

**University of Saskatchewan
Graduate Students' Association**

COUNCIL AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Minutes from Tuesday, December 13th, 2016 meeting

Present: Aurora Bower (ARCHAIA), Banerjee Arinjay (WCVM), Banjo Olaleye (ECC), Brenda Byers (IGSC|MBA), Colin McLaren (Kinesiology), David Hilger (Soil Science), Derek Green (Toxicology), Dimitry Zakharov (History), Isaac Pratt (Medicine), Jaylene Murraray (SENS), John Bird (History), Josh Cronmiller (Geography), Kendall Kreppa (Soil Science), Lindsay Goodwin (Physics and Engineering Physics), Logan Pizzy (ARE Graduate Council), Luc Chabauole (Geology), Morgan Kirzinger (Computer Science), Naheda Sahtout (Chemistry), Roland Macana (Biological Engineering), Stephanie Freser (IGA), Haley Scott (WCVM), Tonny Kar (Computer Science), Oluwuegun Oyeifeju (EGCC)

Regrets: Sylvana Tu (Public Health), Prajjwal Gautam, Mila Markevych (EGSA), Nafisa Absher (VP Operations), Viktoria Hinz, Evan Poncelet (Psychology), Brandon Spanks (Psychology)

Absent: Afolabi Ayeni (EGCC), Chanda Hetzel (Sociology), Daniel Karran (Geography and Planning), Davis Rogers (History), Emiliana Bomfim (Medicine), Greg Lewallen, Ifeoma Adaji (Computer Science), Iloradanon Efimoff (IGSC), Kanssa Patton (History), Katherine Raes (Toxicology), Rahat Yasir (Computer Science), Seth Dueck (Physics), Vita Andersone (Sociology).

Organization of Meeting: Robert Henderson, chair of Council, took the chair, and Anastasia Stadnyk, acted as secretary. The Chair advised that due notice of the meeting had been given, a quorum was present, and the meeting was properly constituted.

OPEN SESSION

1. CALL TO ORDER 6:04 PM

- 2. REMARKS FROM THE CHAIR:** Thank you to everyone who has filled out the survey. The number of responses have been helpful. If you haven't filled it out, please do so. Because of tight agenda people were asked to speak only twice.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

**Derek and Ali
Carried.**

Consent Agenda

Council heard a motion to approve or receive for information the items on the consent agenda.

**Erin and Ziad
Carried.**

4. MINUTES FROM NOV. 29TH, 2016 COUNCIL MEETING

Council approved the minutes as distributed.

5. REPORTS FROM THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE,

Council received these reports for information.

6. REPORT FROM THE EXECUTIVE

Ziad: Last council meeting the GSA worked on student supervisor agreement, this was meant to be circulated to council members and this was to get feedback. They hope that you can take this agreement to your department and ask the students for feedback: what would you like to see or any other changes? Send him your feedback directly to gsa.pse@usask.ca . This has already been sent to the faculty association. Second update is regarding the plan to sustain to association in the future. They are looking to develop a strategic plan for GSA to have all the priorities in one document so that everyone who is in the GSA knows this is related to the achievement of the GSA.

Please read executive reports, there are a lot of event initiatives and events all are available in the report. The floor was open to discussion.

Question: Is a deadline for when the feedback is due? The deadline is end of January. The plan is to bring this agreement forward by February.

Question: Is the agreement going through the GSA if the faculty doesn't support it is there any value in bringing this forward still? The faculty association is just playing a consulting role. The approval comes from graduate college and research and council. There is also a plan to bring to university council.

Question: Will it be mandatory for all graduate students to sign off with their supervisors? The GSA hopes it will be mandatory.

The chair noted that even though if the faculty association doesn't have to approve this, it will take some careful navigation. The end result may not look like the end document. What sort of principles and elements do you want in there? President is meeting with different department chairs to get more support.

Question: What makes this something that our supervisors will have to follow? In the

past there's been no repercussions if the agreement wasn't followed. Answer: The graduate college of research will be bit different as this agreement is seen as a protective tool for students. It has been a problem in the past to figure out if the student or supervisor caused the relationship to break, this document helps to hold all parties accountable and is a protective tool.

Question: If this is mandatory agreement will there be a final vote to this? Answer: It's very early to discuss if this is mandatory. If it does happen it will come from college of graduate studies and research. It's unlikely that the final document would be non customizable so that there are no imposed behaviours, more so principles to follow (obvious but not always followed). Negotiation process, the one you have received is the very first draft. Recently U of M has approved something similar to this; the executives are trying to get a copy of this as an example. Final product was a one final page.

