

Graduate Students' Association Executive Meeting Minutes



University of Saskatchewan
Graduate Students' Association
Monday, May 25, 2015
GSA Commons
5:00PM - 6:00PM

Present: David Bennett (VP Finance), Hardi Shahadu (VP Student Affairs), Natalia Terekohova (VP External), Jebunessa Chapola (VP Academic), Ziad Ghaith (VP Operations and Communications), Sherri Rohovich (Office Manager - Non-voting)

Regrets: Rajat Chakravarty (President), Dana Carriere (Aboriginal Liason)

1. Call to Order: The meeting was called or order at 5:01PM.

2. Approval of Chair: David Bennett was approved as Chair.

a. Moved by Hardi, seconded by Ziad. All in favour. Motion passes.

3. Approval of Minute Taker: David Bennett was approved as Minute Taker.

a. Moved by Natalia, seconded by Ziad. All in favour. Motion passes.

4. Approval of Agenda

a. Moved by David, seconded by Natalia. Motion passes.

5. Approval of the Minutes of GSA Executive Meetings on May 11/15

a. Moved by David, seconded by Hardi. All in favour. Motion passes.

6. Discussion Items

6.1 Coordinator Hours over the summer

a. Several years ago the GSA Coordinators worked all through the summer. A previous President suggested that the GSA hours be changed over June, July and the first two weeks of August. The discussion focused on what our plans should be for this summer season.

b. The office manager noted that it is not giving much notice to our valuable coordinators that they will have very limited hours over the summer.

c. The VP Ops asked if we really need to keep the Commons open after 5PM in the summer to which the Office Manager replied that it does help for some students who prefer to come later on during the day.

She further suggested that we could keep the Commons open on a volunteer basis over the summer months although this is also being done on short notice.

d. The VP External supported this idea and said that each Executive member should be able to volunteer for one or two nights a month to keep the Commons open after 5PM when the Office Manager finishes for the day.

e. The VP Student Affairs suggests that we conduct a headcount this week in the evening to see which nights are the most popular and would be the best for us to remain open a bit later.

f. Once the headcount is completed the Executive's will meet informally and divvy up nights for them to be responsible for. The times/dates will be posted on the GSA website when they become available.

6.1 Propane and BBQ Issues

a. In practice we rent out the BBQ at \$15 per hour. There is confusion about who is responsible for making sure the propane is filled and that the BBQs are maintained. The filling and maintaining of the BBQ and propane tanks is far outside the purview of the Office Manager.

b. The VP External and VP Ops will examine the BBQs and propane tanks and if necessary fill them up at Co-op. It is important that they are transported in the trunk of a car for safety reasons.

6.2 Changing lightbulbs in the Commons

a. June 2nd and 3rd. The GSA Commons will be closed as FMD will be here from 8AM to 3PM to change the lightbulbs and they will be bringing in heavy equipment and scaffolding. The dates/times have been posted on the GSA website.

6.3 Meeting setup

a. We must ensure that the everything (chairs, technology, etc.) is set up and ready to go at least one full hour before the meeting starts. It seems like there is always some glitch that is delaying the start of the meeting and looks unprofessional.

b. The Office Manager has contacted EMAP regarding some problems with our screens appearing blue if a laptop is being used to connect to them.

6.4 Email Response and RSVP timing

a. The VP Finance notes concerns about email RSVPs not being done in a timely fashion and suggests that all commit to replying to time-sensitive emails within 24 hours at the most. It is important to not let things slip through the cracks.

b. It was reported that at times the amount of email can be overwhelming and at times email is not accessible.

c. It was suggested to utilize FB chat to remind people if they appear to have missed an email.

d. The VP Student Affairs suggests that if an email falls under your portfolio that you request a response and/or response time and track those responses individually and followup if necessary.

e. The VP Ops reminded all that it is our responsibility to be connected to the membership and that if we are unavailable or away we must inform others and set up auto-reply feature on email. He will demonstrate how the feature is enabled for those who are unsure.

f. We must ensure that we reply to time-sensitive emails and RSVPs within 24 hours. For certain emails if you don't reply it can be assumed that you have no concerns or comments.

6.5 Retreat

a. This was only mentioned in passing. Suggested location is Pike Lake just outside the city. Suggested day June 21-22nd maybe. A doodle-poll should be arranged.

6.6 Course Council Attendance Information

a. The VP Finance is having troubles finding out the attendance information from the previous VP Ops in order to calculate attendance rates for Council funding and cheques.

b. The current VP Operations will try to gather that information if possible.

c. That may not be possible given circumstances so we may have to assume that there has been good faith council attendance in calculating council funding cheques.

