

University of Saskatchewan
Graduate Students' Association



Graduate Students' Association
Policy Manual

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Created: 19 May, 2015

Updated: 14 February, 2016

1. Communications Policy

1.1. Communication Standards

- 1.1.1. The Association will not publish or promote inappropriate or offensive materials, or materials that are threatening, discriminatory, harassing, or obscene.

1.2. Logo

- 1.2.1. All advertisements about Association events will include the Association logo.
- 1.2.2. Events sponsored by the Association must include the Association logo.
- 1.2.3. The Association logo will be available on the Association website.
- 1.2.4. Any other use of the Association logo requires a majority vote of the Executive.

1.3. Communications with the Graduate Student Body

- 1.3.1. All Members must be informed of all Association news and events on the Association website, social media, and through PAWS. Important news and events will be publicized through e-mails to Members through the College of Graduate Studies and Research. Important news includes:
 - i. Elections.
 - ii. Referenda.
 - iii. Bursary deadlines.
 - iv. Orientation.
 - v. Major social events.
 - vi. Job Postings.
 - vii. Interdisciplinary conferences.
 - viii. Special and Annual General Meetings.
 - ix. Resignation of Executive Members or the Council Chair.
- 1.3.2. Each Executive member is responsible for promotion of events and activities within their portfolio.

1.4. Website Content

- 1.4.1. The website will include but is not limited to:
 - i. News that is pertinent to graduate students.
 - ii. Advocacy
 - a. Current initiatives will be described on the website.
 - iii. GSA Commons
 - a. Events and programming at the GSA Commons
 - b. Information about booking and use of the GSA Commons.
 - iv. Governance information
 - a. Up to date Association governance documents.
 - b. Detailed financial records of the organization including results of professional audits.
 - c. Description of executive positions and contact information for current executives.
 - d. Association meeting schedules and minutes.
 - e. Listing of Academic Councils and Council representatives.
 - f. Listing of Association Committees and committee

members

- v. Resources
 - a. A directory of resources available to students through the GSA and externally.
 - b. A list of all Association services.
 - c. Forms for all Association business.
- vi. Contact information
 - a. Contact information for the Executive;
 - b. Location of the GSA;
 - c. The email address of each Academic Councillor;
 - d. Links to all ratified Academic Council and Social Groups' websites; and,
 - e. Listing of all Association office Staff members.

1.5. E-mail

- 1.5.1. Executive members and Association office staff members will have access to e-mail addresses associated with their position.
- 1.5.2. Email correspondence will be subject to the University of Saskatchewan Electronic Mail Policy.
- 1.5.3. The Executive retains the right to revoke the e-mail privileges of any individual who has access to a GSA e-mail address who is using their e-mail in contravention of the University of Saskatchewan Electronic Mail Policy.
- 1.5.4. E-mails to the entire student body will be subject to a majority vote of the Executive. An email to the entire student body must be sent through the College of Graduate Studies and Research.

1.6. Transition Manuals

- 1.6.1. Incoming executive members will receive a transition manual.
- 1.6.2. Each Executive member will maintain and update this transition manual throughout their term.
- 1.6.3. At a minimum, the transition manual will include:
 - i. A copy of the constitution, bylaws and policy manuals, highlighting all sections that directly apply to each individual position.
 - ii. Detailed information about the progress of current initiatives and promises made to committees, council and the student body.
 - iii. Contact information and resources available to each executive position.
 - iv. Contact and scheduling information for the committees that the position has served on.
 - v. A list of recommended improvements for the role.
- 1.6.4. All Executive members shall ensure that their incumbent has the tools that they need to fulfill the mandate of the position. The outgoing executive shall answer any questions that the incoming executive may have and will notify them of duties that may not be outwardly obvious.
- 1.6.5. Wherever possible, the incoming executive shall shadow the outgoing

executive for the last few weeks of April after election.

