

University of Saskatchewan - Graduate Students' Association



**GSA Executive Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, December 17, 2015 - GSA Commons 5:00PM – 7:00PM**

Present: D. Bennett (VP Finance), J. Chapola (VP Academic), Z. Ghaith (VP Operations and Communications), N. Terekhova (VP External), D. Carriere (Aboriginal Liason), H. Shahadu (VP Student Affairs).

Absent: R. Chakravarty (On Leave)

1. **Call to Order.** The meeting is called to order at 5:01PM.
2. **Approval of Chair.** The VP Operations and Communications as the interim President is designated to be the Chair. He asks if any others are interested in chairing the meeting. Seeing no interest the VP External moves that VP Operations and Communications be the Chair. Seconded by VP Academic. Four in favour. One abstention. VP Operations and Communications will chair the meeting.
3. **Approval of Minute Taker.** VP Finance volunteers. to take the minutes. Moved by VP External and seconded by VP Academic. All in favour. Motion carries. VP Finance will take the minutes.
4. **Approval of the Agenda.** The agenda is moved by VP Operations and seconded by VP External. All in favour. Agenda is so adopted.
5. **Approval of the Minutes of GSA Executive Meetings:**
 - 5.1. **Minutes of GSA Executive Meetings on December 2, 2015.** No additions or corrections are noted. Moved by VP Operations. Seconded by VP Finance. All in favour. Motion carries.
 - 5.2. **Minutes of GSA Executive Meetings on December 8, 2015.** The VP Ops notes that our President R. Chakravarty was in attendance at this meeting but he is not here to submit any corrections or omissions as he is on leave. VP Operations moves to

defer approval of these minutes until he returns. Seconded by VP Academic. All in favour. Approval of minutes deferred until R. Chakravarty returns.

VP Student Affairs raises concern about paper copies versus electronic copies. He notes that certain decisions have been made. He further notes that they can be circulated to any GSA Executive member. He requests that draft copies be circulated in advance of the meeting even if they are in camera.

VP External notes that our emails will be available to others in the future and is opposed to circulating copies via email and prefers that hard copies of in camera minutes be used. VP Student Affairs is fine with that as long as hard copies are circulated in advance.

VP Ops notes he will circulate a hard copy and we will keep it with us. He then moves a motion to defer all of items 5.3 and 5.4 to the next meeting after people have had a time to review the hard copies. Seconded by VP Academic.

VP Student Affairs notes this is an issue that is holding on the necks of himself and everyone else and has spent too much time on the GSA has responsibilities beyond the GSA. He feels that we are overcommitting to the GSA. He notes that the minutes for December 9th have been circulated by him and he would like them approved. He wants this dealt with now.

VP SA this an issue that is holding on the necks of everyone else. He has spent too much time on the GSA. We have responsibilities beyond the GSA. He feels we are overcommitting to the GSA. The minutes on the 9th have been circulated. We have had the opportunity to discuss those minutes. And approve and whatever amended motion. That is why he wants it dealt with now.

VP Ops adds that President Rajat is an important part of these minutes and should be around to have his say. VP Student Affairs notes that his presence won't change anything in regards to approval of minutes. VP Finance notes that there are major corrections to the minutes circulated by VP Student Affairs and in his opinion they aren't very accurate.

VP Ops notes that he has moved a motion above. Duly seconded by the VP Academic. Two in favour. One opposed. Two abstentions. Motion carries. VP Ops distributes hard copies of the minutes on December 9th and 10th and asks they be returned to him in the next meeting. The VP Student Affairs states that he does not recognize the meeting on December 10th.

6. Items for Actions/Information

6.1. Three minutes reports

[Execs]

VP Finance:

The VP Finance notes that it has obviously been quite a stressful time for himself and the rest of the team and he offers his personal thanks to Natalia, Dana, Ziad, and Jebunnessa for their support and their good humour. Things have still been quite busy right up to the end of the term. He is pleased to note that we were able to send out our holiday cards and that he personally had to go to Walmart and brave the crowds in order to buy the needed labels as the GSA had run out and he offers his thanks to Natalia for going to pick up the correct size envelopes that were needed. VP Finance further notes that he took the opportunity to attend the University Council along with VP Academic Jebunnessa where VP Ziad Ghaith gave an excellent report to the University Council that was met with a rousing applause by all in attendance.

