

Graduate Students' Association GSA Council Meeting Agenda



**University of Saskatchewan
Wednesday, November 20th, 2013
5:00 P.M - 7:00 P.M
GSA Commons**

Attendees – Akindamola Awujoola, Zak Baker, David Bennett, Robin Brown, Rajat Chakravarty, Dmitriy Chesnakov, Ranjan Datta, Seth Dueck, Priyangi Edirisinghe, Andrew Frank, Brittany Backosa, Federica Giannelli, Kurt Sarrison, Amanda Guy, Layla Gould, Kristian Hermann, Mark Kroeker, Carla Labarrere, Laura Larsen, Kayla Lindenback, Cinnati Loi, Ana Maldonado, Cody Manchester, Nathan Pham, Isaac Pratt, Martin Prusinkiewicz, Sarah Purdy, Fred Sage, Linzi Williamson, Austen Smith, Balazs Toro, Kurt Woytiuk, Tanna Moats, Savanjan Bairagi, Malhar Padhee, Josie Steeves, Zin Xiang, Stephanie McMillan, Nicole Calihoo, Nazrul Islam, Kelly Richardson, Kaitlyn Irolek, Asm Atiqal Islam, Cynthia Bottomley, Marzieh Eskandari, Steve Knaus, Jason Meroer, Samantha Purchase, Kris Novak

Executives

President, Ehimai Ohiozebau
VP Academic, Izabela Vlahu
VP External, Steve Jimbo
VP Student Affairs, Reanne Ridsdale
VP Operations and Communications, Kiri Staples
VP Finance, Mohammad Rafati
Aboriginal Liaison/Rotating Chair, Omeasoo Butt and Nicole Calihoo

Chair - Dena Burnett

1.0 Call to Order - 5:10 PM.

2.0 Approval of Agenda

Motion 1 - to approve agenda

Motioned by Josie Steeves, David Bennet

Motion carried

3.0 Approval of last GSA Council Meeting Minutes

Motion 2 – to approve minutes

Motioned by Rajat Chakravarty, Seconded Fred Sage

Motion carried

4.0 Presentation by Trever Crowe, CGSR – Student-supervisor relationships

Motion 3 - to move informality

Motioned by Sarah Purdy, seconded by Cody Manchester

Motion carried

Student-Supervisor relationships

- To achieve goal of building this relationship – there are certain key elements
- Building blocks - program of study, research proposal, committee approvals
 - Approval is important because it provides confidence that the research is acceptable and degree will be awarded
 - Qualified faculty important to provide good advice and support timely completion of degree
- Work toward a productive and supportive relationship with your supervisor in order to get through difficulties along the way
- Get incremental approval from supervisor so you can trust that when you finish, it will be accepted
 - If there are errors, then you can readjust or accommodate to make sure that the work is done to satisfy the degree
- Regular meetings with advisory committee meetings and have them documented
- Clear understanding of expectations
- Plans and timelines – work with committee and supervisor when plans change
- Question: What is relationship is not as supportive as expected and where can students go to get help with this?
 - Try and work it out with supervisor and explain what is happening is not working, clarifying what you need
 - If there is still no resolution, talk to Grad Chair to ensure academic unit is aware those problems exist, because there may be some encouragement that they can exert
 - If this still doesn't work, can come to CGSR to see if there are further support mechanisms that the student can access
- Question: if a supervisor cuts off a students' fund, what can we do to protect against that?
 - These issues do exist

- First need to determine written commitment by supervisor and department (CGSR doesn't commit financing at the time of admission – this is only done by supervisor or department)
- If there is written commitment, CGSR will go to them and explain that document is binding
- However – if the commitment is verbal, it can't be enforced
- Question: has CGSR done anything in the past to address the fact that student-supervisor relationship can still be extremely detrimental to students finishing on time, or even dropping out?
 - Acknowledge efforts of GSA to encourage CGSR to treat this as something that's important
 - There are guiding topics that students can use for discussions with their supervisor – i.e. what is the financial commitment that you're making, how many hours am I expected to commit, etc.
 - We don't have good data to set baseline to understand why students drop out or take longer to complete they degree – our surveys are voluntary and response rates have been poor
 - Suggestions for data collection?
 - Committee meeting minutes would be possible indicator for potential reasons for challenges, etc. – can be indicator of atmosphere of meetings
 - Grad program review will begin again in 2014/2015 – if there are trends in drop outs, this review process would uncover that and prompt us to look more closely at it
- Question: different programs have different levels of funding (and international students can't get coverage if they are on paternity/maternity leave – why this discrimination?)
 - There are different sources of funds with different selection and eligibility criteria
 - No standard, uniform level of support for a number of reasons – availability of funds, restrictions of funds as they are allocated, different management strategies
 - CGSR doesn't have the authority to direct how those funds are administered unless they aren't being administered according to published and approved policies

- Question: perception that going to faculty with supervisor problems doesn't work because they are colleagues
 - Just because someone is a faculty member doesn't mean they will support other faculty – there is policy and expectations for people to behave in a certain way, and this is what is used to decide whether or not the supervisor is doing the right thing
 - CGSR has been supportive
 - VP Academics is also in a position to advocate
 - There is a power dynamic there that can't be avoided, but we are looking into ombudsperson position for this
- Question: How far away are we from creating ombudsperson position?
 - Were discussions about having this position for responding to both undergraduate and graduate needs
 - Undergraduate level developed this for own purposes, but it's unclear where graduate students were left in this discussion
 - Question is what the role and authority of this person would be, what mechanism they would use to advocate, and who would pay for it? – not sure what the answers to these questions are
 - E-mail trever.crowe@usask.ca

