

**Graduate Students' Association
Academic Council Meeting Minutes**



University of Saskatchewan
Tuesday, June 30th, 2015
5:00 P.M. – 7:00 P.M.
GSA Commons

Attendees:

Amanda Guy, Ashton Reimer, Isaac Pratt, Josie Steeves, Naomi Maina, Rae-Leigh Pederzolli, Robin Brown, Seth Dueck, Stacey Domoleswki, Casey McMahon

Executive:

Rajat Chakravarty, Ziad Ghaith, David Bennett, Jebunnessa Chapola, Hardi Shahadu

Apologies:

VP External – Natalia Terekhova, Aboriginal Liaison – Dana Carriere

Roll Call for GSA Councillors

30th June 2015

Academic Unit	1	2
Psychology (1)		
History (1)		
Physics (1)	X	
Toxicology (1)		
Bioresource Policy & Economics (1)		
Archaeology & Anthropology (1)		
Philosophy (1)		
Kinesiology (1)	X	
Education Administration (2)	X	

Geology (1)		
Soil Science (1)	X	
Western College of Veterinary Medicine (2)		
School of Environment & Sustainability (1)	X	
Medicine (2)	X	
Engineering (2)		
Plant Science (1)		
English (1)		
Geography (1)	X	
Public Policy (2)		
Biology (1)		
Public Health (2)		
Sociology (1)		
Chemistry (1)		
Ex-officio – GSA Executive (7)		
Total (36) (Quorum – 19)		

1 Call to Order – 17:20

2 Announcements

2.1 Quorum – quorum was not present

3 Executives Reports

3.1.1 President Report – Oral report

3.1.2 VP Finance Report – Oral report

3.1.3 VP Academic Report – Oral report

3.1.4 VP Operations Report – Oral report

3.1.5 VP Student Affairs Report – Oral report

4 Q & A

Council members were appreciative and expressed thanks to the executive for the detailed reports and their efforts towards positive change in the GSA thus far.

VP Finance David Bennett explained audit process and reasons for the itemized and detailed financial report.

President Rajat Chakravarty explained the process of hiring a new GSA chairperson and expressed appreciation for the hard work of the new executive. VP Finance expanded on hiring

procedures of the Council Chair.

Council expressed special thanks to VP External Natalia Terekhova on her recent attendance and reporting of the CFS Annual General Meeting.

President provided information on the developments of the forthcoming GSA handbooks and summary of the meeting with VP External and Student Care.

Council members communicated concerns with respect to improving the experience of new international students, focussing within departments and as a whole. Concerns being; students have limited understanding as to where to seek pertinent information, such as start dates, funding timelines - crucial in eliminating the difficulties of budgeting. Need for students to have centralized academic and non-academic resources made available. The necessity for well-defined instructions regarding required documentation and eliminating the misunderstandings regarding scholarships. Councillors suggest collecting information, understanding where the gaps in communications occur and what pertinent information is missing to students. Centralizing and consolidating where information is placed to ensure better access. Conversations need to happen on a larger scale. What are the best way to welcome students to the University of Saskatchewan?

VP Student Affairs Hardi Shahadu responded to these concerns with suggestions of redesign within the GSA website to incorporate more information for new students including academic and non-academic resources. Better communication from within the GSA.

VP Academic Jebunnessa Chapola was pleased to see this issue addressed and suggested GSA executive continue discussions and gather more feedback from councillors in order to move forward. Overcoming some of the challenges by communicating with individual departments and the possibility of guidebooks available at the airport.

VP Operations and Communications Ziad Ghaith welcomed feedback from council and explained the upcoming revamp of the GSA website and how the GSA can better relay information to new students through social media, he suggested organizing a committee to better facilitate this issue.

GSA President updated council on meeting with lawyer. Suggestion of legal sub-committee. Council voted against obtaining a lawyer in the January 2015 council meeting due to limited funds available in the operating budget. VP Student Affairs proposed a formal letter be written. Council proposed GSA executive meet and bring forth recommendations to the next council meeting

5 Next GSA Council Meeting 29th of July 2015

6 Adjournment – 18:55