

The University of Saskatchewan Graduate Students' Association



Council Meeting Meetings

Tuesday, August 23rd, 2016. 5:00 P.M. onwards

GSA Commons

Attendees: Varun Gaur (Computer Science), Colin McLaren (Kinesiology), Isaac Pratt (Medicine), Nripesh Ayer (Electrical and Computer Engineering).

Executives: Ziad Ghaith (President), Kusum Sharma (VP Finance), Carolyn Gasper (VP External), Shailza Sapal (VP Student Affairs), Ali Kiani (VP Academic), Nafisa Absher (VP Operations and Communications), Dana Carriere (Aboriginal Liaison).

1. Call to Order: GSA President call the meeting to order at 5.19 PM

2. Announcements

2.1 Quorum

- Quorum was not present.

3. Approval of Chair

- GSA President informed the Council that the GSA Chair will not be able to chair this meeting; he further informed the Council that the position is vacant.
- Rajat Chakravarty was nominated by GSA President to chair August 23rd, 2016 meeting. All in favour, motion carries.

4. Approval of Agenda

- No amendment to the agenda and no discussion happened.
- All in favour of the approval of the agenda. Motion carries.

5. Approval of Council Minutes

5.1. June 21st, 2016 Council Meeting (Attached [here](#)).

- Minutes of June 21st, 2016 council meeting cannot be approved as of now due to lack of quorum.

6. Executives Reports

6.1. VP Finance Report (Oral report).

Sharma reported about the various meetings attended and activities she is involved in:

- Financial literacy workshops: GSA will be organising financial literacy workshops for graduate students in collaboration with RBC bank on 13th and 15th September, 2016 at 5.30 PM.
- Tech Venture Challenge award: Sharma and Ghaith drafted an agreement with terms and negotiations for the loan for Tech Venture Challenge award. Sharma is trying to involve university officials in the agreement.
- Monthly financial reports: Monthly financial statements are now available on GSA website and are uploaded in the first week of each month. Operating budget and GSA revenue sheets are available on GSA website and are updated biweekly. Accounting codes file is also uploaded on the website for better understanding of monthly financial reports.
- Summer bursary awards: Sharma along with Ghaith and Absher were in summer bursary awards committee and awarded this bursary to ten students.
- Fundraising: Sharma raised an amount of \$500 from RBC for GSA orientation BBQ event. Sharma will be lobbying for more funds in the coming month.
- No discussion and questions asked.

6.2 VP External Report (Attached [here](#))

Gaspar reported about the various meetings attended and activities she is involved in:

- Canadian Federation of Students: CFS is working on hiring a coordinator to help assisting in the planning and she will be having two upcoming meetings in coming weeks to discuss about the plans. She had discussed about the CFS visits to the GSA and also ordered campaign materials.
- GU15 Conference update: 7 out of 9 schools voted for the incorporation in the meeting to discuss about the future of GU15. She was voted to be the interim Director of Membership relations. GSA members collectively have to discuss if they want to increase membership fee to buy into new incorporation "ThinkGrad". A motion has been presented to have vote and discussion regarding incorporation and the GSA U of S involvement.
- Survey Committee: Gaspar is working with Eleanor from CGSR on a proposal of the objectives and expected outcomes of the survey.

- Student Leadership Community of Practice: Gaspar was invited to Student Leadership Community of Practice meeting next week but could not attend due to research commitments.
- Lunch with David Suzuki: Gaspar was invited to attend lunch with David Suzuki on September 19th because of her work with the office of sustainability.
- Event Planning: Gaspar has started to look for sponsorships for GALA and will be planning the first “ThinkGRAD” conference which will be held in April 2017. The tentative date is April 18-21st, 2017.
- No discussion and questions asked.

