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Nicholas Kristof

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Courtesy of the Graduate Students' Association

The GSA has had some bad luck with their elections.

GSA struggles to find interest in their election

Only two of four GSA executive positions filled

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 News Assistant

Did you know the Graduate Students' Association had an election planned for March? Don't worry if you didn't know. Graduate students didn't either.

The GSA election scheduled for March 10-11 didn't happen. Of the four executive positions, two were acclaimed. No one ran for the other two.

"This year was just pathetic," said GSA chief returning officer Jeremy Hexam. "It's becoming an issue with us. How do we get people involved?"

This is nothing new for the GSA. Last year, there was just one race — vice-president student life — with two candidates. In that election, out of over 6,000 graduate students, 258 voted.

Hexam said graduate students often have a difficult time getting involved with the union because of the demands of their degrees. He added that many graduate students might not know about the GSA.

"A lot of students don't get involved and don't really know

what we do," Hexam said. "One of the things we're going to be working on next year is raising awareness of the GSA to graduate students."

A by-election will be held during a general representative council (GRC) meeting on March 25 to fill the two vacant executive positions — vice-president academic and vice-president finances and services. Any graduate student, full- or part-time, can be nominated, though only GRC members can vote in the by-election.

This is pending, of course, that more than one candidate runs. Hexam is holding out hope for a better turnout in the by-election.

"Usually with by-elections more people do turn up," Hexam said.

The two acclaimed positions are presidential incumbent Sarah Akierman and vice-president student life Aamir Rafiq.

In the same way the Students' Union represents undergraduates, the GSA represents graduate students. They provide a number of services, lobby government and manage the Last Defence Lounge.