5.0 Presentation by Callan Davey, studentcare.net

- Overview of health and dental plan, financial reports from last year
- Started working with GSA in early 2000s – since then has become one of largest services provided by GSA
- Enrollment continues to grow, strong awareness of the plan
- Why is this plan important?
 - a) health and dental costs continue to rise b) financial burden of students means coverage is not always accessible c) designed to cover cost of things not covered by provincial plans
- Group benefits – can bring plan costs down for those who may need it the most throughout the year, as individual plans are both more expensive and exclusive
- Through GSA, plan cost has stayed stable for past six years

- Since last year:
 - Last year, over \$400,000 of claims by GSA members at the U of S.
 - Benefit enhancements for this year
 - 98% of students support health and dental coverage
- What's covered? – these categories are designed for the demographic
 - Travel benefit – 120 days of coverage, plus any travel for academic reasons, trip cancellation, trip interruption
 - Health – prescription drugs, vaccinations, health practitioners, ambulance, medical equipment, etc.
 - Vision
 - Dental
- Who is studentcare and what do they do?
 - Works with more graduate student associations than any other provider in Canada
 - Consultant (negotiation with insurers, plan set-up, strategy, surveys and reporting) and administrator (member services centre, professional communications, opt-out and enrolment, data management)
 - Studentcare Provider Networks – extra 20% coverage at no extra cost (i.e. on campus dentists, certain providers, etc.)
 - 50-60% of students are using Studentcare Provider Networks
- GSA Plan Enrolment: Fall 2013
 - Opt-out students decreased by 2%
 - 75% of membership covered fully, less than 1% is enrolled in one or the other , just under 25% that opted out
 - Can choose to keep just the health or dental plan to allow for greater flexibility
- 2012-2013 Health Claims - \$268,890.85
 - Largest portion is prescription drugs, paramedical practitioners also large portion
- 2012-2013 Dental Claims - \$193,614.48
 - Diagnostic and preventative is largest category, followed by surgical/restorative and periodontics and endodontics
- Role of the GSA
 - GSA Executive reviews reports, etc.

- Council reviews decisions
- Both look out for best interests of their members
- Contact – www.ihaveaplan.ca or 1-877-795-4428 or Room 121 in Place Riel Student Centre
- Question: What is the surplus?
 - There are two different concepts in insurance – premiums (what GSA pays to insurance company) and fees (what students pay to GSA for plan)
 - These fees don't have to match – if fee is higher than premium, it can be put in a reserve account for years when premium is higher than fee or to enhance benefits
 - Premium fluctuates whereas fee is a lot harder to change
 - GSA keeps the difference between premium and fee and has used this surplus in the past, and has been well managed to date
- Question: recent question about paternity leave having to go to hospital and realizing they are not covered by plan. There is nothing to trigger students to think about staying enrolled in the plan. Is there a way the system could be revised make students aware that they need to enroll?
 - This is difficult because it's hard to contact people who aren't on data list (people who aren't enrolled in Plan)
 - Comment: at recent conference for graduate students, this issue came up – other universities have identified this issue and maybe this is something we should look into
 - At other universities, students are granted leave, but can choose to pay
- Question: Do you get e-mail addresses form other universities?
 - Every other university they work with provides e-mail addresses - current U of S. policy is to not provide e0mail addresses
- Question: what mechanisms are there in place to monitor practitioners on the network?
 - As long as students can provide information, studentcare will follow up
- Question: Do different doctors charge different fees?
 - All of our practitioners are contractually obligated to offer specifically reduced rate
 - There is a regulatory body for dental, medical, etc. to regulate fees

- Question: What happened if the premium goes over the fee?
 - Surplus from previous years used to offset costs for these years
- Question: Some services provide cheaper prescription drugs, so is there a mechanism to provide students with cheaper prescription drugs?
 - Every pharmacy has a dispensary fee, which is controlled by pharmacy and there isn't much we can do to get them to drop it
 - Can't dictate generic vs. brand name drug
 - Have set up pharmacy network – started working with Shoppers Drugmart last year where they give students an extra 10% off

Motion 4 - to return to formality

Motioned by Mark Kroeker, Seconded by Ranjan Datta

Motion carried

6.0 Ratification of new Academic Councils

School of Public Health, Master of Fine Arts Student Association Club, Animal and Poultry Science Course Council, School of Environment and Sustainability Students' Association, Graduate School of Public Policy Students' Association, Geography & Planning Graduate Council, Religion and Culture Graduate Course Council, Biology Graduate Students' Association

Motion 5 to ratify new academic councils

Motioned by Cody, Asm Atiqal Islam

Motion carried

7.0 Ratification of new Academic Councillors

Mostaga Aghbolaghy (Chemical Engineering), Cynthia Bottomley (History), Nicole Callihoo (AIGSC), Heemel Dutta (Public Policy), Kaitlyn Frolek (Fine Arts), Melanie Jean (Biology), Reanne Keller (Civil and Geological Engineering), Kendra Meier (Plant Sciences), Kristopher Novak (Soil Science), Bibi Olomola (Chemical and Biological Engineering), Samantha Purchase (Archaeology and Anthropology), Manuel Chavez Ortiz (SENS), Janell Rempel (SENS), Kelly Richardson (SENS), Sams Sadat (Pharmacy)

