-Chair) – Monthly Meetings (Summer/ Fall/ Winter)
- UM Senate Committee on Appeal – Monthly Meetings (Summer/ Fall/ Winter)
- UM Senate Committee on Awards – Monthly Meetings (Fall/ Winter)
- UM Senate Committee on Nomination – Monthly Meetings (Fall/ Winter)
- UM Senate Committee on Rules and Procedures – Monthly Meetings (Fall/ Winter)
- UM Senate Committee on University Research – Monthly Meetings (Fall/ Winter)

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- UM University Discipline Committee – Monthly Meetings (Fall/ Winter)
 - UM University Executive Committee – Monthly Meetings (Summer/ Fall/ Winter)
 - UMSU Board – Monthly Meetings (Summer/ Fall/ Winter)
 - Kelley Main (Dean FGPS)/ Laurie Schnarr (UM Vice Provost Students)/ Willow Josephson (UMGPS Executive Director) – Biweekly Meetings (Summer/ Fall/ Winter)
 - UM President - Kelley Main (Dean FGPS)/ Laurie Schnarr (UM Vice Provost Students)/ UMGPS Team – Once a Term Meeting (Summer/ Fall/ Winter)
 - Board of Governors – Monthly Meetings
 - Senate student election – April 17th, 2026

Ongoing Advocacy/ Initiative:

- Minister of Advanced Education and Training – Hon. Renée Cable
- Bring back health insurance coverage for international students
- Freeze Tuition Fee/ Increase provincial funding to UM – To avoid an increase (4% for domestic or 8% for international – 2026/2027)
- Removal of the English Language Test for Postgraduate Work Permit Application
- Student Associations of Manitoba Post Secondary Institutions
- CASA – Canadian Alliance of Student Associations

Recommendation:

- UMGPS Budget 2026/2027 (Club/ GSA funding, Conference grant/ travel awards etc)
- Early Recruitment of Faculty Representative/ Board of Directors
- Early Recruitment or Enrollment of Councillors
- Continuation / Regular Council Meetings
- Early Commencement of UMGPS Committee Meetings
- Continue Collaboration with Postdoctoral Fellow
- Continue Collaboration with UMGPS Staff

Vice President External Affairs &

Senator Armin Aghajani

Yet to be received.

Vice President Academic Affairs &

Senator Lamia Mahzabin

Yet to be received.

Vice President Equity, Inclusion, &

Diversity Peggy Wu

Full listing of Committee, Council & Board:

- UMGPS Equity & Inclusion Committee (Chairperson)
- UMGPS Council
- UMGPS Executive Committee
- UMGPS Board of Directors
- UMGPS Election and Referendum Committee
- UMGPS External Affairs Committee
- UMGPS Governance and Strategy Committee
- FGPS Graduate Student Experience Committee

External & Advocacy Support

- Attended a meeting with the Minister of Advanced Education and Training as part of the UMGPS leadership team, contributing equity and inclusion perspectives on graduate student affordability, well-being, and immigration-related stressors.
- Attended meetings with Winnipeg Transit, University leadership, and UMSU executives to raise student concerns regarding transit reliability, overcrowding, service gaps, and reduced campus access, and to advocate route and scheduling improvements better aligned with the needs of University of Manitoba students.
- Supported discussions on international student challenges, including financial pressures, health coverage, and barriers affecting academic focus and research continuity.
- Raised concerns regarding the International Graduate Student Scholarship (IGSS) eligibility criteria and engaged with the Graduate Awards Office to advocate for more equitable
 - consideration of graduate-level academic performance and diverse grading systems across institutions.

University Leadership Engagement

- Prepared equity- and access-focused discussion topics for an upcoming meeting with the University President, including certification exam fee discounts, expanded interdisciplinary learning opportunities, and improved recognition of graduate student professional
 - development and PhD career pathways.
- Attended two meetings with the President's Office, raising concerns related to transit
 - accessibility, international student immigration and employment challenges, and the need for more co-op, practicum, and industry-partnership opportunities.

Committee & Governance Work

- Drafted agendas and preparatory materials for Equity & Inclusion Committee meetings.
- Attended the AGM and participated in the Governance & Strategy Committee meeting.
- Contributed regularly to internal executive discussions and decision-making.

- Conducted a transition meeting with incoming successor Kyra to support a smooth handover of the VPEI portfolio.

Events, Outreach & Engagement

- Represented UMGPS at Spring, Fall, and Winter Graduate Orientations, delivering presentations on the VPEI portfolio and available supports.
- Presented at the FGPS Open House for University of Minnesota students, introducing UMGPS and discussing graduate student experiences.
- Participated in community and institutional events, including the Winnipeg Pride Parade,
 - National Day for Truth and Reconciliation programming, Indigenous Student Centre events, and the Convocation ceremony.
- Conducted outreach to décor vendors and gathered proposals in support of planning for the 2026 Gala. Attended the 2026 Gala as a volunteer.
- Promoted UMGPS initiatives, including executive elections, and engaged directly with students to share information and respond to concerns.

Advocacy, Partnerships & Professional Development

- Met with StudentCare representatives to advocate for more flexible and inclusive health and dental plan options.
- Participated in consultations on Winnipeg Transit services, highlighting ongoing accessibility and reliability concerns.
- Attended the Equity & Anti-Oppression Student Forum and completed Anti-Oppression: Framework and Praxis training to strengthen EDIA leadership capacity.
- Built and maintained relationships with key campus partners, including the Indigenous Student Centre, Office of Equity Transformation, and the President's Office.

