

**Graduate Students' Association
Executive Meeting Minute**



**University of Saskatchewan
Graduate Students' Association**

**Saturday, August 23, 2014
1:00 PM — 8:27 PM
Diefenbaker Lake**

1.0 Call to Order 2:06

2.0 Approval of Agenda

3.0 Scheduling meetings for the term:

1. Council meetings will be on Tuesdays to accommodate for executives' schedules.
 2. If a scheduled council meeting needs to be rescheduled, 30 days notice must be given.
- September 2014:
 - o Sep 23: Council Meeting
 - o Sep 9, Sep 30: Executive Meeting
 - October 2014:
 - o Oct 21: Council Meeting
 - o Oct 14, Oct 28: Executive Meeting
 - November 2014:
 - o Nov 18: Council Meeting
 - o Nov 11, Nov 25: Executive Meeting
 - December 2014:
 - o Dec 11: Council Meeting
 - o Dec 9: Executive Meeting
 - January 2015:
 - o Jan 20: Council Meeting
 - o Jan 13, Jan 27: Executive Meeting
 - February 2015:
 - o Feb 17: Council Meeting
 - o Feb 10, Feb 24: Executive Meeting
 - March 2015:

- Mar 17: Council Meeting
- Mar 10, Mar 24: Executive Meeting
- April 2015:
 - Apr 21: Annual General Meeting
 - Mar 7, Mar 28: Executive Meeting (possibly a joint meeting with incoming executives)

4.0 Executive updates

4.1 VP Operations

- 4.1.1 Two new coordinators and a minute taker were hired.
- 4.1.2 U-Pass opt-out forms are online. Improves sustainability and requires applicants to submit electronic files. The processing will also be paper-free.
- 4.1.3 U-Pass admin structure: Office manager will be in charge of the process and liaise with the University and City to resolve any problems, while coordinators and minute takers will work on the distribution, re-activation, replacement and opt-out process.
- 4.1.4 New laptop bought for U-Pass administration. The new structure of the U-Pass admin is expected to minimize disruption of other office work.

Discussion:

- Continue to give preferences to graduate students for GSA recruitment.
- VP Operations will be in charge of supervising the U-Pass administration under the supervision of the President. The Office Manager in charge of the administration, including the staff and the reporting.
- According to our contract with the City, replacement for lost cards and stickers costs \$15. Fees can be paid in cash, cheque or using the debit machine.
- The position of the City regarding the contract is that essentially the same contract will be signed with the price of the U-Pass adjusted.

4.2 VP Finance

- 4.2.1 **Auditing:** The audit is not complete, but have asked the auditor to come to the council meeting. The audit requires additional time and fees—15,000 last year, and 18,000 to 20,000 this year. A motion will be sent and dealt with at council meeting.
- 4.2.2 The GSA needs accounting consultation.
- 4.2.3 **Fees:** The University Fee Review Committee will be meeting by the end of October. Fees charged from students through University will be approved by December. A proposal will be sent to the government with tuition and fees already set so avoid tuition as a mechanism for deficit adjustments. The proposal will be sent earlier in December before board of governors meet. This will go through the Provost's Committee on Integrated Planning (PCIP). The GSA needs preparation for the new mechanism. Fee increases require council approval.

4.2.4 Health and Dental: \$80,000 will be needed from the \$180,000 health and dental reserve fund, because health and dental will increase due to the number of claims last year brought about by the new dentistry on campus and the increased dental claims per student from \$500 to \$750. The surplus does not come from our budget. Fee increase for health and dental higher than 5% requires a referendum.

4.2.5 Studentcare.com will be presented to the Executives and the council.

4.2.6 Online banking: We switched to RBC Express online banking in May. Gradually, future payments will be moved to online banking, avoiding the use of cheques. This is a more efficient way of keeping track of money transaction.

Discussion:

- Expense forms are to be filled out according to different tasks for a better management of the budget. The expense form should indicate its purpose according to the budget line that best represents its nature.
- We received \$6,000 from the University to be used for GSA initiatives. We could use the fund to increase executive travel budget line, office supplies and banking charges.

4.3 VP Student Affairs

4.3.1 Residence

4.3.1.1 Every 3 weeks, there is a document indicating how many rooms/apartments are occupied/vacant.

4.3.1.2 College quarter is not open to graduate students any more. Only graduate house is open to graduate students now, but it is not going to be any cheaper—appears to be a white elephant.

4.3.1.3 Residence rate is not going to rise. The lease is for one year from September to August, which is not convenient for some graduate students who have no expectations of when they're going to graduate, because the residence allows no subletting. For academic reasons, students are allowed to break the lease with a 2-month notice and penalties will be waived. If not with a 2-month notice, no waive will be applicable, and \$300 will be charged to break the lease.