- 1.6.6. The outgoing Executive shall make themselves available to aid the incoming Executive for the first month of the new term during a transition meeting. If an outgoing or an incoming Executive member is not available for at least one transition meeting the honouraria of that Executive member shall be waived for their last or first month, respectively.

1.7. Confidentiality Policy

- 1.7.1. The Association often deals with topics that are not appropriate for publication. Confidential files will be clearly labeled as such and will be signed and dated by involved parties. Unless otherwise specified, confidential files will be kept for an indefinite period.
- 1.7.2. The Association will uphold the confidentiality of individual students inquiring about academic or employment related grievances.
- 1.7.3. Files kept on current advocacy cases will be available to the Vice President(s) dealing with the case and the student(s) they are advocating for with the exception of third party information that is promised to remain confidential.
- 1.7.4. All bursary applications will remain confidential and will be filed for one (1) year.

1.8. Human Resources Information

- 1.8.1. As an employer, the GSA will uphold the confidentiality of its interviewees and employees.
- 1.8.2. Interview information, including resumes, interview process, selection criteria and interviewer notes will be kept on file for 2 years.
- 1.8.3. Performance appraisals will be kept on file for 2 years.
- 1.8.4. These files will be available to the President and Vice President Operations and Communications and other executives only when appropriate.

2. Health and Dental Insurance

- 2.1. The Vice President External Affairs will act as the liaison between the health and dental insurance provider and Council, and will report on information pertaining to the insurance plan.
- 2.2. All Members will have access to health and dental insurance through the Association under terms outlined by the insurance provider.
- 2.3. Council will decide on the health and dental insurance provider and fees by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote.
- 2.4. The Health and Dental Committee shall discuss health, and dental changes and make a recommendation to Council.

3. Social Groups

3.1. The Vice President Student Affairs will be responsible for overseeing the ratification of Social Groups.

3.2. The purpose of a Social Groups Policy is to provide for the social needs of Members.

3.3. Social groups shall be ratified based on the following criteria:

3.3.1. Have a majority of its total membership be GSA Members.

3.3.2. Have members from more than one Academic Council.

3.3.3. Have completed and submitted an application for ratification including:

i. The official name of the Social Group

ii. The names and NSIDs of the Social Group's Executive

iii. The number of Social Group Executives who are GSA members

iv. The number of Social Group members who are GSA Members

3.3.4. Have submitted an up-to-date copy of their constitution which includes:

i. An outline of the Social Group's mission, purpose, structure, and regulations.

ii. The official name of the Social Group.

iii. The policies and procedures for democratic elections of Social Group Executives.

iv. The financial procedures and policies of the Social Group.

3.4. Social Group status will be effective until August 31.

3.5. Social Groups must reapply for Social Group status each academic year.

3.6. Social Groups will be ratified by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of Council.

3.7. A Social Group must:

3.7.1. Exist for the betterment of its members.

3.7.2. Use any membership fees and money for the objectives outlined in the constitution of the Social Group.

3.7.3. Elect its executive in a democratic fashion following the procedure in its constitution.

3.7.4. Hold elections at least once per year

3.7.5. Hold public meetings.

3.7.6. Make its governing documents public to its membership and the Association.

3.7.7. Not exist for the purpose of discrimination or harassment of any group.

3.7.8. Not exist for the financial betterment of its members.

3.7.9. Not be named in a manner that violates any obscenity or copyright legislation

3.7.10. Be open to any GSA Member

3.8. A Social Group not operating in accordance with the Social Groups Policy may have its ratified Social Group status revoked by a majority vote of Council.

3.9. In the event the application for ratification is rejected, the Social Group may launch an appeal to Council by notifying the Vice President Student Affairs in writing.

3.10. Ratified Social Groups may have the privilege of:

3.10.1. Booking the Commons.

- 3.10.2. Applying to the Association for funding (see Bylaws 5.5).
- 3.10.3. Advertising news and events through the Association with the approval of the Vice President Operations and Communications.
- 3.10.4. Being indemnified by GSA Commons liability insurance for certain events and activities

4. GSA Commons

4.1. Graduate Students' Association Commons

- 4.1.1. The Vice President Operations oversees the daily operations of the GSA Commons;
- 4.1.2. The GSA Commons will serve the needs of all graduate students to be used for academic, professional, and social activities;
- 4.1.3. The rated capacity of the Commons is 99 persons at one time, and must be posted in the Commons.