Motion 6 - to ratify new academic councillors

Motioned by Josie, seconded by Isaac Pratt

Motion carried

8.0 Ratification of new Social Groups

Bangladeshi Students' Association at the University of Saskatchewan (BSAUS), FOCUS, Nepali Students' Association (NSA), Canadian Obesity Network, Table Tennis Club (TTCUS)

Motion 7 - to ratify new social groups

Motioned by Josie, seconded by Andrew Frank

Motion carried

9.0 Executive Reports

9.1 VP Student Affairs Report (Report attached)

- Summary of report (attached)

9.2 VP Operations and Communications Report (Report attached)

- Canadian Graduate Student Association Conference attended
- Have set a date to meet with Minister of Education - will be soliciting open letters of support to extend retention program to graduate students
- Interdisciplinary Student Form – in December will be graduate students only – we want to bring dialogue of what graduate students are facing – if you want to bring to the table, let Reanne know

9.3 VP Academics Report (Report attached)

- Ombudsperson – these are ongoing conversations that the GSA has been having for several years – do expect university to conduct survey on this – need to start thinking about what we need when there is a problem between students and faculty – but where do we find a neutral person, because student (GSA) and faculty (grad chair) are not neutral
- Hotelling of offices – hopefully will have FMD come with presentation to understand how office space is administered
- Travel fund – is administered by International Student Centre, but is not just for international travel
- GSA Congress will take place on March 6-8th - have submitted an application for funding – would like to take care of graduate community outreach – panel on why it's important for graduate students to get involved with outreach to the community

9.4 VP Finance Report (Report attached)

- Submitted application to ensure we maintain NGO status
- Insurance renewal – didn't know we had insurance coverage for bowl during orientation, so next time we can save money on this
- Ratified groups can use this insurance as well
- Extension from CRA to do auditing

9.5 Aboriginal Liaison Report (Report attached)

- Five recommendations for university to make it Aboriginal-friendly campus
- Meeting with President, which was very positive
- Social event on November 19th, next event is Christmas potluck on December 6th – also an open event, opportunity for cross-cultural understanding

9.6 VP External Report (Report attached)

- Attended two conferences – CFS lobby and CAGS conference
- Graduate Student Awards Gala on March 8th, 2014 – will be selling tickets, trying to raise money to offset cost of tickets
 - Currently working with volunteer course councillor
 - Trying to find keynote speaker

9.7 Presidents' Report (Report attached)

- Thanks to outgoing Aboriginal Liaison and VP Operations
- University will see changes in next months and graduate voices need to be heard
 - TransformUS – GSA needs to take a position on this
 - CGSR review – should it be decentralized
- Continuing advocacy for graduate retention
- Need to advocate as a whole for GSA Congress – need to get nominations in place, tickets, etc.

9.8 Questions regarding Executive Reports

- Question: What kind of benefits are we getting from CFS and if we are not getting benefits, can we get rid of it?
 - Benefit of it is collective advocacy – whenever there are issues that are common for graduate students, CFS advocates for them
 - As for defederating, there are many legal implications for it

- Question: Thank you for getting reports to councillors ahead of time, as this will shorten length of meeting. Meeting with Minister about graduate retention program – there was a meeting last year, was there a ministerial change? Do you have an agenda for the meeting, what are you hoping to achieve for the meeting? Last year Minister wanted to know specifics for budget and costs so he could see if extending the program could be possible. Might be a good idea to build on that meeting
 - Yes, there is a new Minister
 - They want to know the ratio of graduate students that graduate from U of S. and reside in Saskatchewan – we will get this information in preparation for this meeting
 - If we can get letters for this meeting, that would be ideal
 - Meeting is on Dec.13th
 - Many of us are on scholarship and can't get tax break under the program
 - We are advocating for those with advanced degrees from Saskatchewan (rather than all students across Canada)

Motion 8 - to extend meeting for 30 minutes

Motioned by Josie, Seconded Nicole Calihoo

Motion carried

- Why is CFS better as an advocacy group than CASID, which is cheaper?
 - We don't have the resources to leave CFS

10.0 Standing Committee Reports

10.1 Budget Committee (No report)

10.2 Bursary Selection Committee (Report attached)

- Summary of report (attached)

10.3 Elections and Referenda Committee (No report)

10.4 Constitution Revision Committee (No report)

10.5 Code of Ethics Committee (No report)

10.6 Travel Grant Committee (Report attached)

- Had over 130 applications in June

- Prior to deadline for applications the Executives discussed the high number of applicants and made decision to make all money available for travel grants into this round so that committee could decide amounts for domestic and international travel
- Committee met again in October to discuss whether there should be a travel grant administered by the GSA going forward - there has been change in funding in University so that travel funding is administered by International Student Study Abroad Centre (ISSAC)
- The travel committee met with ISSAC
- Decided that in the future, if we would like to contribute more money for travel, it can be done by ISSAC. The GSA will give money to ISSAC for them to give to graduate students. This way the GSA can avoid administrative costs and graduate students will still benefit.