6.3 VP Operations Report (Attached [here](#)).

Absher reported about the various meetings attended and activities she is involved in:

- GSA Website: GSA website committee has met on June 6th and 11th, 2016. The new website got officially launched on August 2nd, 2016. Absher was working on this website since the beginning of her term in May. The website has new features such as the Ask GSA tab. It will benefit members in accessing information related to their graduate student experience. Absher emailed all graduate students about the launch of new website and announced about the same on various social media.
- GSA Social Media: GSA now has an Instagram account (@usaskgsa), and a twitter account (GSA_USask). These platforms are helping to connect with GSA members and do announcements.
- GSA Mobile App: Absher is currently working with a company Oohlala to develop a GSA mobile app. It has been submitted to app stores for approval and will be promoted heavily during orientation. It will have important information such as a map, tour of the campus, events, class schedules, student club pages.
- GSA Communication: Absher has been communicating with graduate students via emails through CGSR for various announcements. Absher has been responding to student emails in timely manner and posted council meeting and executive meeting minutes on GSA website.
- GSA Commons: GSA Commons has new coffee mugs with GSA logo on them and will enhance the coffee bar for the upcoming year.
- GSA Council Chair: After advertising the chair position and receiving applications, Absher along with executive committee has narrowed down three choices. Interviews will be held and the recommendation will be provided before the council.

- GSA Office Coordinator: This position has been advertised and she has been currently receiving applications. The deadline to apply is August 19th, 2016.
- GSA Summer bursary: Absher along with VP Finance, VP Academic, GSA President and another councillor evaluated and reviewed applications and chose ten successful candidates. She contacted these winners asking them to pick up their cheques at the GSA Commons.
- Executive and Council meetings: Absher worked for preparing the agenda, distributing it, writing the minutes and published it on the GSA website.
- GU15 Conference: Absher along with VP External attended GU15 conference and next conference will be held at U of S. 9 of the U15 GSA's were present and majority of them voted that GU15 must be incorporated. It will be a think tank that works to explore graduate students' needs on a national level. This group was voted to be known as "Think GRAD". An interim president, a secretary and a treasurer were appointed until November, 2016. U of S GSA must now discuss membership opportunities to this organization and the conditions of this memberships.
- No discussion and questions asked.

6.4 VP Academic Report (Attached [here](#)).

Kiani reported about the various meetings attended and activities he is involved in:

- University Library Master plan.
- GSA executive meetings.
- Met ISAAC president and executives.
- Met Alumni association for fundraising the orientation.
- Working with Student Employment and Career Centre (SECC) to have different workshops at the GSA.
- Met with Campus Community Giving - Program Manager University Relations to have few workshops and more connection with different parts of university.
- Meeting for Graduate Students survey.
- Kiani reported that he is dealing with three students' academic life problems.
- Kiani is helping international students by meeting in person at his office and also via emails.
- Kiani is working on a workshop which will be held on September 23rd, 2016 and is about social media. He will be having a meeting with GSA Anti-Racist group next week to plan for the Anti-Racism workshop at GSA.

- Kiani is planning to have meditation workshop at GSA every Friday afternoon.
- No discussion and questions asked.

6.5 VP Student Affairs Report (Attached [here](#))

Sapal reported about the various meetings attended and activities she is involved in:

- Met VP student affairs USSU, Renata for Orientation facilities.
- Met with Bobbi Mumm regarding Orientation Planning.
- Met Jason Ventnor for arranging tables and chairs for the BBQ.
- Talked to STM and Macs store for booking the freezer spots for keeping BBQ food.
- Sent out invitations and sponsorship letters to the dignitaries on and off campus.
- Met various students on campus to encourage them to join the GSA council.
- Met and arranged the performers for GSA Orientation BBQ.
- Wrote to bookstore for getting giveaways and freebies for the orientation.
- Booked a spot at campus expo on September 2nd from 1:00 – 4:00 Pm.
- Booking of the BBQ, DJ and ordered orientation material for the Orientation.
- Called for the volunteers for survey team and arranged two effective meetings with the team so far.
- Called for volunteers for Orientation BBQ, first meeting is scheduled for Monday 22nd August.
- Sapal will be helping VP Academics in organizing meditation workshop at GSA.
- No discussion and questions asked.