4.2. Commons Coordinators

- 4.2.1. Shall be employed in accordance with Association Bylaws, the University of Saskatchewan Policies, and Saskatchewan Labour laws.
- 4.2.2. The duties of GSA Commons Coordinators shall include but are not limited to:
 - i. Be responsible for administrative details of the GSA Commons.
 - ii. Will act as a receptionist during daily operations.
 - iii. Will coordinate workshops and discussions hosted by the GSA;
 - iv. Coordinating social events;
 - v. Will coordinate bookings of the GSA Commons.
 - vi. Oversee the selection and installation of artwork in the Commons.
 - vii. Be assigned duties that will assist all Executive members.

4.3. GSA Office Manager

- 4.3.1. The GSA Office Manager shall:
 - i. Be employed in accordance with Association Bylaws and Policies, as well as the University of Saskatchewan Policies and Saskatchewan Labour laws.
- 4.3.2. The duties of the GSA Office Manager shall include but are not limited to:
 - i. Be responsible for administrative details of the Executive.
 - ii. Will act as a receptionist during daily operations.
 - iii. Refer students to the Executive and appropriate University services when required.
 - iv. Schedule appointments for the Executive.
 - v. Assist the Vice President Operations with duties related to the Association Communications Policy.
 - vi. Organize the annual Association promotional materials under the direction of the Vice President External Affairs in accordance with Association Communication Policies.
 - vii. Be assigned duties that will assist all Executive members.

4.4. Bookings

- 4.4.1. The Association, at the discretion of the Vice President Operations reserves the right to deny use of the Commons;

- 4.4.2. Groups or individuals using the GSA Commons will be required to sign agreements in order to use the space and its equipment.
- 4.4.3. The GSA Commons will be booked for activities in the following order of priority:
 - i. Association meetings (e.g. Council and General meetings);
 - ii. Association special events (e.g. social events, orientation, Town Halls, etc.);
 - iii. Academic Council public events (e.g. lectures invited and organized by Councillors);
 - iv. Academic Council private events (e.g. social events);
 - v. Graduate student events; and
 - vi. Other events.
- 4.4.4. Members may book the GSA Commons at no charge during regular Commons hours. Bookings outside of regular Commons hours will be charged at an hourly rate;
- 4.4.5. Non-members may book the GSA Commons at an hourly rate.
- 4.4.6. Anyone booking the GSA Commons:
 - i. will provide a damage deposit;
 - ii. must return the Commons in the same physical state it was found. Additional charges will result if the cleanup checklist in the GSA Commons Rental Agreement is not completed and initialed by a GSA Commons Coordinator;
 - iii. may be levied additional charges for special requests.

4.5. Alcohol Use and Provision

- 4.5.1. Groups serving alcohol are responsible for:
 - i. Obtaining a liquor permit;
 - ii. Ensuring that all university and provincial liquor regulations are followed; and,
 - iii. Providing any necessary staff.

4.6. BBQ Use

- 4.6.1. The Association owns two BBQs that may be:
 - i. used by Association Social Groups at a flat rate with propane costs included; and
 - ii. used by non-Members at an hourly rate and propane will be billed.
- 4.6.2. BBQs are to be left as they were found;
 - i. Additional charges will apply if the BBQ is found inoperable or dirty.

4.7. Art in the GSA Commons

- 4.7.1. The Association will display artwork by Members in the Commons.
- 4.7.2. Diversity and variety in make, medium and subject matter are the priorities when selecting artwork for the GSA Commons.