10.7 Gala Committee (No report)

10.8 Questions regarding Standing Committee Reports

- Question: Don't support giving GSA fund to ISSAC because it only gives funding once a year.
 - In ISSAC you are limited to one time, but GSA has limited resources and has to have competition, only giving money to the top applicants. We had the same restrictions in that you can only get money once. As a result, students were applying to both GSA and ISSAC, and same students were receiving funding by both – this serves smaller number of students getting more money.
 - Last year allocated 89% of ISSAC funding to graduate students – won't be just GSA money for graduate students
- Question: What does ISSAC stand for? Is it funded by University? Is there an administration fee?
 - International Student Study Abroad Centre
 - It's funded by the University and there's no fee
 - GSA money through ISSAC will only go towards graduate students
 - ISSAC will ensure GSA is acknowledged when it provides funding

- Question: how do you define financial need for bursary selection?
 - Evaluation is based on a number of factors, such as income, extenuating expenses, status as an international student and eligibility for grants

11.0 Special Committee Reports

11.1 Childcare Co-op Report (Report attached)

- If anyone would like to participate in Childcare Committee, let us know
- Will come up with cooperative childcare list of providers for graduate students – caregivers would primarily be graduate students and family members
- Coming up will have meeting with stakeholders to see if it's possible – has been done in the US

11.2 UPASS Negotiation Committee Report (attached)

- Results from City transit survey have been received (were distributed with agenda)
- Met to discuss negotiations with City
- Hoping to get agreement before December
- Went through recommendations and will meet again

11.3 Questions regarding Special Committee Reports

12.0 New Business

12.1 Motion 9 - to Increase the budget for GSA auditing

WHEREAS a proper audit conducted by a chartered accountant (CA) is required accordance with the GSA constitution, and

WHEREAS the Canada Revenue Agency has requested the GSA to perform and audit very soon, and

WHEREAS for the past several years an audit was not conducted, and

WHEREAS the amount of money allocated in the 2013-2014 budget to cover the audit for the for the fiscal years ended April 30, 2011 and 2012 is insufficient to cover the cost of a legitimate audit,

WHEREAS the VP Finance has received estimates from chartered accountants that an audit would cost up to \$15000.00 (including tax), given the lack of previous audits and the somewhat disorganized nature of the GSA's internal financial records,

BE IT RESOLVED THAT Course Council authorizes the VP Finance to overspend the audit budget by up to \$15000.00 to obtain a legitimate audit.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT once the audit is complete, the VP Finance will provide a report on the audit, including the actual document, to academic councilors at the subsequent GSA Council meeting.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT once the audit is complete the VP Finance will provide the detailed cost of the audit to academic councilors at the subsequent Course Council meeting.

Motioned by Mohammad Rafati, Seconded by Reanne Ridsdale

Discussion

- Auditing is still incomplete
- Comparing costs from different auditors – typically costs \$5,000/year
- Hasn't been completed in the past, which makes it more challenging this year
- This is an important thing to do quickly – CRA asked us to confirm process of auditing
- Question: most companies don't do audit every year, would simply file tax return. Going forward, is the GSA going to be conducting an audit every year or will we simply file a tax return?
 - CRA requested audit and we haven't had auditing since 2005, and there are few records from before 2010 – it is more expensive this year because this is the first time we are doing this
- Question: does the up to \$15,000 cover the 2014/2015 year?
 - No
- Question: what if we don't respond to the CRA request? This is a lot of money.
 - Agree that this is a lot of money and it isn't sustainable for us to spend this amount on audits every year
 - What we've had previously is an accountant look at our books – we want recommendations to ensure our finances are in place
 - Our budget is growing and we need to find a way to finance auditing going forward – might incorporate this into next referendum

- We are a non-profit organization, and as long as we want to keep this status we need to update our financial status for CRA

Motion 10 - call to question

Motioned by Josie, seconded by Reanne

Motion carried

Motion 9 carried

13.0 Announcements

Reminder to clean up your garbage after the meeting

14.0 Next GSA Council Meeting: Friday, December 13th, 2013

15.0 Adjournment - 7:29

Motion 11 - to adjourn meeting

Motioned by Fred

Motion carried

Reports for GSA Council – November 20th, 2013

Executive Reports

1. VP Student Affairs Report

- Update on Childcare (report below)
- Update on Negotiations (see below), still dealing with outstanding opt-out issues.
- Attended the CGAS conference in Montreal where most other universities are dealing with the same funding, supervisor relations, and childcare.
- Moving forward with meeting with the Minister of Education.
- Starting dialogue on international/domestic students having updated contact list for emergencies.
- Meeting with USSU and David Hannah on Residence issues.
- Student forum will be meeting in December on JUST graduate issues, If anyone is interested please contact me at gsa.sa@usask.ca. This is a one time commitment (1.5hr) I would ask that you bring me the issues before hand so I can notify the right audience to be there.

2. VP Operations and Administration Report

Ratification of Academic Councils

There have been several issues recently over the lack of clarity on the ratification of academic councils. Many of these issues stem from the difficulties of keeping track of groups that are or are not ratified on a year to year basis. In order to address this, we will in the future require academic councils to re-ratify every year. In effect, all academic councils will be considered “de-ratified” on the first GSA Council meeting in September, but can then re-ratify at any point throughout the year. This process will take effect in September 2014, and is intended to allow for more efficient tracking of ratified councils. Moreover, keeping track of ratified groups is an important part of our insurance policy. The changes to this process will be made clear on our website. If you have any feedback on this process, please let me know.

GSA Commons

The vending machine has been delivered and once we have clearance from an electrician it will be stocked.

Website

Our new website is now up and running, though there are still a couple of glitches to work through.