6.7. Event Funding Formula

a. The VP Finance notes that Whereas 5.3.6. Academic Councils shall be considered Ratified Social Groups for the purposes of applying for additional funding under this by-law. And whereas 5.5 Social Group Funding notes that: To qualify for funding, a ratified Social Group must not use the funds for the private use of a few individuals but for use towards serving the membership of the Social Group and the graduate student community in general.

Applications for Social Group Funding shall be made to the Executive. Funds shall be awarded by a majority vote of the Executive. Social Groups can receive up to \$500 in funding per academic year.

Social Group applications for funding shall be evaluated by the following criteria:

- If the intent of the funding request fits within the mandate of the Social Group;
- Whether the funds will contribute to the success of the Social Group's event;
- Whether the Social Group, the Association, and the general graduate student body will benefit from the event; and,
- The extent of effort made to secure external funding.

The Association will not disburse funds to Social Groups for:

- Direct donation to charity; either for the Social Group or for other causes;
- The cost of alcohol served at any event;
- The day-to-day administrative costs of the Social Group;
- Year-end banquets;
- Graduation banquets; and,
- Travel or travel expenses.

In the past a formula of \$7.50 per student per event was used. The VP Finance recommends that in light of consumer inflation that the rate be raised to \$7.65.

b. All were supportive of that idea.

6.8 GSA Council Chairperson

a. This position is still unfilled. The VP Ops suggests that we put out an advert via email and the career centre. The job can be advertised via the FB Reconnect page as well.

b. The job must go to a grad student according to the Constitution. We want a strong person by June 20th to prep for an end of June Council Meeting.

6.9 Summer UPASS for graduate students

a. As of now it has been impossible to get anything for this summer even though many students have been coming to the GSA and contacting the GSA wanting this service. Although if we had the service we would be hearing the same thing just from those students who are opposed to the UPASS.

b. The VP Student Affairs has put in large efforts trying to come up with a solution and has met with representatives from USSU and Saskatoon Transit to no avail.

c. There is a discounted term pass available for purchase from Saskatoon Transit and also a Go-Card that you can load ten trips on to available for purchase from Saskatoon Transit and approved vendors.

d. We will make another attempt to contact Saskatoon Transit for a meeting to see if there is any other potential solution. The VP Ops, Student Affairs, and Finance have agreed to arrange and attend a meeting with officials from Saskatoon Transit.

6.10 Update on Vandalism in U-Lot.

a. The VP Student Affairs has submitted an official report to the University President and has met several times with groups of concerned and affected students. The University President, Vice-President of Teaching & Learning, as well as the Director of Consumer Services and Protective Services also attended several meetings.

b. An emergency relief fund has been earmarked for students that were impacted by this event that took place. Funds will be dispersed within a week and will be \$500 regardless of the actual damages. They are providing relief for those affected and they are not actually paying for the damages. To be eligible for this fund individuals must have reported the incident to Protective Services. That list was crosschecked with the GSA list and ten names were added were added to the eligible list as a result. The fund is limited to registered students. Non-student spouses must apply through their registered student spouse.

c. The VP Academic questions why those who have been victimized in the past aren't being offered any compensation and suggests that this issue be raised with the administration as it feels like a double standard.

d. The VP Student Affairs notes that it was an extraordinary event and the funds being given are considered to be emergency help and not direct compensation. He further notes that the University Administration has been quite helpful in responding to this situation.

e. The VP Finance notes that the VP Student Affairs is doing excellent work on this issue. All present heartily agree.

f. The VP Student Affairs notes that he will send out a final report to membership in the coming weeks.

g. The VP Academic suggests we consider planning a potluck or BBQ event and invite those who live in the Residences in order to get to know one another better and create more solidarity. VP Academic, Student Affairs, and Ops. will look into this matter once the report is finished.

6.11 Potential for housing/rental registry

a. Will be discussed at next meeting.

6.12 Handbook

a. VP External asks if UPASS can somehow be included in the Day planner.

b. Six advertisements have already been sold. 1800 handbooks will be ordered. Some will be held back for distribution at Winter Orientation. There is a maximum of 32 pages for GSA/USask stuff in the handbook.

c. VP Academic notes that it is important for campus organizations and clubs to be included. Particularly a note about the Aboriginal Centre.

d. The design will be similar to previous years, just some tweaks. There will be stickers!

7. Motion

7.1 Whereas The Animal and Poultry Science Grad Student Council seeks funding to help augment the costs of their annual networking and social event and it appears to comply with all GSA requirements BIRT that the GSA contribute the amount of \$114.75 to the APS GSC. BIFRT that receipts/invoices be provided for GSA records within 30 days of the actual event.

All in favour. Motion Passes unanimously.

8. Motion to Adjourn: All in favour. Meeting Adjourned at 6:14PM