4.7.3. Art selection and installation will be coordinated through the Commons Coordinators.

5. Student Advocacy

- 5.1. Members will be able to approach any Association staff or Executive members with a sensitive question without fear of judgment, harassment or discrimination.
- 5.2. With the exception of imminent danger to the individual or individuals in their surrounding or abuse, student inquiries will remain confidential at the request of the student in accordance with the Confidentiality Policy.
- 5.3. The Association will not assume the role of a counselling service, social services or disciplinarian, but will work with students to overcome academic and non-academic issues that they are facing.
- 5.4. The Executive and Staff will have knowledge of the resources available to graduate students and to the Association in its role as a student advocate and will refer students when necessary.

6. Association Student Handbook

- 6.1. The Association shall publish a handbook for graduate students containing:
 - 6.1.1. Information about the Association and how to get involved;
 - 6.1.2. A day planner;
 - 6.1.3. A directory of resources available to students through the Association and externally; and,
 - 6.1.4. A list of all Association services.
- 6.2. The Handbook will be compiled by the Vice President External with the help of the Office Administrator.

7. Bursary Policy

7.1. Bursaries

- 7.1.1. The Bursary Fund will provide assistance to those graduate students who are ineligible for other awards, who demonstrate:
 - i. difficulties in acquiring funding;
 - ii. community involvement; and,
 - iii. good academic standing.
- 7.1.2. Bursary documents, including applications will be kept confidential.
- 7.1.3. Allocation of bursary funds shall be determined by the Bursary Selection Committee

7.2. Eligibility

- 7.2.1. Applicants must be registered as a graduate student at the University of Saskatchewan in the term of award.
- 7.2.2. Students are only eligible to receive this bursary once a year
- 7.2.3. Current Executive members are not eligible for Association Bursaries.
- 7.2.4. Members of the Bursary Selection Committee are not eligible for Association Bursaries.

7.3. Bursary Fund Amount and Distribution

- 7.3.1. The bursary fund shall be no less than \$3000 for each term.
- 7.3.2. The bursary fund will be distributed evenly between recipients.
- 7.3.3. The bursary selection committee may choose to re-distribute the allocation of the bursary fund in special circumstances.

7.4. Application Procedure

- 7.4.1. Applications will require the submission of:
 - i. A one page cover letter written by the applicant, outlining their situation and why they are deserving of the bursary.
 - ii. A completed bursary application form (available at the Association office and on the Association website).
 - iii. One letter of recommendation from a faculty member in their department.
- 7.4.2. Applications may be accepted electronically or in hard copy.
- 7.4.3. Application deadlines are as follows:
 - i. Fall term: Mid October.
 - ii. Winter term: Mid February.
 - iii. Summer term: Mid June.

7.5. Bursary Selection Process

- 7.5.1. A new Bursary Selection Committee will be convened for each term. There can be only up to two (2) Bursary Selection Committee members from any given department.
- 7.5.2. All graduate students are eligible to apply
- 7.5.3. The Bursary Selection Committee shall select recipients using a rubric based on the following criteria:
 - i. Students who are ineligible for major scholarships.
 - ii. Students who have exhausted the funding for their program.
 - iii. Students in need of child care services.

- iv. Students who have demonstrated financial need
- v. Students with good community involvement
- vi. Students with strong academic performance.

7.6. Awarding Bursaries

- 7.7. Bursary recipients will be notified within two (2) weeks of the deadline.
- 7.8. The Association shall announce that bursaries have been awarded, but will not release names of recipients.

8. Affiliations Policy

8.1. Canadian Federation of Students

8.1.1. The Association shall budget for and send at least one Executive member to all CFS national and provincial meetings, including but not limited to the May Semi-Annual meeting, the November Annual meeting, the National Graduate Caucus Stand-Alone and the National Aboriginal Caucus Stand-Alone meeting. This shall happen through a discussion and Executive vote in the during an Executive meeting. Council approval is required if more than two (2) Executives are to be sent to any of these meetings.

8.2. Indigenous Graduate Student Council

8.2.1. The Association within its organizational capacity will support the Indigenous Graduate Student Council (IGSC) in representing the unique nature of issues relevant to its membership.