The major priorities that he has been working on were representing the GSA at the first round of the Dean's Scholarship Committee. There the committee reviewed over 100 applicants (so that works out to just under 1000 pages of support material). It was obviously a time consuming process but giving out scholarships that attract and reward top caliber graduate students is obviously wonderful. The second administrative task that he has been working on is supplying an updated list of ratified social groups and councils to our insurance broker. It is part of the requirement of coverage that we keep this updated and is obviously important as we have a new broker's representative that he is dealing with at our insurance provider.

He notes that he attended the Grad School Health Chat event organized by VP Terekhova and thanks her for all her efforts in coordinating this great series of events. He comments that hopefully he'll stick to his new year's resolution which was the topic of the health chat yesterday. He also was pleased to attend the IGSC Miyasin Potluck that was organized by our Aboriginal Liaison which was a wonderful event. The VP Finance states that he is deeply committed to working with her to increase the GSA's engagement with Indigenous students. This is a priority that has been echoed by all levels of University administration along with highest levels of government. One which the GSA should support. VP Finance also attended and helped purchase the supplies and set-up the Commons for the GSA Guppies Social and the GSA Holiday Social which were very fun occasions for all that attended. The Guppies campus rec. sports teams have been such a successful initiative for the GSA and he is proud to be a part of that.

VP Academic:

The VP Academic notes that she is also coming from the previous University Council meeting and commends Ziad for representing the GSA in a very positive and professional way and offering a credible message to those in attendance. She also notes that the sending of holiday greeting cards is important as it creates positive recognition and impact for the GSA.

VP Academic has been quite busy with her role in the RSAW Committee and notes that in addition to their holiday wrap up they held a special session on how to develop resumes and CVs. This was presented by a specialist in the field. She will prepare information on this topic to share with the GSA.

She notes that her Conference Coordinator is working very well and that she has been very hard at work on the conference and also working on the topics of the gala and the 3MT (Three Minute Thesis).

VP External:

The VP External notes that contacted the University Office of Sustainability to pick up our donations for helping Syrian refugees. She notes that this was necessary and we had accrued so many donations from our generous members that it was simply too much for her or Jebunnessa's cars and they had a large truck. She adds that they accidentally took our bins and she will touch base with the Open Door Society to get them back.

She notes that the most recent Grad School Health Chat wasn't the most well attended but the discussion was very high quality and the attendees were all very nice. She thanks those that took part during this very busy time of year. The VP External sent out information about our ISIC cards and has already received over 100 inquiries. She is pleased that the card printing machine is up and running.

She concludes by noting that the Gala Coordinator has been working very hard on the budget and proposal. Apparently there was a slight misunderstanding in regards to his funding status but she and the VP Ops are working on getting approval of this from the CGSR.

VP Ops:

The VP Ops begins by updating Dana as she was a few minutes late in her arrival due to work commitment. He notes that he gave a report to the University Council today and he offers his personal thanks to those that attended and supported him and the GSA. The feedback that he received was positive. He notes that per the GSA Bylaws he has assumed all the responsibilities of the Presidency whilst Rajat is on his leave. He is now handling both the responsibilities of the GSA Presidency and his own portfolio.

The VP Ops now reads a confidential letter based on a motion passed on December 10th. This is met with applause and sincere appreciation by the majority of those present.

VP Student Affairs:

VP SA notes that what he has done is part of what everyone knows. He values integrity and honesty and couldn't sit back. He emailed the Chair of the GSA and asked for advice. He states that whatever anyone has done is based on that advice. What he did was not in his personal interest but was in the interest of the GSA and not because he likes or hates anyone. Based on the

advice he received from the GSA Chair he communicated information to the University Admin as it affects the GSA and we may now be incapable of following up on commitments. He also communicated to the Chair and offered him the opportunity to contact the membership. He notes that this is something he had to do and it has given him a tremendous headache knowing of this betrayal and seeing how the dots are connected between people. He has put himself out there to do this.