4.3.2 Parking

4.3.2.1 Parking in U-Lot (residence parking) is \$50 per month from September to May. Parking is not a luxury—it is a necessity like laundry for students. We are fighting for the status quo. The University claiming that the parking service is “cheaper than other places in the city” is not justifiable for us, as a portion of the money goes to College Quarter and Graduate House, and the U-Lot is not even heated.

4.4 Aboriginal Liaison

4.4.1 Monthly aboriginal awareness seminars: indigenous program.

4.4.1.1 Invite the program to the GSA for events, and make the events GSA events.

4.4.1.2 Raise awareness among international students.

4.4.2 Sisters in Spirit Vigil National Awareness Day.

4.4.2.1 Promotional kit will be provided from CFS at no cost.

4.4.3 Orientation:

4.4.3.1 For the entertainment session, an aboriginal welcome will be extended.

4.4.3.2 Confirm to have general remarks from the aboriginal students for the orientation.

Discussion:

- For the GSA Conference, set up a panel for aboriginal issues. It will depend on what has been submitted from students, but if possible, we can make a workshop within the Conference.
- The GSA is willing to represent aboriginal students. In order to bring aboriginal students closer to the GSA perhaps GSA executives could attend the aboriginal graduate council as visitors, provided an invitation is received. The Aboriginal Liaison will look into this.
 - Not all students know that the Aboriginal Liaison is an executive of the GSA.
 - Currently, when aboriginal students have academic or other challenges, they seem to avoid approaching the GSA as it is not perceived as a safe place. However, aboriginal graduate students have the same rights to use GSA services and attempts need to be made to break any barriers.
 - If invited, GSA Executives could take turns to the Aboriginal Council Meetings to learn about issues from aboriginal students and make improvements.
- In future GSA events, we could start by acknowledging that we are on Treaty 6 territory—this is just a starting point to raise awareness among students, not an end point. We could also invite Sylvia and Collin coming to the events such as the GSA Council Meetings to make an introduction before the events start.

4.5 VP Academic

4.5.1 Planning on an employment workshop every month in addition to the industry talks at the GSA Commons, to guide students in writing resumes and cover letters.

4.5.2 Dealing with complicated five student cases.

4.5.2.1 Miscommunication with CGSR happened. In the future, VP Academic should have a conversation with the President before the

VP Academic approaches the Associate Dean of CGSR to avoid unnecessary confusion.

4.5.3 Student advocacy is necessary. Working with CGSR might prove beneficial.

4.6 VP External

4.6.1 GSA Handbooks/planners. The planners are going to arrive late, but it will be worth the wait.

4.6.2 CFS reimbursement for one of the two delegates – still waiting on it.

4.6.3 CFS Semi-Annual General Meeting. GSA President and VP External went to the meeting, and we are still waiting for any update on the motion to advocate against TransformUS.

4.6.4 What services the GSA can give to international students?

4.6.4.1 There could be surveys at the end of an academic year, to find out what international students want and what problems are existing, and leave for the new executives to solve the problems.

4.6.4.2 Update on how international differential fee is used, or help international students with visas and tax by information sessions.

4.6.5 CFS information should be added on the GSA website—have a link of CFS with our contribution in the GSA introduction part.

4.6.6 New executives are advised to go to the GU15 meeting in Calgary next year to learn how graduate students' associations are run at other U15 research intense universities. However, this will require an increase in travel budget.

4.6.7 CFS is organizing skills workshops across the country. The budget is within the CFS schedule.

4.6.7.1 Need to figure out how many people in Regina and Saskatoon will be attending to decide where the workshop is going to be held.

4.6.8 A meeting with the Minister of Advanced Education will be set up to discuss about graduate retention for both international and domestic students.

4.6.9 Policy Review Committee—Need more councillors, will send out a call after the first council meeting.

4.6.10 The awareness of students shall be raised to vote in this province during provincial election.

4.7 President:

4.7.1 Conference: Student Union Development Summit (SUDS) in Vancouver. Attended this conference in addition to the CFS and GU15 meeting with the VP External.

4.7.2 On October 1st, the faculty association will be organizing an Academic Freedom event with support by the GSA, and delegates from the Vancouver meeting will come upon our invitation.

4.7.3 On September 30, the faculty association and the GSA will be co-hosting an Academic Freedom event at the GSA, where Dr. Jim Turk will be giving a speech. A complimentary Wine and Cheese sponsored by the faculty

association will follow the talk. We could also invite other associations to participate.

5.0 Event Planning for the Year

5.1 Winter Orientation

- 5.1.1** Has been proposed to CGSR and is included in the GSA policies.
- 5.1.2** Time: Jan 9 2015. Could be called an “Appreciation Day” as we did in 2011.
- 5.1.3** However, we need to raise additional funds for the winter orientation.

