



University of Saskatchewan - Graduate Students' Association
GSA Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
March 30, 2022 – In Person
6:45 PM – 7:30 PM

The GSA operates on Treaty 6 Territory and the Homeland of the Métis Nation. We pay our respect to the First Nations and Métis ancestors of our gathering place and reaffirm our relationship with one another.

Present: Rifat Zahan (President), Ehsan Moradi (Vice-President Finance and Operations), Mostofa Kamal (Vice-President Academic and Student Affairs), Devin Cherneski (Vice-President External Affairs).

Regrets/Absent: None

Guests: N/a

1. Call to Order / Opening Remarks

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM by GSA *President Zahan*.

2. Approval of the Agenda

President Zahan asked whether there were any amendments to the agenda as circulated. There was no amendment.

Motion: To approve the current agenda

Moved: VP Academic and Student Affairs

Seconded: VP External Affairs

***Vote: All in Favour,
Motion Carried.***

3. Approval of the last Executive Meeting Minutes

President Zahan asked whether there were any amendments to the last executive meeting minutes as circulated. VP External Affairs indicated draft minutes were distributed to the executive for proofreading. Minutes were from March 1, 2022.

Motion: To approve executive meeting minutes from March 1, 2022.

Moved: VP Academic and Student Affairs

Seconded: VP External Affairs

***Vote: All in Favour,
Motion Carried.***

4. Items for decision

4.1 To approve the final date for the 2022 GSA Annual Awards Ceremony.

Motion: To approve the date for the 2022 GSA Annual Awards Ceremony at April 13, starting at 5:00 pm.

Moved: VP External Affairs

Seconded: VP Academic and Student Affairs

***Vote: All in Favour,
Motion Carried.***

5. Items for Discussion

5.1 Monthly budget update – The VP of Finance and Operations forwarded an updated GSA budget forecast spreadsheet for the executive members to review.

5.2 GSA Annual Awards Ceremony 2022 – The VP of External Affairs and the President discussed the upcoming GSA annual awards ceremony that will be at the GSA Commons on Wednesday,

April 13th, 2022. The executives plan to invite all winners from the annual awards, 3MT competition, and Sustainability Committee photo-voice competition. Plans are in place with the evening schedule, Emcee, and speeches from winners and senior leaders. We discussed the number of invitees and will only invite up to 50 people as we gradually reopen from the pandemic. Our executive discussed our potential invitee list and will finalize plans when the next Awards Committee has meeting, including food and beverages. The VP of External Affairs discussed having an elderly person say a prayer and land acknowledgement at the event. President Zahan indicated she would contact Dr. Angela Jaime, Vice-Provost, Indigenous Engagement to discuss having a representative from one of the Elders attend the awards ceremony or someone they recommend.

5.3 3MT Thesis Competition – The VP of Academic and Student Affairs discussed the upcoming 3MT event held online this coming Friday, April 1, 2022. There are over 52 abstract submissions with everything ready to go on the agenda, including equipment and volunteers. The event will start at 10:00 a.m. with opening remarks and competition rules, including any questions. The Dean from the College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (CGPS) will attend from noon until 2:00 pm and give a brief speech. The VP of Academic and Student Affairs indicated that the 3MT judges would come from diverse academic backgrounds, i.e., social sciences, law, computer science, etc. VP Kamal noted that he would continue to network to find more judges and backups. The deadline to decide winners was discussed for around Monday, April 11th.

5.5 GSA Contribution to the Need base bursary

The VP Finance and Operations suggested that GSA contribute to the GSA bursary by 40,000 CAD from reserve fund that is accumulated from past years remaining budget. He mentioned that now we are in the post-Covid recovery period, and it could help at least 40 students to keep their research advances. VP Moradi continued that this motion should go to the Budget Committee after executives' approval and then to the AGM, so that the next executive committee be able to use the extra money to support more graduate students.

Motion: To approve withdrawal of 40,000 CAD from reserve fund to contribute to the GSA Bursary

Moved: VP Finance and Operations

Seconded: VP Academic and Student Affairs

***Vote: All in Favour,
Motion Carried.***

5.7 GSA's Stand Against Tuition Hikes

When the university is reopening following the global pandemic, the graduate students at the University of Saskatchewan are seeing hikes in their tuition, even though not all the students have recovered from the financial, mental, and emotional stress of the pandemic yet. Specially, increasing standard thesis-based Masters tuition fees for international students is not really feasible at this post-pandemic time.

The tuition increase projection presented by College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (CGPS) translates to a 21.55% more tuition fees for students to pay during 2023-2024 academic year compared to 2020-2021 academic year. On the other hand, international students enrolled in the standard priced Masters program will see 8.6%, 26%, 48.83%, 56.27% more tuition fees during 2021-2022, 22-23, and 23-24 academic year compared to 2020-2021 academic year.

The university's decision to approach the U15 standard in terms of tuition fees is not realistic given the fact that there exists variation in terms of student experiences, funding packages, and financial support in other U15 universities. Canada's economy is heavily benefitted from the innovation of the research work conducted by international graduate students, as low tuition rate, and good funding package attracts more international students in this country. With the proposed tuition increase in the next few years, the GSA is afraid that the province of Saskatchewan will be behind other U15 universities in terms of innovation and socio-economic development.

The GSA strongly supports this freezing of tuition once a student starts their academic program when scholarship/stipend does not increase the same way tuition rate increases in the following years.

5.8 GSA Honorary Lifetime Membership to Reggie

GSA Constitution permits the naming of an Honorary Lifetime Member which is purely symbolic. Such a position shall be awarded by a majority vote at a General Meeting.

Reggie Nyamekye spent her valuable time to guide the transitioned GSA Chair and Vice-Chair. She also made her available for any volunteer opportunities at GSA, whenever needed.

Motion: Reggie be made an honorary lifetime member in recognition of her diligence, dedication, and years of service to the GSA

Moved: President

Seconded: VP Academic and Student Affairs

***Vote: All in Favour,
Motion Carried.***

6. Closed Session

7 Adjournment of Meeting – President Zahan motioned to adjourn the executive meeting in April 2022.

Motion: To adjourn the meeting at 7:30 PM

Moved: VP Academic and Student Affairs

Seconded: VP External Affairs

***Vote: All in Favour,
Motion Carried.***

The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 PM.