

Dear GSA Members,

It is my pleasure to provide you the annual report of my activities as the Vice President - Finance and to give you updated information on the finances and budget of the Graduate Students Association (GSA). I would like to thank our GSA Office Manager Sherri Rohovich along with all our wonderful co-ordinators, volunteers, and most importantly, you - the members for making this a very successful year at your Graduate Students Association. I want to offer my particular gratitude to the members of the Finance and Audit Committee for their assistance this year. I would also like to acknowledge Mr. David Bennett for his generous assistance throughout the year in the matters of book keeping. The following is a highlight of the activities and tasks that took place under my portfolio:

Free Tax filing services:

I succeeded in collaborating with CFS and UFile to bring free tax filing services on campus. For the very first time, such a service was introduced wherein, a team of 14 graduate student volunteers were trained for this service, which successfully benefitted 126 students (with spouses) over a five-day period. The feedback received was extremely positive and encouraging. A request to continue this service for the next year was made by almost every student highlighting the need of such service through GSA.

Financial Literacy workshops:

With the collaboration of Royal Bank of Canada, GSA held a financial literacy workshop each term to bring awareness among graduate students about personal banking and effective money management. Topics like handling credit cards, student loans, Tax free savings account and GIC were discussed in detail. Each workshop had a turnout of about fifty students and the feedback received appreciated the initiative.

Academic council funding:

GSA Council funding was calculated based on a formula preset in GSA policies that states: Academic Councils may receive up to \$3.00 per full time student or \$1.50 per part time students according to the following formula: $c = [x \times (3.00) + y \times (1.50)] \times [a / b]$

, where c is the funding received by the Academic Council, x is the number of full time students, y is the number of part time students, a is the number of meetings attended by Academic Councillors and b is the possible attendance rate by the number of registered Academic Councillors. The cheques were prepared and made available to different academic councils in September 2016. The academic council attendance for 2016/17 was better than the previous year and hopefully will be even better in the coming year.

Student club funding:

In addition to the funding to Councils, GSA provided funding to around twenty-two student groups for various activities and initiatives like club socials, conferences, retreats, fundraising, and cultural events. This year we received an overwhelming response for student club funding from various student groups. Such funding helps in establishing a communication between GSA executives and its members. Hopefully, the response will be even more demanding next year.

RISE conference:

Along with VP student affairs, VP academic and aboriginal liaison, I attended 2017 RISE conference in Winnipeg, Manitoba. The conference highlighted many of the social issues related to minority communities with emphasis on racism and its adverse impacts. The conference also highlighted how to avoid the stigma associated with such issues. It was a three-day long conference packed with panel discussion, workshops, open and close discussions among other events. It was alarming to hear about the personal and professional problem faced by aboriginal students.

Committee appointment and meetings:

In addition to the awards committee, I also represented GSA at the University fee review committee. I was able to provide exact figures for GPass to University of Saskatchewan with the help of Saskatoon Transit Services. The GPass for 2017/18 fall and winter term will be \$108.44. I also raised my concern for increased University athlete fees which was reconsidered by the committee and the GSA president was in contact with the committee in this regard.

Scholarships and Awards:

A major part of my responsibilities as an elected Executive member is to attend various meetings representing the GSA. Funding and scholarships are obviously a major concern of virtually all grad students. I represented the voice of GSA in two different university scholarship and award committees (one is a sub-committee of University Council and the other is a sub-committee of the College of Graduate Studies and Research). I adjudicated 234 applications for various scholarships (49 University continuing scholarship, 132 Dean's round 1 and 59 Dean's round 2 including domestic and international applications). I am also representing GSA in University Graduate student awards which is happening on April 23rd. In all these committees, the number of scholarships have not been raised. CGPS is yet to decide where to put the million dollars that was reported last year.

GSA need based bursary committee:

I sat in this committee once each term for 2016/17 to evaluate applications from graduate students. The committee evaluated an average of 120 applications per term for the year 2016/17. GSA distributed 10 bursaries each term and CGPS contributed in providing an additional 30 bursaries in fall and winter terms. The rubric for evaluating the application needs to be defined where VP Operations is working in collaboration with university Officials. My sincere thanks to all committee members, VP academic and VP operations for arranging the meetings on time and in extending their help to evaluate the applications to the best of their efforts.

Insurance and ISC returns:

The GSA is mandated to file year-end financial returns and maintain up-to-date registry information with the Information Services Corporation (a government-approved body that manages all business and non-profit registered in Saskatchewan). The deadline for submitting this information every year is August 31st but the information that is being submitted represents the GSA's end of year financial position of April 30th. This was successfully completed. I submitted the annual returns for 2015/16 and the incoming VP

will be filing 2016/17 returns. Other insurances like non- profit Directors and officers and Commons insurance were also successfully completed ensuring safe GSA work practice. Worker compensation Board:

The WCB considers Executives who are paid honorariums to still be employees for their purposes of coverage. Our WCB premiums are currently up-to-date. Also of note, we received a Certificate of Achievement from the WCB for having a zero injury year again this year. My congratulations to the VP Operations, Office Manager and staff for ensuring a safe workplace! I should also note that the GSA has received a credit on our account from the Workers' Compensation Board in the amount of \$61.93.

GSA financial budgeting:

Along with the dedicated volunteers of the GSA's Finance and Audit Committee, I chaired this committee and together we crafted and presented an operating budget for the 2017-18 financial year. This budget is now available for any further amendments. A detailed report has been attached along with the descriptors. The committee carefully determined the pros and cons of various GSA services like Crisis Aid program, Campus Legal services and took decisions that support student success and sustainable spending.

An effective Important financial and administrative task that I accomplished this year include making monthly financial statements public to provide enhanced transparency. All monthly Statements were made available for public to look at. Due to the privacy concerns raised by governance committee members, these monthly statements were taken off from GSA website. These statements are available on demand. All book keeping was done using the accounting code structure developed by previous VP Finance.

Tech Venture Challenge:

Mr. Tedric Soh, a graduate student from U of S won TVC in 2016. With the help of University liaison office an agreement was made that laid the terms of loan amount i.e. \$10,000 for the recipient. This agreement was signed by Mr. Tedric Soh, GSA President

and GSA VP finance releasing an amount of \$8,000. Rest \$2,000 will be released upon providing satisfactory expense details.

Other updates:

Fundraising: I was successful in fundraising amount from Royal Bank of Canada this year. It was the first time when our banking service i.e. RBC was actively involved in GSA events and initiatives.

GPass: I was able to develop an excel sheet for calculating accurate GPass amount for each school term. The sheet now clearly accommodates the number of opt outs, opt ins and university cheque adjustments throughout the year.

Governance committee: I served as a member on governance committee which is introducing a new model for GSA governance for the upcoming year.