- We have recently added a “Student Group Events” tab in order to promote the social and academic activities run by graduate students.
- At the last GSA Council meeting, concerns were raised that minutes from previous Executive meetings that were held over the course of the summer are not yet available online. I am still waiting to receive these minutes from the previous VP Operations, and will continue to follow-up on this issue. As soon as they are received they will be uploaded to the website.

If anyone has any thoughts on how the website could be improved or updated, please let me know.

Meetings and Events

Over the course of the past month, I have represented the GSA at the following meetings and events:

- University of Saskatchewan Copyright Committee meeting
- GSA Halloween Party
- Bursary Selection Committee (report to follow)

3. VP Academics Report

GSA Report

I represented the GSA Report at the Graduate Academic Assembly and the Fall Senate. The report was well received and raised questions about the establishment of an Ombudsperson's Office and the involvement of the GSA in policy reviews. I revisited the discussion of an Ombudsperson at the President's breakfast meeting with the hope that we will see some developments in this area. Despite the lobbying done by the GSA Executives, it is evident that the involvement of the GSA Council and general student body are necessary as well. Students who face no difficulties during their studies, in general don't see the need for an Ombudsperson, some don't even know what an Ombudsperson is, and that can be misunderstood to mean that there is no need for such an office. We all need to work very hard to raise the awareness among our graduate students.

Graduate Student Offices and Hotelling

I met with a group of students from the Humanities that are affected by the hotelling of office space. The students raised concerns with the model and I brought their concerns to the attention of David Parkinson, the Vice-Dean of Humanities and Fine Arts. The students were promised that their concerns will be addressed and that they will be consulted in any future planning that affects them. In addition to the meeting with David Parkinson, I brought these concerns to the President's breakfast meeting. That resulted in FMD seeking further consultation from the Graduate Student body on space management so that the student perspective of things will not be overlooked while making future plans. Likely we will have FMD presenting at Council.

International Travel Fund

Myself and the VP Finance, Mohammad Rafati attended a meeting with ISSAC to discuss the terms of reference for the international travel fund to which the GSA is contributing \$6000. Some changes have been made to the way funds are administered on campus and ISSAC has been made responsible to administer funds available for international travel. Many funds whose terms of reference allowed funding of international travel now simply contribute to the fund administered by ISSAC. The hope is that the centralization will allow more students to benefit from the funds rather than having few students winning travel bursaries from several sources while others have no funds available to them.

GSA Congress GRC 2014

The preparations of the Congress are continuing. I submitted a funding application to the President's fund. The call for papers will be out very soon. Participant registration is anticipated

for the second week of December. We will also have a panel discussion on the graduate student involvement in community outreach that I am personally organizing, so if anyone is interested in participating they should contact me personally. Please be reminded that the Congress will take place on the 6th, 7th and 8th of March.

4. VP Finance Report GSA Budget in 2013-2014

Information provided in this report shows the revenue and expenses from May 2013 until the November 15. Items presented in the tables are defined in the GSA website under the budget section.

GSA Business Budget 2013-2014 Fiscal Year			
<i>Revenue</i>	Estimated Value	Value To Date	Amount Remaining
GSA Fees	186,000.00	86,507.71	99,492.29
GSA Conference Ad Sales	1,000.00	0.00	1,000.00
Commons Booking	3,500.00	2,656.01	843.99
CFS Handbook Ad Sales	2,000.00	712.50	1,287.50
Orientation Contributions	1,500.00	2,555.00	-1,055.00
CGSR Bursary Contribution	20,000.00	20,000.00	0.00
UofS Cold Beverage Agreement	9,000.00	9,000.00	0.00
Surplus	107,084.20	205.22	106,878.98
<i>Total Revenue</i>	330,084.20	121,431.22	208,652.98

Highlights:

University sent the 90% of the fees of fall semester for the following items in October 2013:

- Health and Dental plans
- Upass fees
- GSA membership fees
- CFS fees

GSA Business Budget 2013-2014 Fiscal Year				
	<i>Expenses</i>	Value	Used to date	Amount Remaining
1	Office Staff Salary	70,000.00	-31,738.66	38,261.34
2	President Stipend	6,397.20	-3,198.60	3,198.60
3	Executive Stipend	33,265.44	-16,632.72	16,632.72
4	Academic (Course) Council Funding	8,000.00	-1,368.53	6,631.47
5	Annual Audit	1,500.00	0.00	1,500.00
6	Comprehensive Audit	5,000.00	0.00	5,000.00
7	Bank Charges	300.00	-146.93	153.07
8	CFS Handbook Printing	2,000.00	0.00	2,000.00
9	Commons Insurance	3,500.00	-3,691.00	-191.00
10	<i>Commons Renewal and Repairs (Equipment)</i>	<i>6,500.00</i>	<i>-4,663.50</i>	<i>1,836.50</i>
11	Conferences (External)	5,000.00	-3,131.85	1,868.15
12	Entertainment/Refreshments	2,500.00	-1,836.95	663.05
13	Executive Discretionary Fund	3,500.00	-1,809.94	1,690.06
14	Grad Student Club Funding	5,000.00	-1,500.00	3,500.00
15	GSA (CGSR) Need-Based Bursary	40,000.00	-25,000.00	15,000.00
16	GSA Awards Gala	5,000.00	-2,300.00	2,700.00
17	GSA Conference	5,000.00	0.00	5,000.00
18	GSA Fall Orientation BBQ	7,000.00	-7,423.68	-423.68
19	GSA Travel Grant	10,000.00	-8,700.00	1,300.00
20	Office Supplies	2,800.00	-2,501.84	298.16
21	Operating Costs	3,200.00	-1,434.84	1,765.16
22	UofS Student Travel Award Contribution	6,000.00	0.00	6,000.00

