

GSA Course Council

Thursday, December 8, 2011

Graduate Students' Association Course Council Meeting Minutes



University of Saskatchewan
Graduate Students' Association
December, 8 2011, 5:00 P.M -7:00 P.M
GSA Commons

Executives: Xiu Yao and Ehimai Ohiozebau

Councillors: Collen George, Yasmin Carter, Jan Gelech, Madison Yurach, Gareth Perry, Sarah Purdy, John McLeod, Sara McPhee Knowles, Jith Thomos, Sara Kuleza, Conception Ponce, Wendie Marlis, Robert Henrt, Spike Postnikoff, Orleigh Bogle, Marcos Zenobor, Federice Amez-Osuna, Paula Tribolo, Matthew Munson, Rajat Chakaiwaaty, Justin Botterill, Layla Gould, Tekuni Nakuja, and Eamon McDermott (Speaker).

1.0 Call to Order: 5:05p.m

2.0 Approval of Agenda

Motion: *BIRT agenda be approved: Sarah Robert and Ehimai Ohiozebau, motion carries*

3.0 Approval of Meeting

The minute for November, 8 course council was approved with a voice vote after the correction of relevant session.

4.0 Guest Speaker: Dr. Lawrence Martz - Dean, College of Graduate Studies and Research

Dr. Lawrence Martz gave a presentation on the role of CGSR to graduate students and on the university's integrated plan. He explained that the CGSR is organized into academic and administrative components. The administrative arm is headed by a dean with directors and associate dean. While the academic arm is modelled under the university council. He further explained that the university's integrated plan is a process that bring together university level and college/unit specific initiatives. This is to foster strategic and collective decision making and align academic priority with resources. The third circle will span from 2012 to 2016. The areas of focus will be knowledge creation, Aboriginal engagement, Innovation in academic programs, and culture and community. Finally, the dean pledged the university's willingness to engage the GSA to address emergent issues in a timely and effective manner.

5.0 Reports

The following reports were presented by executive members:

1.0 President

Event:

-Saskatchewan Immigration Information Session (Nov 23rd, Wednesday)

As follow up of the Forum with Minister of Immigration and Advanced Education in June, the Saskatchewan Immigrant Nominee Program (SINP) manager from Saskatchewan Immigration Office gave the presentation about the information and services for students on November 23rd. The questions that students asked were well answered by the manager. More than 60 students attended this session and had some positive feedback for it. We appreciate the International Student and Study Abroad Centre (ISSAC) and College of Graduate Study and Research (CGSR) for their support.

-Cordinator for conference in March 2012: We are in the process of hiring a staff to organize the GSA annual conference in March 2012.

-We plan to screen 'PHD movie' for all graduate students in January. This event will be organized by VP student affair in January 2012.

Issues:

-Review and Revise the Constitution and Policy

Taking the concerns and issues into account, GSA is reviewing the constitution and policy. The review committee is aimed to ensure that the bylaws of student representative are clearly and correctly stated in the constitution. The revising of GSA booking policy is also in process, which aims to run the GSA commons effectively and guarantee accessibility.

- Graduate Professional Skills Development Program

GSA has partnered with CGSR and other associations on campus to offer workshops and lectures for graduate students.

Meetings:

-Residence and Food Services Rate for 2012/13

Meeting with Dean Martz

Amongst the issues discussed, we advocated for increase in minimum stipend for graduate students and the dean

promised to set up a committee to review the present graduate student pay, compare the existing structure with other G15 Universities and come up with recommendation for possible implementation in line with the university's strategic plan. He further assured us that GSA executives will be carried along in the review process.

Other meetings attended

- University Council
- GSA Executive Meeting
- Student Forum
- Presidential Search Committee Meeting

2.0 VP Operation

GSA Staff

Graduate Service Fellowship for the GSA: We have advertised the GSA/CGSR graduate service position. Application deadline is Friday, December 9. The successful applicant is expected to resume work in January 2012. Interview and hiring will be done in line with GSA Policy 7 (Employees and Volunteers).

Part-time staff: The Office Administrator (Sarah) will be going on her annual one month leave in February 2012 and advert has been placed to graduate students to work as GSA part time staff.

Western Canadian Association of GSA

I represented the University of Saskatchewan's GSA in the inaugural meeting of Western Canadian Association of GSAs at Calgary. In summary, the purpose of the meeting is on how to ensure collaboration of the respective graduate student associations in western Canada and to ensure service delivery of their respective university authority. The universities represented in the meeting are: Universities of Calgary, Alberta, Lethbridge and Regina. Others are University of British Columbia and Athabasca University. A comprehensive communique from the meeting and subsequent proposal for ratification will be presented in winter term course council meetings.

Health and Dental Report

A detailed annual claims report for the GSA's 2010/2011 Health and Dental Plan (H&D Plan) is hereby attached.

I had meetings with Amanda (Studentcare/net Prairie Representative) over the past month on ways to open the H&D Plan for bidding. We agreed to start this process in January 2012 after her course council presentation. This process will encourage competition, access past and current market rates and possibly lower premiums for graduate students.

Meetings attended in November

- Executive meetings
- University Council
- Teaching and Learning Committee
- Copyright Advisory Committee
- Provost Review Committee
- With Dr. Lawrence Martz (Dean, College of Graduate Studies and Research)

- With GSA Staff and
- general commons' issues

3.0 Student Affairs

The VP Student affairs neither sent his written report nor was present to orally present it.

4.0 VP Academics

There are four students' academic issues I am currently handling. However, there is a significant concern regarding student Lawyer who can represent students' interest. I had a meeting with university Student Forum, and it seem to me that university is not interested in recruiting *ombudsperson* outside of the university.

