



Graduate Students' Association

Summer Council meeting minutes

University of Saskatchewan-Graduate Students' Association (GSA)

Wednesday, August, 2025; 17:00-19:00

Meeting Location: Inperson (GSA Commons)

“As Council gathers, we acknowledge that we are on Treaty 6 Territory and the Homeland of the Métis. We pay our respect to the First Nations and Métis ancestors of our gathering place and reaffirm our relationship with one another.”

Appendix: See appendix A

Chair: Shaily Tandekar

(Recording secretary was absent)

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 5:14 pm. The Chair, began by introducing herself and acknowledging the land, recognizing Treaty 6 territory and the Métis homeland. She then continued to welcome members to the meeting and introduced the meeting format.

Approval of the agenda

Motion: (Palash/ Portia): That the agenda be approved as circulated.

Rules and Regulation

The Chair outlined the procedures based on Robert's Rules of Order. She then explained the voting protocols. She emphasized respect and decorum.

Agenda: Election of GSA Recording secretary

She outlined the roles and responsibilities of a Recording Secretary as enshrined in the GSA Bylaws 1.16. She then introduced all the contestant for the Recording Secretary position as follows: Kelly Heinemann, Roana Facanha da Silva Leite, Nooshin Jannati, Marziyeh Hassani Sangani, Leili Rouhi, Aiminayanate Pepple, Adriana Pita Chopin, Hamid Yari, Rahul Kumar Yadav and Manpreet Singh.

All candidates for the position were given the opportunity to introduce themselves to the assembly, outline their reasons for contesting, and share their aspirations as well as relevant experiences.

Following the introductions, the house proceeded to vote, and Aiminayanate Pepple was elected with a total of 8 votes.

Agenda: GSA executive reports

President

The President provided an update on activities from June to August. Key highlights included:

1. Collaboration with the Student Recruitment Team to enhance engagement with new graduate students through events, videos, and tours.
2. Ongoing planning of an Anti-Racism Symposium with campus partners, proposed for the fall.

3. Notification from the University Governance Office regarding the implementation of a 1% administrative fee on GSA student fees.
4. Discussions with the university on tuition payment options and financial sustainability for graduate students.
5. Exploration of collaborations with the University Library to promote graduate research visibility.
6. Development of a GSA website page and newsletter feature to highlight graduate student research and life stories.
7. Upcoming meeting with a Federal MP to discuss advocacy priorities, with Councillors invited to provide input.
8. Advocacy for graduate student representation on the University's Board of Governors.
9. Continuation of childcare advocacy efforts to establish a GSA childcare facility.
10. Plans to meet with Saskatoon Transit regarding a potential spring/summer U-Pass option.
11. A new format for the GSA Orientation, led by the VP Academics, with a focus on creating a more engaging experience for incoming students.
12. He concluded with the number of meetings he has attended.

Concerning the 1% administrative fee on GSA student fees, Matthew Chapelski, from the College of Kinesiology Graduate Society, asked if the 1% fee will increase going forward or if a backpay will be required. He also asked if the President had any idea what the interest fee could be for tuition payment plan. The President responded that the Provost's Office has just made GSA aware of the situation, and that we will provide further communication as more information becomes available. He opined that at this time; our position is not to agree to pay fees that were not collected by the University. Matthew commended GSA for the Life stories, proposed changes to HARVEST.

Portia Mohrbutter from the Biology Grad Students Association, asked about the meeting date with the Federal MP and the deadline for the grad student submission of feedback. The President responded that the meeting was scheduled for Wednesday, August 28, at 1:00 PM and that we expect receive input from grad student by August 27.

Another member asked how often the GSA expects to hold council meeting and asked if the functionality of the U15 archives and how different it is from the Interlibrary loan. The president responded that at least once in a month. He also added that yes, the functionality of the U15 archives and the Interlibrary loan are different in his opinion.

Vice President Finance and Operation

The VP Finance and Operations was in absentia. The President read her report. He provided an update on activities from July to August. Key highlights included:

1. GSA-CGPS Need-Based Bursary: 34 recipients were awarded bursaries from the Spring-Summer call, with 216 applications received. The Fall Term call will be announced in September, with the remaining 76 bursaries distributed during the fall and winter terms. Analysis of recent data indicated 69% of applicants were master's students and 31% PhD, with 59% of bursary recipients being master's and 41% PhD.
2. 2024 Audit Completion: The finalized audit for the 2023–2024 fiscal year was completed in June 2025 and approved by the GSA Executives. The audit was favourable, with no major concerns, though it noted higher-than-typical accounts payable due to delayed vendor payments between January 2023 and April 2024. All outstanding debts have since been paid, and the GSA is in good standing with vendors. Council was advised that the 2024 audit may reflect over-inflated assets, which will be corrected in the 2025 financial statements.
3. GSA Events Survey: A July survey with 180 respondents identified top student-preferred events, including free professional headshots, a research conference, financial literacy sessions, health and dental plan information sessions, and movie nights. Upcoming financial literacy workshops will cover budgeting (October), saving and investing (February), and taxes (March).

Vice President Academic and Student Affairs

The VP Academic and Student Affairs provided updates on activities and upcoming initiatives.