23	UofS Cold Beverage Agreement	9,000.00	-6,299.99	2,700.01
24	TransformUS Service	4,489.68	-3,848.00	641.68
25	Legacy Fund	60,000.00	0.00	60,000.00
26	Upass Salary	15,000.00	-7,321.14	7,678.86
27	GSA Handbook	8,000.00	-7,518.50	481.50
28	UPASS Printing Cost	2,131.88	-2,131.88	0.00
	Total Expenses	330,084.20	-117,079.04	213,005.16

Highlights

- The GSA is paid a total amount of \$255,097.92 (=2,618 x \$97.44) to Saskatoon Transit as the GSA UPass Fee for the 2013/2014 Term 1. Also, the GSA paid the sum of \$315 (21 x \$15) to Saskatoon Transit for lost or stolen stickers in term 1. Until October 29 2013:
 - Number of registered GSA members = 3,058
 - Number of opt-outs = 440 members: 195 individuals met the "exclusively enrolled in distance education" criterion, while 245 graduate students met the other opt-out criteria.
 - Number of UPass Fee accessed = 2,618 members
 - Because the GSA would not receive the full 99% (1% is for administration fee) of the total value until next semester, we paid the remaining of 10% from GSA budget.
- GSA commons insurance premium went over budget. Executive voted to use 200\$ from surplus to cover the difference. The reason for the increase in the premium was adding the GSA social groups and academic council into the insurance coverage, and a little increase in the last year GSA revenue.
 - Ratified GSA groups are covered by the insurance. This coverage includes activity of those groups even out of GSA commons and university campus as long as they follow the insurance broker policies and keep GSA informed on their event in advance.
 - Also, our insurance would cover the GSA events out of commons such as GSA orientation in the bowl at no extra charge. It is recommended for the future executives to contact the insurance company a week in advance to provide documentation for university to have their events in the bowl.
- Item 10: Commons Renewal and Repairs was used for the new GSA website
- The 15000\$ of the bursary budget was used for the fall round.
- The final expenses for the fall orientation went 423\$ over budget. But this was adjusted by the 500\$ sponsorship from health care office for orientation.
- Most of the travel grant was used by the qualified recipient.
- For this year GSA is planning to send the money to ISSAC as the UofS travel contribution. This is going to happen before the end of the year.

- Wending machine was purchased from the budget item 23. The rest of the fund would be used for installation and running the equipment.
- The remaining CFS fees for the last two fiscal years were paid on October.

5. Aboriginal Liaison Report

The Aboriginal and Indigenous Graduate Students' Council Chairs continue to participate in cross-campus planning on the Students' Forum, Students' Forum Executive and President's Breakfast Meeting.

In regards to Aboriginal and Indigenous issues solely, we are currently participating in the Gordon Oakes-Red Bear Subcommittee. We are also assessing our ability to participate in an Aboriginal student leadership committee, and support the work of Humanities and Fine Arts faculty currently developing a number of indigenous worldview research projects, initiatives and policies. We also recently wrote a letter in support of a campus-wide ceremonial protocol.

In addition, this past week we had a meeting directly with President Busch-Vishniac in regards to our five priorities, and were well received.

6. VP External Report

CFS Lobby Week

I attended the CFS lobby week between 21st and 25th of October. The lobbying entails meeting with member of parliament and senators to lobby them to champion some policy changes on issues that affect graduate students. Some of the issues we discussed included: tuition and access to education, funding education, student debt, research and innovation, aboriginal education and international students.

51st CAGS conference in Montreal

I attended the 51st CAGS conference in Montreal from the 2013 dates 3-6th of November. This conference brings together all the Deans and Colleges of Graduate Studies across Canada and their respective Graduate Students Association representatives. This conference offered me an opportunity to have a first hand experience on management and issues faced by the colleges. It offered a platform for peers from diverse backgrounds to share problems and solutions and to take common stands on issues and policies that affect graduate education and management.

I particularly loved the idea of having the sessions broken down into different topics and issues with at times there being concurrent sessions thus offering choices on what to sessions and topics to attend.

I found the sessions being very useful. I cannot say any session was not useful since at all time there would be a group that the session was addressing or that found it interesting. The most important sessions for me in a graduate students perspective were the the preconference workshops that were broken down into

1. Deans and associate deans.
2. For Administrators.
3. For Graduate students.

The sessions for graduate students offered graduate students an opportunity to meet with colleagues to discuss and share problems and experiences. We were also able to make very useful and important contacts.

We were able to come up with the following issues as issues of importance to graduate students:

1. Lack of Graduate Student Funding
2. Student-Supervisor Relations
3. Student Health (with an emphasis on mental health)
4. Student-Administration Relations
5. Graduate Student Professional Development
6. Student Apathy and Lack of Involvement
7. Internal Organization Development
8. Research-Based Advocacy
9. Academic Freedom

7. Presidents' Report

(A) Graduate Retention Program (GRP)

Last year, we started a campaign to lobby the provincial government to include graduates with advance degree from Saskatchewan Post Secondary Education in the provincial GRP. We are currently negotiating with the Minister of Advance Education, Hon. Rob Norris to include graduates with M.Sc and Ph.D in the provincial Graduate Retention Program. Currently, only graduates from the undergraduate programs are entitled to a \$20,000 tuition rebate. The GSA has requested an audience with the minister. I met briefly with him during the convocation ceremony, he confirmed hearing from us. We shall inform members of the GSA Council when a date for the meeting is scheduled.