He also notes that he has been receiving emails to help students in Residences with issues. He sits on P&P Committee of Council and the President was invited to give his vision on the University. This was valuable.

Aboriginal Liason:

The Aboriginal Liason notes that has mostly been taking care of all the GSA's social events. The IGSC Miyasin potluck was very successful and well attended. Truly a warm event and she offers her thanks to David, Jebunnessa, and Ziad for their help and attendance at this event.

The GSA's Winter Social was also very successful and she thanks all those who helped and attended. This is the same sentiment she expressed in regards to the GSA Guppies Social as much positive feedback was achieved.

She has spent a great deal of energy working on the Gordon Oakes Redbear Student Centre Steering Committee and is pleased to announce that the GSA and IGSC have been asked to be part of the opening ceremonies which will be in the first week of February to coincide with Aboriginal Achievement Week.

She requested an update about the Winter Photo Contest from the VP Ops in his role as interim President. He notes he will find the information from Rajat and get back to her.

6.2. Students Advocacy Steering Committee

[D. Bennett]

The VP Finance notes as those present know the Council passed a motion that formed this Student Advocacy Steering Committee. It's membership is compromised of myself, the VP Academic, the VP Student Affairs, two members of Council and an open call to the membership. VP Operations Ziad has kindly volunteered to serve on this committee as well and of course any executive member can also volunteer to serve on this committee that would be appreciated.

He asks for the consent of the Executive to send out this invitation to our membership and attract interested students to serve on this steering committee. The rationale that was recognized in the motion that was passed at our Council is trying to make this more of a grassroots efforts and to open up and democratize the process. Obviously the needs of our members for all forms of advocacy are an important task and VP Finance is optimistic that this committee will present some innovative ideas that our Council will strongly considering acting upon.

The VP Student Affairs notes he hasn't seen the minutes and didn't attend the meeting so he cannot comment properly. The VP Ops notes that as soon as those minutes are received from the Chair they will be posted. The VP Finance notes that the motion was passed without amendment following an interesting and informative debate. The VP Student Affairs expresses concern that this committee will modify the role of the VP Student Affairs and the VP Academic. The VP Finance notes that this is a steering committee that will present a report to Council to act upon. The VP Academic states that this is such an important initiative and she is glad to be a part and looks forward to it.

The VP Finance will submit a invitation call to be distributed to the membership by the VP Ops.

VP External excuses herself and notes she will see many later at the VPs Christmas Party.

6.3. International Mother Language Day

[J. Chapola]

VP Academic notes that will be her main February Initiative (in addition to the GSA Conference). In addition she is planing initiatives for International Women's Day and also an initiative to focus on anti-racist event. This current planned event will focus on endangered languages. She has received a great deal of support from Indigenous Studies professors who are experts in Canada's Indigenous languages. She further notes that she speaks Bengali as her mother tongue and this linguistic group fought for the recognition of language rights in the 1950s and the establishment of International Mother Language Day. In order to plan and execute this event she requests to be allowed to use \$200 to \$250 from the GSA Events/Initiatives budget line.

VP Finances moves to allocated \$225 from the above mentioned budget line. Seconded by VP Ops. All in favour. Motion passes unanimously.

The VP Academic points out that UNESCO notes that languages are dying out and we should do an initiative to support endangered languages. The VP Finance queries how many languages are spoken on campus. The VP Academic notes that she personally knows about 15 or 20 different languages that are spoken. The VP Finance commends that linguistic diversity on campus.

6.4. Graduate Student Achievements Week proposal

[Z. Ghaith]

The VP Ops thanks the VPs Academic and External and Coordinators for their hard working and also the VP Finance for all their support for this major proposal. He notes that the University

President he offered verbal support and he will send the proposal to the President and is optimistic of its approval. He also took the opportunity to inform the Dean of CGSR who can help advocate on behalf of us.