In my eight months' experience as a VP Academic, there are very few students who have been successful in their appeal. In most cases, university and their policies are closely related on how to protect department, course instructors, or save university's interest. Through the affected student and the VP Academic are part of the hearing, our presence hardly make any difference in changing or taking student concern seriously. It is my hope that the GSA will advocate harder for the creation of *ombudsperson's* office.

The other issues I have been engaged with are:

- Graduate Students Workshop
- Recruiting Conference Coordinator (Mid Dec)
- Preparing for interdisciplinary Conference in 2012

5.0 VP Finance

VP Finance Report 8th December 2011

- 1) So far, the received funds for GSA orientation are \$940; deficit is 2,806.03
- 2) U of S has finally invoiced us with the GSA commons renovations (1st Dec 2011). Below is the breakdown;

Total construction services to November 30, 2011	\$287,147.89

Subtotal	\$287,147.89
GST ¹	\$ -

Total	\$287,147.89
Less: University Grant	(\$53,760.89)
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Total funding request	<u>\$233,387.00</u>

¹ GST-exempt (public institution supply)

We will now go ahead and transfer the \$243,066.73 in the investment account back to the main chequing account to issue the payment. The delay was due to the GST; the financial division were following up on how to get the exemption so that our cost is minimized.

University of Saskatchewan Graduate Students' Association
Statement of Operations for the Fiscal Year 2011-2012

Revenues

	Proposed 2011	Current
GSA Fees	\$ 136,000.00	\$ 72,940.74
CFS Fees	\$ 22,000.00	\$ 13,216.12
GSA Commons Booking	\$ 1000.00	\$ 2,651.60
Health and Dental Fees	\$ 5500,000.00	\$ 557,943.32
GSA Orientation	\$ 4,250.00	\$ 940.00
CFS Handbook	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 2,140.00
Bursary	\$ 9,000.00	\$ 9,000.00
Total Revenue	<u>\$ 724,250.00</u>	<u>658,831.78</u>

Expenses

Audit	\$ 500.00	\$ -
Bursary	\$ 18,000.00	\$ 12,000.00
Conferences	\$ 4,500.00	\$ -
CFS Handbook	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 2,278.50
CFS Fees	\$ 22,000.00	\$ -
Course Council Funding	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 75.00
Entertainment	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 505.91
GSA Orientation	\$ 4,250.00	\$ 3,746.03
Health and Dental Plan Premiums	\$ 550,000.00	\$ 269,754.60

Honoraria	\$	28,500.00	\$	15,985.20
Insurance	\$	3,500.00	\$	4,018.00
Miscellaneous	\$	3,500.00	\$	200.00
Office	\$	6,000.00	\$	2,520.38
President/Student Fund	\$	6,000.00	\$	-
Bank Charges	\$	200.00	\$	16.71
Office Salaries	\$	60,600.00	\$	18,556.30
Operating cost – W/Internet System	\$	1,000.00	\$	1,000.00
Operating cost – Media equipment	\$	700.00	\$	700.00
Equipment renewal	\$	6,000.00	\$	6,000.00
Computer renewal	\$	500.00	\$	500.00
Total Expenses	\$	<u>724,250.00</u>	\$	<u>351,072.75</u>
Excess				<u>307,759.03</u>

NB:

Numbers that are not in bold in the proposed column 2011 should add up to \$136,000

The excess is calculated from the figures NOT in bold.

The figures in red indicate overspent accounts.

6.0 VP External

November has been a busy month. Along with the regular responsibilities of answering emails, executive meetings and keeping up with the International Activities Committee of Council (IACC), here are the things I attended to and have been planning-

1. Canadian Association of Graduate Studies (CAGS) conference: It was a good opportunity to learn about different initiatives that has been planned for the graduate studies in Canada. Ideas were shared and what works and what does not in terms of graduate studies and graduate students was discussed. The deans and associate deans valued students' voice. One interesting topic that was discussed and that I would like to share with you all is: lack of innovation and innovative research in Canadian graduate schools. Most of the participants at the conference agreed that Canadian graduate schools should consider incorporating innovation in all the programs offered and research conducted. There was also a quality discussion of the Professional Development Courses for graduate students. University of Saskatchewan does offer a Professional Development course but is seriously considering on opening it up for larger number of students and making it a credited course.

There was also an opportunity to discuss about graduate issues with other graduate student associations. Housing, Childcare, Student fees were the most common topics of discussion among the graduate students.

2. Canadian Federation of Students' AGM: I was not able to attend the AGM in Ottawa hence I called in for application to represent University of Saskatchewan GSA at the AGM. Ran Bi, a PhD student from Pharmacy department was chosen to attend the meeting. However, Ran has yet to report about the meeting so I apologize for not having any information about the AGM to share with you all.

3. Bus Pass: I am working to collect data on graduate students' location (number of students who live in residences and the number who do not) to present it to the Saskatoon Transit so that they can give GSA a quote on the bus pass price per month.

4. Presentation about Provincial Immigration: I assisted the President in organizing and run the presentation. It was a successful event with very active participation and positive feedback from the audience. Series of events as such is recommended in future. Presentation was given and questions were answered by David Li, Manager of Saskatchewan Immigrant Nominee Program (SINP).

Lastly, I would like to welcome course councilors to be part of Policy Review Committee. Please email gsa.external@usask.ca if you are interested.

Thank you

Sunisha Neupane

VP External

7.0 VP Aboriginal .

The new VP Aboriginal gave an oral report at the meeting. She Called for a meeting and very few aboriginal students showed up. Hopefully, more meetings will be called in Term 2 and she hoped to see improved attendance. She also promised effective representation from January 2012.

8.0 Adjournment: 6.30pm Gareth Perry and Math Paula