5.2 Conference and Gala

- 5.2.1** Could be part of “The GSA Week”, which will be a 4-day week of celebration of graduate student research.
- 5.2.2** Dates: March 4th to 6th (Wednesday to Friday) for the Conference, and the Gala will be on 7th (Saturday).
- 5.2.3** More faculty participation is needed in the Conference.
- 5.2.4** Theme could still be “Curiosity”, which is open and does not need to change.
- 5.2.5** Currently, we need to secure funding for this event, and this requires a good proposal to be prepared by the VP Academic.
- 5.2.6 Gala**
 - 5.2.6.1** Early organizing is needed.
 - 5.2.6.2** Fund raising is needed. Discuss with Alumni Association.

5.3 Fall Orientation

- 5.3.1** Time: September 2nd and 3rd
- 5.3.2** Activities: The event program should be confirmed on Monday.
 - 5.3.2.1** The GSA BBQ at 5 pm on September 2nd, in the Bowl, and tent will be available for free.
 - 5.3.2.1.1** No Alcohol will be provided on the BBQ.
 - 5.3.2.1.2** At 4:20 pm, burgers should be taken out from the freezer, and they shouldn’t be cooked for too long.
 - 5.3.2.1.3** To entertain kids, volunteers could distribute Frisbees and balloons.
 - 5.3.2.1.4** Find a cook. If not available, we could think about hiring one from the culinary services.
 - 5.3.2.1.5** Sound system—will contact USSU.
 - 5.3.2.1.6** Speeches during the BBQ will include an Aboriginal greeting.
 - 5.3.2.1.7** Need to invite and confirm performances for entertainment sessions during the BBQ.
 - 5.3.2.1.8** Executives could help but should not be relied upon as the other volunteers for the BBQ. They should be ready to stand on stage and greet and mingle with guests.

5.3.2.1.8.1 Leaders within the volunteers should be identified.

5.3.2.1.8.2 Executives should be ready to be on the stage at 6 pm.

5.3.2.1.8.3 Before the event, executives can help with preparation. Coordinators could also be hired for the job with payment.

5.3.2.2 A complimentary Wine and Cheese event will be at 7 pm on September 3rd at the GSA Commons.

5.3.2.2.1 Volunteers will be ready at 2:00 pm on the day.

5.3.2.3 Live Expo

5.3.2.3.1 USSU held this before. We could invite ratified social clubs to come and sit at 10 tables in the booth.

5.3.2.3.2 However, the session needs advertisement, and currently time does not allow us to organize the Live Expo for this Fall Orientation event – better to have fewer, but well organized events.

5.3.3 If there are plans to hold a Live Expo in the Winter Orientation, we need to organize, advertise, and confirm earlier.

5.3.4 Logistics

5.3.4.1 Executives could help with the logistics planning and shopping of burgers, juice, meat, and salad.

5.3.4.1.1 About 1,500 to 2,000 burgers needed (as per last-year's report), and they need to be kept in the freezer. Could ask St. Thomas More for help in extra freezer storage. If there is not enough room for storage and burgers run out, we could go to superstore to purchase more.

5.3.4.1.2 The President and VP Operations will be in charge of the food and beverage purchase for the BBQ and the Wine & Cheese.

5.3.4.2 Confirm with FMD for a parking permit on the Bowl.

5.3.4.3 Rent one truck and find a driver to pick up the BBQ on the event date.

5.3.5 Advertisement

5.3.5.1 Posters should be made as soon as possible. The two events could possibly share one poster.

5.3.5.2 Posters should circulate in emails and on the website.

5.4 Other event proposals

5.4.1 Winter holidays Wine and Cheese in December, possibly after the Council Meeting.

5.4.2 Cross-cultural Food Festival engaging different ethnic groups

5.4.2.1 Could be in November.

5.4.2.2 Pictures from the event could be used for our website and other promotional materials.

5.4.3 Graduate student photography contest/exhibition

5.4.4 Fund-raising for the GSA to encourage donation

5.4.4.1 A proposal is needed.

6.0 Miscellaneous

6.1 The College of Education is donating a piano to the GSA.

6.2 Seek partnership with the USSU.

6.2.1 The GSA could be seeking partnership regarding the GAA, or advocate our common interests.

6.3 GSA President volunteered to be an International Student Commissioner at the CFS semi-annual meeting. This is another title the GSA could use on behalf of our international students.

6.3.1 We could collaborate with ISSAC to explain to the students the new terms of study permit and immigration.

6.4 Committee Representation

6.4.1 Every executive needs to send a list of the committees he/she sits on to the Office Manager to keep track. If an executive finds there are too many committees to attend, let the President know. If the executive wants to find a proper and responsible graduate student to represent on behalf of the executive, the executive should inform President first, and it should be made sure that the student is a good representative and reports to the executive about the meetings.

6.4.2 Executives give monthly reports to council including committee representation. The reports, in addition to reflecting the work done by the executives, can be viewed as an opportunity for each executive to address council, and convey information that needs council's involvement.

7.0 Adjournment: 8:27 pm