VP Ops notes that our Gala Coordinator was not officially approved by the CGSR. There was a misunderstanding about what was approved and what wasn't. He is working with CGSR to rectify this situation and thinks it will be resolved successfully.

The VP Student Affairs states that he wants this proposal circulated to him and all the Executive. He notes this doesn't contradict any policy and he wants to see the information. VP Academic notes that she will share it but it is the intellectual property of the creators and asks if others really need to see how these budget requests are prepared. VP Academic notes that she had the input of Dean Baxter-Jones and the President's Chief of Staff on the proposal.

The VP Ops will circulate the proposal after the meeting and any feedback can be given to the applicable executives.

VP Academic thanks those who provided input on the Conference name. VP Finance suggests calling the gala "the golden gala"

6.5. University Council Meeting Updates

[Z. Ghaith]

The VP Ops notes that today was the last University Council meeting of the term. He adds that this is a very important meeting for the GSA. He did his best to represent the GSA in an appropriate way and he hopes this will encourage all University Council members to support GSA Week. He offers his appreciation to the Executive and President Rajat for giving him this opportunity to represent the GSA at this important event.

VP Finance and VP Academic note that VP Ziad did a great job. VP Academic suggests we could include more update on our major events and achievements in the report.

6.6. Thinking about my Drinking Month

[N. Terekhova]

The VP Ops notes that the VP External Natalia has left so we will discuss this at a future meeting. Essentially this is a month where people (USSU execs. etc.) will blog about not drinking for the month of January. Ziad moves to table 6.6. All in favour. Item is tabled. VP Finance notes that the GSA makes him want to drink more.

Aboriginal Liason seeks to add an item 6.7 Winter Orientation. Moved by VP Ops. Seconded by VP Finance.

VP Student Affairs notes that in respect to people's schedule this item is too late to be added. The Aboriginal Liason notes that this is an important topic. Four in favour. Motion carries unanimously. Item 6.7 'Winter Orientation' is added to the agenda.

6.7 Winter Orientation

[D. Carriere]

Aboriginal Liason wants to know what is going on for this event? How can IGSC be involved? What involvement is needed from the GSA. The VP Finance notes that the GSA budget has allocated \$500 for this. VP Student Affairs notes he is the guardian of this money and it cannot be used without his permission. VP Finance notes that it will just roll back into general revenue next year.

The VP Student Affairs notes that ISAAC is doing something and the GSA can be part of that. They are working to have a University Orientation. He notes there are only 17 or so new grad students coming and he doesn't want to do anything when we can support other initiatives. He has taken an executive decision not to do a separate GSA event.

The VP Finance and Aboriginal Liason want to coordinate a winter welcome and orientation event. VP Academic notes that it doesn't matter whether it is 17 or 170 we should be delivering a winter orientation that is welcoming to students. She suggests an outdoor activity as a way to offer an innovative initiative. The VP Student Affairs notes that he doesn't want to plan this type of event. The Aboriginal Liason notes that this type of social events is directly under the VP

Student Affairs portfolio. She further notes that her and other Executives have taken leadership in planning events in lieu of VP Student Affairs doing so. He also notes that

VP Student Affairs notes he doesn't have time to do so and others can do so if they want and has left the meeting.

7. Motions

7.1. Whereas the Soil Science Graduate Students' Association is a duly ratified group within the GSA. Whereas the Soil Science Graduate Students' Association aims to bring together graduate students within soil science and the College of Agriculture and foster a positive work environment within the unit. BIRT the GSA provide \$400 in funding to support the Soil Science Graduate Students' Association event (event details circulated via email in advance). [D. Bennett]

VP Ops moves to amend the motion to replaced ratified with registered in order to be consistent with the language in our policies and bylaws. Seconded by VP Academic. All in favour. Motion is amended.

Motion as a whole. Moved by VP Finance. Seconded by VP Ops. All in favour. Motion carries.

8. Adjournment. Meeting is adjourned at 6:24PM.