GRADUATE STUDENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE (GAC) TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. INTRODUCTION

The Graduate Student Advisory Committee (GAC) is an Ontario Tech Student Union (OTSU) Committee and shall be a special committee of the Board. The Committee is dedicated to representing all graduate students of Ontario Tech University to enhance the student experience. This Committee will strive to engage graduate students in conversations related to campus events, opportunities, and/or concerns.

Topics of discussion can be related to but is not limited to:

- OTSU events, programs, services, and initiatives for graduate services,
- Campus opportunities for graduate students to get involved,
- Advocacy for concerns related to the graduate student experience.

Additionally, this Committee will actively identify any challenges and/or opportunities relevant to graduate students and recommend matters specific to graduate students concerns to the OTSU Board of Directors and Executives. The committee members will work alongside the Board Director representing Graduate Studies and the OTSU President to provide high-level insight into the needs and priorities of graduate students and how to enhance their post-secondary experience.

GAC allows graduate students to work directly with the OTSU, executives, and members of the Board. Members of this committee will also have the opportunity to develop campus connections, establish strong professional networks, and gain a deeper understanding of the OTSU's operations.

2. REPORT

The Graduate Advisory Committee reports to the OTSU Board of Directors.

3. DUTIES & SCOPE

3.1 The specific functions of the Committee shall be as follows:

3.1.1 Monitor and evaluate the status of graduate student concerns and opportunities at Ontario Tech University;

3.1.2 Provide feedback, input and guidance on the status of graduate student projects, as set by the OTSU Executive Team and Board Director for Graduate Studies;

3.1.3 Act as the OTSU's primary consultants with issues/opportunities relevant to graduate students;

3.1.4 Share information about OTSU initiatives, programs, and services that are under development and provide feedback, input, and guidance for those activities specific to graduate students; and

3.1.5 Share information about graduate student concerns that negatively impact graduate students' quality of life at Ontario Tech University.

3.1.6 Expected minimum availability of 5 hours per month between committee meetings, forum groups, and volunteer opportunities.

3.2 The President and Board Director for Graduate Studies, or designate of the Committee, will submit an annual report to the OTSU Board of Directors, outlining the Committee activities throughout the preceding year; and

3.2.1 Act as the main policy owner to review and recommend changes to the Terms of Reference and Related Procedures, when necessary, to the OTSU Board of Directors.

3.3 The Committee shall not duplicate other services or events that run in conjunction with Ontario Tech University or the OTSU.

4. COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

4.1 The Committee membership shall consist of:

4.1.1 President;

4.1.2 The Board Director representing the Faculty of Graduate Studies;

4.1.3 Students (4-6); and

4.1.4 Vice President of Downtown, Vice President of Student Life, and Vice President of Student Affairs;

4.1.5 Vice Presidents will attend meetings as relevant to the scope of their position, i.e. if the committee is discussing downtown graduate student challenges or opportunities, the Vice President of Downtown would attend, for agenda items related to actionable internal advocacy issues, the Vice President of Student Affairs would attend, and for clubs and societies and student life, the Vice President of Student Life would attend.

4.2 As the Committee's primary mandate is to observe and guide the OTSU on concerns/opportunities related to the graduate students, a holistic approach is ideal when selecting Committee members.

4.3 It is preferable that between four to six (4-6) student positions would be filled by one (1) graduate student from each of Ontario Tech's faculties, thus properly representing the entirety of graduate students. Alternatively, there should be an equitable number of graduate students from both the downtown and north campus, which would be two to three from downtown.

4.4 In addition, up to two (2) "Graduate Students-At-Large" may be welcomed on the Committee, under the discretion of the Board Director for Graduate Studies and the President.

4.5 Each representative that sits on the Committee is considered an advisory member. Members serve voluntarily until April 30th of the 2027 academic year.

5. CHAIR & VICE CHAIR

5.1 Each year, the Chair will be designated to the individual who serves as the Graduate Studies representative on OTSU Board of Directors. If this individual cannot take on the responsibility of a Chair, the President will serve. The President of the committee will be designated as the Vice Chair, with the exception of if they are serving as Chair, in which case the committee members will vote to elect a Vice-Chair.

5.2 The responsibilities of the Chair will include:

5.2.1 Developing the agenda;

5.2.2 Chairing meetings;

5.2.3 Maintaining committee files;

5.2.4 Acting as a contact person for the Committee; and

5.2.5 The Chair will also work alongside staff and university administration to provide the necessary support and resources to the Committee and the OTSU.

5.3 The responsibilities of the Vice Chair will include:

5.3.1 Communicating with the Chair between committee meetings, if necessary;

5.3.2 Helping facilitate discussions during committee meetings; and

5.3.3 The Vice Chair will be responsible for filling the above duties in the absence of the Chair.

6. MEETING PROCEDURES

6.1 The Committee shall meet a minimum of once per month; however, additional meetings are to be scheduled as often as necessary to fulfil the mandate of the Committee.

6.2 Quorum of 50% of the student membership is required for all primary advisory meetings; however, it is not required for secondary and tertiary meetings. Quorum will not include the executives and board members. Where a vote/decision is affecting the operations of the Committee, a quorum of 50% of the student membership is necessary.

6.3 Meeting minutes will be taken by an individual(s) determined through a vote of the advisory members during the beginning procedures of each Committee meeting, unless it has been voted upon that a committee member shall serve as the primary notetaker; in which case a new vote will only commence in their absence.

7. COMMITTEE LIMITATIONS

7.1 These limitations are to ensure accountability to all students and to the membership. The OTSU Executive Team, as a collective, has the right to halt Committee activities automatically and/ or Committee member participation, depending on the severity of the incident.

7.2 The GAC and/or its members can be sanctioned for, but not limited to, the following reasons where cause and severity are determined by the OTSU Executive:

7.2.1 Committing an offense which contravenes any federal, provincial, or municipal laws;

7.2.2 Committing an offense which contravenes Ontario Tech University Student Code of Conduct;

7.2.3 Committing an offense or engaging in an activity that damages the reputation of the OTSU or Ontario Tech University;

7.2.4 Breach of any OTSU Bylaws or OTSU Clubs policies or procedures;

7.2.5 Breach of any Ontario Tech University policies or procedures;

7.2.6 Misuse of OTSU services or privileges; and/or

7.2.7 Failure to take adequate precautions to limit liability while hosting or participating in events or activities