Question: The faculty has an agreement on their website already that is customizable, how is this different? This new one is very different, the principles are the same but there are noticeable differences between this and the one on the website. Based on CAGS framework, its different than website but the principle is the same. This one on the website is not mandatory. A couple of years ago a prior motion was defeated and so this is a new approach.

Comment: Individual anticipated pushback from both sides but am strongly supportive of this. Because of not having an extra agreement he was in a legal agreement.

Door is always open to provide specific feedback to GSA president.

7. REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES: Q&A with the Executives

Chair asked if there are any questions? There were no questions on the floor.

Regular Agenda

8. REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT

c) Renewal of Social Club Status – Presentation from Brazilian Students Association.

The chair noted this is a club up for renewal and they want to ratify through the GSA.

They are a student association composed of grad and undergrad students. No financial relation to the Brazilian association of Saskatoon. But the association is supportive and sees the value in having this at the University. The club wants to provide cultural, academic, support for newcomers and to connect to build intercultural relationships.

Already have 20 members: 18 of them are graduate students. The goal for this association is to promote the culture and they are partnered with various organizations in the city. Many of them are already partners from the Braza association. There are also consulate services. Future plans to promote culture include: carnival, taste of brazil, June festival, Portuguese speaking social club.

Anyone who is interested in learning about the culture is able to join. Can find the BSA on Facebook.

Chair asked if there are any questions. Ziad wanted to congratulate them on their efforts and was happy to see this and wished them luck. Chair added that the GSA is grateful to have them here.

Question: Echoed the thanks, but was confused about being a partner and what does that mean for the club? Answer: Brazilian community in Saskatoon were the first ones to notice that there is a need because 40 Brazilian students have no support inside the university. The associations and partners talked to them to help start this club. These partners will help add services to the students but it was reiterated that they don't financially support them.

Attached to this presentation on page 27.
Motion was put forward to ratify this club.

Jalene and Aird.
No discussion.
Carried.

8D. GSA FEE FOR SEPTEMBER 2017.

Ziad to take floor and make reports. They provided an option of recommendation to raise the GSA fees behind 5% and the rationale was that they haven't increased fees in past two years but expenses are increasing every year. They have approached the university many times for help, and they wanted to know why GSA didn't raise fees. The rationale is in the motion. They require the council to approve this by 5%. Current fees are 33.65 and 5% is about 2\$. This is legal according to by-laws, any increase above 5% calls for a referendum. Hopeful to increase for interest of

Question : final approval is through the board of governors. Can you comment why this is?

Answer: the process of increasing follows: once any unit wants to increase fees, they must communicate with university and then they make a recommendation to the board of governors. The board of governors already met in December. There is a window until January.

Question: Does the USSU do this? They follow the same process.

Chair added that the board of governors doesn't sit down and think is it a good idea or not, they would trust our council to make the determination. Its their job that the proper process was followed. This is in alignment with GSA constitution and by-laws, there's no reason for them to deny, this is a formality Only if they deny will they step in. Thanked for the question.

Ziad and David. 1 opposition. 3 abstentions.

Carries with the above. This qualifies as a 2/3 majority and therefore motion is carried.

9. DISCUSSION ON GSA Governance

The chair noted that they wanted to discuss some observations of the governance at the GSA. They met yesterday and there are some issues that they wanted to bring to your attention today,

some have already been brought forward and want people to hear this and provide feedback.

The first slide covers the major points: council functions vs board functions

In the survey there was recommendation for improvement to the by-laws.

Council Functions V. Board functions: as hinted in the later part of the agenda, they are going to ask for a call for a special AGM to have more opportunity to get some changes in place now that they have the momentum in place. The council is also by the bylaws the BOD of the GSA. As discussed at the orientation, these are two distinct functions and it makes it difficult for the organization to operate at good governance if these two are combined. First issue is that its not entirely compliant with the NFP act. (alternative councillors and alternate BOD) more to the point, there was a question raised in a prior meeting about liability insurance for the directors. The current insurance only covers the executive. Insurance for entire council is very expensive, in the governance committee view it would be better to separate these functions. Forming a smaller BOD that would oversee the corporate matters of the student association and keep council the way it is but without having the liability of it attached to it. What this means is council would still go on the way it does, but the BOD would be responsible for financial and corporate oversight. Acknowledge the difficulty for a group this size to keep tabs on all of these financial situations.