Highlights included:

1. 2025 Fall Orientation: Scheduled for September 10, 2025, at the GSA Commons, this year's event will feature a relaxed drop-in format with booths from key campus units and services. Councillors were asked to secure at least three volunteers from their departments to support the event.
2. Ratification of Academic Councils and Social Clubs: Councils and clubs must re-ratify annually (September–August). A call for ratification will open in early September, and all are encouraged to submit packages promptly.
3. Graduate Opportunities Workshop (GSA–USSU Collaboration): Scheduled for September 12, 2025, the workshop will provide undergraduates with information on graduate studies and feature peer mentorship roundtables. Twelve graduate students have volunteered to date, with a target of at least 20 volunteers. Councillors and members were encouraged to participate.

Following the report by Vice President Academic and Student Affairs, Portia Mohrbutter from the Biology Grad Students Association, asked if grad students will receive email notification when the call for ratification is opened. Mandela responded affirmatively and noted that notifications will be sent by email as well as through the GSA Newsletter.

Vice President External Affairs

The VP External Affairs was absent so President read his report. Highlights included:

1. GSA Research Feature Series: New initiative to highlight graduate research and stories via GSA platforms; two students featured so far, more encouraged to participate.
2. Meeting with Federal MP: Upcoming meeting to discuss advocacy priorities (funding, housing, immigration); councillors invited to suggest additional topics.
3. GSA Orientation – Social Media Engagement: VP External to enhance online presence for Sept 10, 2025 Orientation through promotions and coverage; suggestions for boosting reach welcomed.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:49 p.m. (Mandela/Mary)

Academic Council	Name of Councilors and (alternates)	June 2025	July 2025	Aug 2025
Biology Graduate Student Association	Portia Mohrbutter Ayicia Nabigon (Alternate)	P	P	P
Chemistry Course Council	Marco Justino Loza Taghavi (Alternate) Ozra	A	A	A
College of Medicine Graduate Students Society – Biochemistry, microbiology & Immunology	Andy Kim - Councilor Shirley Yu - Councilor Samiul Chowdhury - Councilor Sara Dalkilic - Councilor Rylan Bahrey (Alternate) Adrielle Souza (Alternate)	A	A	A
Computer Science Graduate Council (CSGC)	Thulani Hewavithana Norah Ridley Mary Fidelma Ndupu Mumtahina Ahmed (Alternate)	P	P	P
Engineering Graduate Community Council (EGCC) – Biological	Sumana Majumder	P	A	A

	Emmanuel Ezechinyelu (Alternate)			
Engineering Graduate Community Council (EGCC) – Biomedical	Danyil Dmytriiev Bashu Gautam (Alternate)	P	P	A
Engineering Graduate Community Council (EGCC) – Chemical	Parvaneh Koranian Sara Nath (Alternate)	A	A	A
Engineering Graduate Community Council (EGCC) – Civil, Geological & Environmental	Anukul Basnet Bashu Gautam (Alternate)	A	A	A
Engineering Graduate Community Council (EGCC) – Electrical & Computer	Deepa Upadhyaya Subedi Bashu Gautam (Alternate)	A	P	A
Engineering Graduate Community Council (EGCC) – Mechanical	Kiranbir Kaur Faizan Ansari (Alternate)	P	A	A
English Course Council	Lydie Hua Gwen Rose (Alternate)	A	A	A
Geography & Planning Graduate Council	Emily Ireland Prakash Sapkota (Alternate)	P	P	A
Kinesiology Graduate Student Council	Matthew Chapelski Karissa Johnson (Alternate)	P	P	P

Nursing Graduate Student Association (NGSA)	Jordan Sherstobitoff Ewurabena Sacky-Forson Hayen Chei Luri (Alternate) Stella Aluko (Alternate) Kristen Witter (Alternate)	P	A	A
Plant Science	Luke Dojack (Rodensky Teramene)	P	P	P
Physical Therapy Student Society (PTSS)	Patrick Janzen-Brown Taya Stang (Alternate)	P	P	A
SENSSA	Jethro Opara Chelsea Ohenewaa Nyarko (Alternate)	A	P	A
School of Public Health (SPHSA)	Wasim Al-Khanati Omar Bardouh Theresa Agbeyei Isfar Chowdhry (Alternate)	P	P	A
Sociology GSA	Meaghan Boily Leah PHouseman (Alternate)	P	P	A
Soil Science Graduate Student Association	Andrea Cline Chloe Canning (Alternate)	P	P	A

	Levi Lundell			
Animal and Poultry Science GSA	Megan Dubois Gus Halibert (Alternate)	A	P	A
Toxicology Graduate Student Association (TGSA) Academic Councilor	Chantel De Lange Summer Selinger (Alternate)	P	A	A
History Graduate Student Association	Catlin M. Woloschuk	A	A	A
Physics & Engineering Physics (PEGASUS)	Jeisson A. Vanegas Carranza Nicholas Simonson	P	A	A
Johnson Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy Student Association	Harjot Tur-harjot Bazal Khalid (Alternate)	A	A	A

Executive member	Name of executive member	June 2025	July 2025	August 2025
Exec. President	Palash Roy	-	-	P
Exec. VP Finance and Operations	Lindsay Carlson	P	P	A
Exec. VP Academic and Student Affairs	Mandela Alema	P	P	P
Exec. VP External Affairs	Biraj Saha	P	P	A
Exec. VP Indigenous Engagement	-	-	-	-