

# Graduate Students' Association Executive Meeting Minute



University of Saskatchewan  
Graduate Students' Association  
September 16, 2014

5:00 PM – 7:33 PM

**Attending:** Izabela Vlahu (President), Xin Lu (VP Operations), Ranjan Datta (VP Academic), Rahwa Osman (VP External), Rajat Chakravarty (VP Student Affairs), Dana Carriere (Aboriginal Liaison), Mohammad Rafati (VP Finance)

## 1. Call to order—7:03

## 2. Oohlala online student association app presentation

- a. Oohlala can work to connect students in a meaningful way, while the current iUsask app is not building a community for communication.
- b. Features: news, events, weather, add to the timetable of the smartphone or tablets, campus map, tours, check-in, club organizations or ratified groups, campus services, health and dental plan office intro and phone number, timetable/calendar (campus focused), reminder-friendly, campus feed.
- c. The Oohlala app for UBC had 2,825 downloads in two weeks.
- d. Cost: Discount price of \$4,500 per year for the value of \$9,500 premium service before the end of September.
  - No restriction to download numbers.
  - There is no survey or consensus features yet. But such ideas could be considered. Currently surveys could be accessed via link.
  - Interactive features enabling students to ask questions could be realised through feed from social apps; emails are also available to be sent via app.
  - Multi-year contract on 3 year terms. There will be a 10% off if we are signing 3 year terms.
  - Specific functions for customize services and features will cost more. However, general app renewal and generally developed new features are for free within the contract period.
- e. If the Executive welcomes the app, there will be a possible presentation from Oohlala on the council meeting on September 23<sup>rd</sup>
- f. 5 out of 7 executives are interested in the app, with concern about the cost.

- g. The iUsask App (VP Student Affairs):
  - i. We asked for a GSA channel from the iUsask app which gets rss feed from the GSA website to update.
  - ii. Problem with the iUsask GSA channel: users have to open the app to look at the channel, as the app doesn't push news notifications to alert users.
    - People could also check the GSA website for updates, not necessarily open the iUsask app if no notification could be pushed to the smart phone.
  - iii. Problem with the iUsask app popularity: no advertisement of the iUsask app among students.
  - iv. There are potentials of selling ads for the Oohlala app to trade off the cost.
  - v. Update from iUsask will be available to the executives by Friday
    - 1) The iUsask app requires a Wordpress blog for the rss, rather than a calendar.
    - 2) Rss feed apps can help catch updates on our blog and send push notifications.
    - 3) Contact student associations who are using the Oohlala app to do more research on the app and the feedbacks.
    - 4) To face the questions of the council meeting
      - Consider the cost and possible advertisement offset, and
      - Show more quality or effort trying existing channels with less cost.
    - 5) Should give time for council if we need to have a contract by end of September.
    - 6) We should find out functions in iUsask to compare with Oohlala.
    - 7) Budget is to be give full consideration of.

### **3. U-Pass service and budget**

- a. Motion in council meeting to dissolve the U-Pass administration \$10,940 budget line.
- b. The reason to move forward with this motion is better financial practice.
- c. The service has been moved from the executive office.
  - i. Last year, there was a problem in information and cost tracking, as well as administrating.
  - ii. The current U-Pass admin budget line is used to pay salaries and for hardware/software, i.e., it is of miscellaneous nature. This is highly discouraged by the GSA constitution.
  - iii. Miscellaneous budget lines cause inconvenience:
    - 1) Last year, the administration cost was covered from the GSA surplus, and the structure of the U-Pass administration was

different. The cost for U-Pass last year was not clearly tracked. There was no track of hours for communication with the city or the university administration.

- 2) This year, coordinators are working on the U-Pass, and the implementation we are having now helps keep track of how much money is necessary for the U-Pass administration.
- 3) Current administration will continue at least for this term, until the revenue has been confirmed.

- d. Currently, as reported by the VP Operations and Communications, complaints regarding opt-out options have been received, but none on pick up hours.
- e. The U-Pass administration must be done by GSA hired staff. Volunteers are not an option for the administration.

#### **4. Extending the meeting for another half an hour.**

- a. Moved by VP External, seconded by VP Ops.
- b. All in favour. Motion passed.

#### **5. Orientation Budget and winter orientation plans**

- a. \$500 received from CGSR.

#### **6. Staff plans**

- a. Need to hire a new minute taker.
- b. A new coordinator is on board.

#### **7. Proposal from CGSR confirmed**

- a. We have received an extra \$500 from CGSR, and the transfer will be taken care of by VP Finance.
- b. GSF for executives per month will be on payroll starting September.
- c. CGSR confirmed \$30,000 contribution for bursaries.
- d. CGSR confirmed GSFs for 2 coordinators.

#### **8. Communication to all graduate students via CGSR** should come through VP Operations. If VP Operations is not available, forward it to the President.

#### **9. GSA office**

- a. Avoid disturbing the Office Manager, especially in September, as this is very busy time.
- b. Put office materials back to their places.

#### **10. Health and dental plan**

- a. Keeping the status quo to obtain data.
- b. VP External will contact other providers
- c. More updates to follow from VP External and Finance

#### **11. Transparency**

- a. Explanation to the public (U-Pass)
  - i. First through council, as its role must be respected. After feedback has been received, inform the members at large.
  - ii. Keep a loop within the GSA executives to get everyone informed.

iii. Summer was difficult for information to go around

**12. Agenda items for president breakfast meeting**

- a. Submit by Friday prior to the meeting week

**13. GAA representation**

- a. Meeting has been arrangement with the University secretary.
- b. We should become aware of any limitation in GSA representatives.

**14. Council elections**

- a. Consideration for GSA councillors elections. It is difficult to confirm validity of Ratification forms and some departments don't have a representative in the council.
- b. Election criteria such as signatures, basic information could be submitted to CGSR, and the election should happen before September, even before new executives are in office.
- c. We need to see how policies and constitution would have to change for council elections.
- d. Bring this idea to the next council meeting as a point of information.

**15. Next executive meeting** is scheduled for September 30, but will have to be moved due to the Academic Freedom event taking place that day, and all executives will need to attend that event.

**16. 7:33 adjournment**