(B) Legacy Fund (Progress Report)

During the September GSA Council meeting, a motion to create the GSA Legacy Fund for graduate students with entrepreneurial skills was approved. The \$60,000 fund will be administered by the Industry Liaison Office (ILO) and the Wilson Centre.

This GSA initiative parallel emerging trends in graduate student entrepreneurial skills development like the Tech Venture Challenge, the two competitions will occur simultaneously. Application is currently opened for the Tech Venture Challenge-application deadline is November 29, 2013. Kindly encourage your members to apply for the challenge. The following are the required information:

What can you Win?

- \$50,000 cash to launch your business
- Office space for a year at Innovation Place
- Professional services from Deloitte
- \$10,000 low interest loan from Graduate Students' Association

Who can win?

- Individuals or Teams, as long as the Team Leader has the U of S affiliation.
- Technology-based business idea.

-Any technology that adds higher value to products or services or creates new product or services in any sector (ICT, Life Science, Engineering, Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Environmental)

-Business Start-Up must be located in Saskatchewan.

-If already incorporated, must be for less than 1 year.

-Must be willing to participate in Tech Venture Challenge training workshops and programs.

How do you win?

-Complete the on-line application by Friday November 29th, 2013.

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1xG50zAB6HB39Gma6NBPTLkehFM-sKVTut6XSHjr8mU/viewform?usp=sharing&edit_requested=true

And then what?

-At the end of November, all of the applications will be reviewed by a panel of judges and the Top 10 will be announced in early December.

-Those Top 10 will advance in the challenge and go on to participate in training workshops as they develop a full business plan due at the end of April.

-Each team will pitch their business to the judges in early May for the Challenge Grand Prize to be awarded in mid May.

(C) Graduate House (Update)

Recognizing that the needs and aspirations of graduate students differ from those of undergraduate students, the University of Saskatchewan has articulated a vision for student residence life and a set of principles for student housing. At the core of those is a commitment to provide high-quality housing and relevant housing services in a way that is financially sustainable and aligned with the strategic goals of the university.

The university will open Graduate House, its first residence focused specifically on graduate students, on Wednesday, November 20th, 10 am. All members of the GSA Council are invited to the event.

An Advisory Council has been formed to foster and support the vision for Graduate House. The Advisory Council consists of three outstanding University alumni named by the President, the Dean of the College of Graduate Studies and Research and the Vice-President University Advancement. The Advisory Council acts as a patron of Graduate House both within and beyond the university. It will meet annually with the university's Associate Director of Student Housing to review operations and to provide advice on realizing and sustaining the vision for Graduate House.

(D) TransformUS

Like other members of the university community, we are expecting the report from the two TransformUS task forces. The GSA may write a position statement and present it during the town-hall meeting in term 2. The executive will recommend a position statement to the GSA Council after meeting with our representatives to the two task forces. Amongst the areas we will consider is to identify possible effects (if any) the report will have on graduate

students. Also, discuss if the GSA should take a position: if yes, what route; if not, state the rationale.

(E) Campus Climate Survey

The university is conducting a survey to find out how welcome, supported and respected students feel at the U of S. The Campus Climate Survey is an online survey that will seek input from the entire U of S student body and ask a variety of questions related to personal experiences with campus climate issues, perceptions of the campus climate and participation in diversity-related activities. Results of this survey will provide important information about student experiences and quality of life as a student at the U of S. The information shared will also help continue to make the U of S a welcoming place.

Kindly encourage your members to complete the survey.

(F) GSA Awards Gala: Call for Keynote Speaker

The Executive Council is currently in the process of receiving nominations for a keynote speaker during the 2014 GSA Awards Gala. Academic Councillors are encouraged to send names of possible speakers to the VP External.

(G) Meetings

I represented the GSA in different committee meetings as stated in Policy 1.3-Committee Representation. I also met with several students and groups.

Standing Committee Reports

1. Bursary Selection Committee

According to Policy 4.1.5.1 “The Graduate Students' Association Bursaries Selection Committee will be chaired by the VP Operations and Communications and will include the Vice President Finance, and a minimum of two (2) Course Councilors.” The Fall 2013 Bursary Selection Committee was comprised of the two required Executives, as well as three course councilors. The deadline for the bursary this term was on October 31st, and the committee met soon after to make its selection. The selection is based on financial need, with a priority given to:

- Part time students
- Senior students who have exhausted the funding for their program
- Students in need of child care services
- Students who demonstrate hardship in acquiring other scholarships
- Students in the Humanities and Social Sciences
- Demonstrated financial need, good citizenship and academic performance
- Students receiving less than \$5000 in other scholarships

A total of 63 completed applications were received, representing over thirty different academic departments. Of the fifteen applicants that were successful:

- 10 were international students
- 11 were Master's students, 4 were PhD students
- 10 different academic departments were represented

The previous VP Operations made note that the bursary application and selection forms need to be updated so that they are clearer for applicants and the selection committee. Going forward, this is something that will be looked into for the Winter 2014 bursary.