6.6 Aboriginal Liaison Report (Oral report).

Carriere reported about the various meetings attended and activities she is involved in:

- Carriere's term as GSA Aboriginal Liaison and Indigenous Graduate Students' Council Chair will come to an end at the end of August. She will no longer be a graduate student as she has finished her graduate program.
- Carriere will remain active into September for the purposes of assisting in organizing the IGSC Meet and Greet and Annual General Meeting, and to provide a transition to the incoming Aboriginal Liaison and IGSC Chair and Council.
- Indigenous Graduate Students' Council Meet & Greet: The IGSC hosts an annual meet and greet even in September which is an opportunity to raise awareness about IGSC and bringing together Aboriginal graduate students.

- Indigenous Graduate Students' Council AGM: The IGSC hosts its annual general meeting in September. At this event, nominations and voting for chair and council positions occur, as well as the nominations and voting for the position of Aboriginal Liaison. Two members are also elected to be the IGSC representatives in GSA Council.
- Campus Rec (GSA Guppies): Since Carriere's term is coming to an end she will no longer be the sports representative for the GSA, the new sports representative will be Carolyn Gaspar, VP External.
- No discussion and questions asked.

6.7 President Report (Attached [here](#)).

Ghaith reported about the various meetings attended and activities he is involved in:

- Graduate representation in the Board of Governors: Ghaith has formally requested the minister of advanced education to amend some clauses in the University of Saskatchewan Act, 1995 to improve the graduate students' representation in both Board of Governors and the University Council. Ghaith met with Regina MLA and Trent Wotherspoon (Leader of opposition, NDP) and discussed about the same. He plans to visit some government officials in Regina for presenting the proposal.
- Graduate Survey: The survey committee has met two times to put the survey proposal together, and divided the tasks among the committee. He is trying to get inputs from various stakeholders and expect to launch this survey in Fall. He also thanked the volunteers and GSA executives who are part of this committee.
- CGSR Proposal: Ghaith submitted a proposal to the Dean of College of Graduate Studies and Research requesting the college to sponsor some of the important initiatives of GSA such as bursaries and GSF for graduate students. He is still awaiting the Dean response.
- GSA Commons improvement: With the help of the GSA Office Manager and VP Operation, Ghaith is currently working on new initiatives to improve the GSA Commons and make it more welcoming to our members. He is in the process of starting up a mini library in the GSA, and to set up an indigenous mini exhibition. He has met with the IGSC and GMCTE multiple times to push these initiatives forward.

- SUDS Conference: Ghaith participated in Student Union Development Summit in Vancouver. He added that this summit was an excellent opportunity to learn how to develop our association and improve our services and initiatives. Currently, Ghaith is working on action plan with different executive on how to develop our services based on other unions' experience.
- Student-Supervisor Contract (Memorandum Of Understanding): Ghaith met with the new Associate Dean in the CGSR, and addressed the desire to regulate the relationship between the supervisors and their students. The association Dean was very supportive and positive about this. Ghaith encouraged members to join for cultivating ideas for this initiative.
- GSA Orientation: GSA Orientation will take place on September 6th. Ghaith requested sponsorships for the orientation from different organizations.
- Fundraising: 2000 dollars have been raised so far which is 1000 dollars more than last year.
- President thanked the councillors for serving their term and requested them to encourage graduate students in their respective academic units to join as GSA Councillors.
- No discussion and questions asked.

6.8 Q&A

- Council member Isaac Pratt (Medicine) asked for explanation about ThinkGrad?
 - o Gaspar responded to this question. Think Grad is GU15 research intensive is an informal body of sharing best practices. It will allow us to build stronger relation with Canadian Federation of Students. "ThinkGRAD" is the first graduate think tank in Canada. This think tank will expand its memberships to other universities with strong research vigour and try to understand the Canadian graduate student experience through research. The incorporation of "ThinkGRAD" is to hold schools accountable for their duties and to help graduate student lobby internally within the U of S administrative for students' matters on campus and nationally with supporting data.