UMGPS Academic Affairs Committee Membership:

- Peggy Wu – VP Equity & Inclusion (Chairperson)
- Brie Willoughby
- Jalal Rhaman
- Katarina Hein
- Peace Ifeanyi
- Sharin Fatema

Recommendations:

- Strengthen collaboration with campus partners to co-develop consistent and impactful EDIA programming.
- Increase structured opportunities for graduate student feedback on equity-related issues across faculties.

- Expand advocacy efforts addressing international student challenges, healthcare accessibility, and transportation barriers.
- Explore more equitable and inclusive approaches to scholarship and funding allocation.
- Provide additional institutional support and funding for EDIA-focused initiatives and student-led projects.
- Ensure hybrid accessibility remains standard practice for meetings and events to promote inclusive participation.

VP Events & Clubs

Diwan Oulai

Full listing of Committee, Council & Board:

- UMGPS Events and Clubs Committee (Chairperson)
- UMGPS Council
- UMGPS Executive Committee
- UMGPS Board of Directors
- UMGPS Academic Affairs Committee
- FGPS Executive Committee
- FGS Awards Committee

UMGPS Events and Clubs Committee

Chairperson: Diwan Oulai (VP Events and Clubs)

This term, the committee met several times to discuss clubs' registration and club funding with more than 50 clubs who registered and received more than half of the allocated budget (50 000 CAD). The committee also discussed and planned activities such as the creative de-stress night, grad students' social, volunteer and committee appreciation day, as well as the tax clinic. These activities helped with engaging the students, provided a space to have fun, and relax.

During the fall term, with the committee, we had several events that directly spoke to the students' needs in terms of mental health and wellbeing with events such the peer support hour and the mental health workshop. We also had couple of exciting and engaging events that resonated with the students and provided them with an escape from all the stress that grad school comes with. We had events such as karaoke night, welcome event, game night, pumpkin and carving competition just to name a few. The committee also met a few times to also discuss clubs registration and club funding as well as discussing and planning the different events.

During the Summer Term, the committee organized couple of events in collaboration with the International Centre. This collaborative approach was intended to reach more and diverse students on campus. We had events such as Beach Day to Gimli, FortWhyte Alive trip, and the Movie night. Beside that, the committee organized the viewing of the Champion's league Final and Meet and Greet picnic at St. Vital Park.

UMGPS Events and Clubs Committee Membership:

- Diwan – UMGPS VP Events and Clubs (Chairperson)
- Lamia – UMGPS VP Academic and Senator (Vice chair)
- Thalia – Staff
- Andy – HSGSA Designate (VPA)
- Chamali Kodikara
- Jagpreet Kaur
- Narthaky Vimaladhas
- Khatereh Salimi
- Samuel Barrett
- Sara Petkau
- Clarissa Klenke
- Mohamedelmufasta Ahmed
- Teah Goossen
- Israk Iram Oyshe
- Danyel Ramirez
- Emmelynn Cullen
- Aishika Dissanayake Mudiyansele
- Anushika Rathnayake
- Andrea Mandzuk
- Sasha Kullman
- Daniel Rose
- Rei Shibue

Recommendations:

- VPEC should work closely with VPA to agree on overlapping events
- VPEC should engage with committee members as soon as they take office
- VPEC should stay in constant communication with the Marketing, Event and Communication staff

Vice President Health Sciences

Ashraf Kadar Shahib

Governance and Institutional Advocacy

- Chaired and attended all necessary Health Sciences Graduate Students' Association (HSGSA) Executive and Council meetings throughout the academic year.
- Consistently represented the HSGSA at the UMGPS Executive and Council meetings.
- Participated in university-wide governance by attending Senate Meetings and FGS/FGPS Faculty Council Meetings.
- Met directly with University of Manitoba President Dr. Benarroch and Dean Kelly Main to discuss graduate student priorities.
- Attended a meeting with the Minister of Education in December 2025 to advocate for student interests.
- Represented the association at the AFMC Leadership Meetings during the summer term and fall terms.

Student Life and Major Events

- Directed the planning and execution of the Manitoba Student Health Research Forum (MSHRF) over several days in June 2025, which included preparing award letters and certificates.
- Hosted a dedicated HSGSA Summer Event at Birds Hill Park in July 2025.
- Organized and executed professional development initiatives, including the Meet the Professionals event in September 2025.
- Executed the Dr. Patrick Choy Distinguished Lectureship in October 2025, which included hosting a keynote session with Dr. Hirst.
- Organized the HSGSA Culturo-Fest in November 2025, handling logistics from dinner menus to stall coordination.
- Organized an HSGSA Pickleball Tournament in February 2026 to promote physical wellness and student networking.
- Served on the Gala Committee throughout the year and supported the Winter Gala in March 2026.

Multidisciplinary Health Research Experience (MHRE)

- Navigated the MHRE restructuring and sponsorship processes throughout the summer and fall.
- Managed comprehensive recruitment and interview processes for the MHRE Director and Associate Director positions.
- Conducted MHRE Instructor interviews.
- Attended the MHRE Career Day in March 2026 alongside ongoing monthly MHRE meetings.
- Collaborated with StudentCare regarding international student therapy and facilitated an HSGSA Mental Health Workshop.

Administrative and Financial Operations

- Initiated changes to financial signing authority with ACU and BMO at the beginning of the executive term.
- Summer Term Performance Appraisal Meetings with all HSGSA executives to maintain organizational accountability.
- Created the Ad Hoc Committee tasked with the recruitment and hiring of the Chief Returning Officer (CRO) and Deputy Returning Officer (DRO).
- Evaluated applications for the Continuing Education Grant, Travel Awards, and GSEA/GSMA applications.
- Completed robust documentation duties monthly, including Executive Meeting Agendas, Verifying Meeting Minutes, and tracking reimbursements.

Vice President Postdoctoral Affairs

Dr. Nazanin Vafaei

Yet to be received.