Special Reports

1. Childcare Coop Planning Committee Report

This report is for information only. All questions and concerns may be directed to Sarah Purdy, Chair of the Committee. If the answer has not yet been found you will be encouraged to join the committee to find it.

Based on a motion in 2012, the Childcare coop planning committee was formed. It solicited student participation by email to what was then the Course Councilors, and also in an email to all graduate students. The Committee meets irregularly at the convenience of its members. Membership is open (students may join at any time, and make contributions based on their own judgement).

The Plan: The Childcare service would be a list of contacts for babysitters populated by students, and spouses/family members of students. Being on or using the list would be subject to conditions designed to maximize the safety of the children, caretakers, parents, GSA, and to follow all laws outlined by the City of Saskatoon and the Province.

The cost of this childcare program would be equal to the hourly rate of a GSA coordinator who would maintain the list.

The University has expressed interest (Adam Baxter-Jones and David Hanna). They are helping to address the legal and liability concerns surrounding this program.

Outstanding issues include:

International students are required to have “caretaker” status on their visa

Completing the picture of similar programs and best practices. This includes contacting the USSU and University Childcare Committee leaders for input and institutional knowledge

Compiling a user agreement

Completing the proposal to present to Council before the AGM.

Should the council accept the proposal, the Childcare contact list should go into effect in September 2014. It is the Committee’s highest priority to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the children and graduate students who would make use of this service.

The next CCCP meeting will be in the last week of November.

2. UPASS Negotiation Committee update

The results of the Saskatoon Transit survey conducted in 2012 were recently provided to the GSA and UPASS Negotiation Committee (see attachment).

3. Travel Grant Committee Report

Prepared by

Izabela Vlahu

VP Academic, Chair of the Travel Grant Committee

At the 2013 AGM, the GSA members approved the 2013/2014 budget which included a budget line of \$10,000.00 for Travel Grants. However, the Travel Grant terms of reference were tabled, leaving decisions at the discretion of the Travel Grant Committee and the GSA Executives.

The GSA Executives had the annual retreat in June 2013. Prior to the retreat, the GSA had received over 130 travel grant applications. The Executives discussed the overwhelmingly high number of applications and made the decision to allocate all \$10,000.00 for the Summer Round with the understanding that the Travel Grant Committee would decide on the amounts that were to be awarded for international and domestic travels.

The Travel Grant Committee consisted of the VP Academic, the VP Finance, two councillors and one student. When the committee met, a decision was made to award \$150 for domestic travels and \$350 for international travels. The committee decided that the Travel Grants will be given as reimbursements. To be able to claim the grants, the applicants had to provide the GSA with proof of attendance within two weeks of attending the conference. Failing to do so will result in the unclaimed amount being declared as surplus.

Recommendations for Future Planning

The Travel Grant Committee also met in October 2013 to discuss the outcomes of the Travel Grant. Although the Committee agreed that the Travel Grants were beneficial to our members, **the Committee unanimously recommends to Council that the administration of all funds available for traveling purposes be delegated to ISSAC.** There were several reasons for the decision:

- Due to the high number of applications received, the committee was forced to rank all applications and award the top ones. The GSA subsequently learned that most of the awarded students had, (most likely simultaneously,) applied to other funding sources and were considered qualified as well. This resulted in the GSA giving an opportunity to students to “double dip”, rather than funding students who had no other resources available to them.
- The University has restructured the funds available to students for travelling purposes, establishing a central fund administered by ISSAC. Most units that had their own funds (for travel purposes) now contribute their resources to the central fund. In particular, a portion of the President’s fund is transferred to ISSAC for travels. The GSA was previously contributing to the President’s fund, but is now going to contribute to the fund administered by ISSAC directly. In fact, the GSA is going to contribute to a fund that is available only to graduate students. Keeping this in mind, if the GSA is interested in allocating more resources for travels, then contributing to the fund administered by ISSAC will benefit graduate students directly, which will result in more students receiving support versus the same number of students receiving a higher value support.
- The Travel Grant Committee spent over 7 hours in June reviewing applications. Prior to that meeting, the GSA staff had spent over 40 hours organizing and preparing the applications for the committee. After the awardees were notified, the GSA office spent significant amount of time reviewing proofs of attendance and giving out cheques. In addition, several hours were spent collecting the necessary data to write this report. Considering the limited resources available to the GSA for administrative purposes, and

the possibility of having ISSAC administer travel grants for the GSA at no additional cost, the committee felt that the GSA Travel Grant was an unnecessary use of resources for the GSA.

The numbers of received and awarded applications, as well as the distribution of international and domestic travel grants are summarised in the following table:

Travel Grant Table

Prepared by

Sherri Rohovich - GSA Office Manager

Domestic Travel Grants - \$150.00

14 domestic travel grants were awarded in total
13 cheques have been issued and collected by recipients
1 failed to submit proof of attendance

International Travel Grants - \$350.00

23 international travel grants awarded in total
21 cheques have been issued and collected by recipients
1 failed to submit proof of attendance
1 yet to attend: November 17 th – 21 st

<p>*1 transfer of awards from international to domestic: Student was not able to obtain visa on time to attend the conference. Thus the student requested the award be transferred for an alternate domestic conference. The committee reviewed and granted the request.</p>

***Note:** One student applied for the international travel grant and was awarded 350.00. His name appears on the list for domestic award winners, as he was mistakenly added to the incorrect column on the spreadsheet during the application process.