7. Committee Minutes

7.1. Website Committee meeting minutes (6/6/2016) (**Attached [here](#)**)

7.2. Website Committee meeting minutes (11/7/2016) (**Attached [here](#)**)

7.3. Summer Bursary Selection Committee meeting minutes (**Attached [here](#)**)

7.4. Executives Meeting Minutes (16/8/2016) (**Not published yet**).

7.5. Executives Meeting Minutes (19/7/2016) (**Attached [here](#)**).

7.6. Executives Meeting Minutes (14/6/2016) (Attached [here](#)).

7.7. Executive Retreat Minutes (15/5/2016) (Attached [here](#)).

7.8. Executives Meeting Minutes (10/5/2016) (Attached [here](#)).

- The approval of these meeting minutes is to be postponed until quorum is reached.
- No discussion done.

8. Old Business

8.1. Motion: GSA Budget (Kusum Sharma/Ziad Ghaith)

WHEREAS the GSA receives revenues from its ISIC card service

WHEREAS the aforementioned revenue must be included in the financial statements of the GSA for financial transparency

WHEREAS the GSA recently sold its non functional vending machine and has generated revenue as a consequence

WHEREAS the vending machine revenue must be included in the financial statements of the GSA for financial transparency substantive

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the GSA introduce two additional budget revenue lines called 'ISIC card' and 'vending machine'

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a budget expense line called 'ISIC Card' be introduced for expenses related to improving the service

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the GSA introduces two new revenue lines named “sales” to accommodate any sale that GSA might do in future

- The approval of these meeting minutes is to be postponed until quorum is reached.
- No discussion done.

9. New Business

9.1. Motion: GSA Budget (Carolyn Gasper/Ziad Ghaith)

Preamble

The University of Saskatchewan Graduate Student Association (GSA) attends GU15 conferences as an informal sharing body of best practices. In August 2016, 7 out of 9 school attendees at the GU15 conference voted for incorporation.

The new name of the incorporation is “ThinkGRAD” (Graduate Research and Development), the first graduate think tank in Canada. This think tank will expand its memberships to other universities with strong research vigour and try to understand the Canadian graduate student experience through research.

The incorporation of “ThinkGRAD” is to hold schools accountable for their duties and to help graduate student lobby internally within the UofS administrative for students’ matters on campus and nationally with supporting data.

The GSA will play a historical part of “ThinkGRAD” by hosting the first “ThinkGRAD” conference in April 2017.

This motion is a reaffirmation of the GSA’s commitment to the GU15 conference.

WHEREAS incorporating “ThinkGRAD” will help our association to work and cooperate with other Graduates associations in Canada

WHEREAS The incorporation of “ThinkGRAD” is to hold schools accountable for their duties and to help graduate student lobby internally within the U of S administrative for students’ matters on campus and nationally with supporting data.

BE IT RESOLVED the GSA Council allocate \$1100 dollars from the unallocated fund revenue budget line toward this incorporation

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED the GSA agrees, in principle, to levy a student fee of up to \$.50 per member, per term (Term 1 and Term 2 of the U of S academic year), to be paid to the “ThinkGRAD” membership fees as an on-going financial contribution to participate in future conferences.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the final decision to approve or disapprove a levied fee shall be made at a Annual General Meeting of the GSA, pursuant to Section 8.3 of the GSA Constitution, held during Term 2 of the 2016-2017 U of S academic year;

- The approval of these meeting minutes is to be postponed until quorum is reached.
- No discussion done.
- Chair added that levying a student fee of up to \$.50 per member, per term is out of scope of GSA council to approve.

10. Q&A.

No questions asked.

11. Next GSA Council Meeting 27 of September 2016

Chair suggested the councillors to apply for re ratification of their respective graduate councils with GSA as the current councillors will be ending their term on August 31st, 2016. Chair also encouraged councillors to encourage graduate students in their respective academic units to become GSA councillors.

12. Adjournment

- Meeting adjourned: 5.51 PM.