Ziad also notes that the GSA this year has the opportunity to make real changes, they have a great council and noted the great discussion each time. Also acknowledged the experience governance committee. They had discussion on multiple issues. They have a large committee in terms of number of people, there was discussion amongst executives how efficient is this to have this size? Should they combine positions or not? Alternate views noted the more work. Zia researched and noted that they are the biggest executive committee of all u15 universities. The potential to combine finance as well as combine student affairs and academic into one position. This is a discussion, haven't made a decision. Collecting information of this for review at the committee meeting.

He also notes that financial issues are important and they need to be professional in terms of managing finance, they need a certified bookkeeper to help this. Combining positions will help generate some money and this will ensure the sustainability of the organization. The idea behind combining positions to take organization a step forward and to have more professional organization. The GSA may not be lucky every year with having such a good VP Finance and by having processes in place will help.

Another less time sensitive is whether or not they need three documents or if constitution and by-laws can be combined.

Chair added that they are opening these few ideas for discussion and the intention is to have some broader consultation in January with the membership. Governance committee is very dedicated to meeting frequently. If there are any changes this would be served by the special AGM.

Opened the floor for questions and comments. They want feedback to know if it's a good idea

Question: what are the costs of having a bookkeeper to manage the finances? At the moment they don't know the time it would take. Estimate is a few thousand a year.

Ziad added that they don't have an exact figure, they are talking about a part time bookkeeper 5-6000 a year.

Will continue this discussion later. Assuming the silence and no questions means proceed and continue. Is it worth a month of work and 5 meetings if there's no support.

Comment: Noted that this is a good way to move forward. To move forward and to form an opinion would need more information but they are receptive to the idea.

Question: This issue has been raised in a committee meeting, it's going to put a lot of pressure on the student who is the bookkeeper? Notes that it will be a lot of pressure on the student. chair noted that they are investigating how much time is spent on each roles and what sort of workload this would look like.

Ziad is looking at a document team to see how many hours each position requires. And to find the overlap between the positions and collecting the information to comprise one document. If the GNC also had an appendix in the final proposal this would help. Ziad noted that this is not just about moving saving, but how proficient they are. It might be hard to manage the finances when they don't have formal training. They are taking risk by having the finances managed by a group who has not enough formal training in finances. The goal is to protect this important liability and responsibility and ensure is done correctly.

Another question: Issue noted that this doesn't relate to hiring a bookkeeper. The problem is why VP operations and VP finance would merge? They have a large role, communications, taking care of the commons etc.

Chair notes: Wouldn't want to underestimate the work put into this and that this is one of the most challenging issues that GSA face to ensure there is enough time to balance the duties and being a student. This would be done by having the roles appropriate, what can be moved out of these portfolios while still maintaining the executive oversight. I/e bookkeeping adds a level of control which will also help.

Question: is it worthwhile to look at other universities? How about talking to them to see what the time looks like ?

Chair notes that he's seen a number of frameworks across the country, and this comes up quite often. The thing that GSA have grown a lot over the last decade because the grad student population has grown. Other schools are managing multiple million dollar budgets. That a lot of GSA have done is that many of the executive are full time executive and part time students (not perhaps ready for this at Usask now) but this is a future consideration because it will likely get more challenging.

Question: As these things are being considered, how it would be helpful to mitigate costs, they also think the money spent on bookkeeper seems like an incredibly small price to pay for responsible financial difficulty. Can empathize with how difficult it would be to manage this

without experience. The help of having a trained professional would likely help this. chair noted that this is a great point and that the operating budget is about ¼ ,million.

Comment: Noted that she wants a more detailed plan for what a VP Finance and VP Operation would look like role wise. Notes that its too early.

Chair commented that this is brought forward early so that they can work towards something council is supportive and that makes a recommendation that makes sense. Governance committee will take this discussion back to its next meeting. Will come back to council with something more concrete on paper.

10. CALL FOR A FEBRUARY SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING

The motion is written, and that the exact date and time will TBD. The rationale is distributed in advance.

Zia and Jalene

Chair notes that there are no questions or comments.

1 abstention

Carries

11. OTHER BUSINESS OR ANNOUCEMENTS

Ziad announced that this Friday 16th there is a social event (a holiday social) which starts at 6:30pm. There will be a workshop on December 19th regarding anti racism, you are invited to this.

Chair noted that the next meeting is schedule Tuesday January 31 at 5pm.

Council moved in Camera at 6:58pm

Council then convened *in camera*. 6:58 pm

Council adjourned at 7:25