



Graduate Students' Association

June Council meeting minutes

University of Saskatchewan-Graduate Students' Association (GSA)

Thursday, June 19th, 2025; 17:00-19:00

Meeting Location: Online (Zoom)

“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.”

Attendance: See appendix A

Chair: Shaily Tandekar

(The recording secretary was absent)

Call to Order

- Meeting was called to order at 5:20 PM by Chair Shaily Tandekar.
- Quorum was confirmed with 24 members present.

Land Acknowledgement

- The Chair delivered the Treaty 6 Territory and Métis Homeland acknowledgement.

The Chair reviewed meeting procedures:

- Use of Robert's Rules of Order.
- Requirement of mover and seconder for motions.
- Voting procedures (cards or chat).
- Time allocations: 3 minutes per speaker, with reminders.
- Emphasis on professionalism and respect.

Approval of Agenda

- Moved and seconded.
- Motion carried.

Approval of Minutes

a) Motion 1: AGM Minutes – April 30, 2025

- Motion to receive minutes was moved and seconded.
- Motion carried.

b) Motion 2: Executive Minutes – April 9 & 29, 2025

- Motion to receive minutes was moved and seconded.
- Motion carried.

Motion3: Election of Vice Chair

- The Chair outlined the role and responsibilities of the Vice Chair (presiding in absence of Chair, knowledge of bylaws, conducting one training meeting, etc.).

Candidate Introductions

- Clement Abdullah (Community Health & Epidemiology, originally from Ghana, currently in Ghana for data collection until July 15).
- Zinat Akbarzadeh (Plant Sciences, originally from Iran, M.Sc. student, interested in contributing to the GSA).
- Mohammad Shafiqul Islam Khan (Bangladesh, MPA student at Johnson Shoyama School of Public Policy, background in finance, administration, and public service).

Candidate Question & Answer

- Mostofa Kamal asked about candidates' availability, especially Clement's current presence in Ghana. Clement clarified he is abroad only temporarily for thesis data collection and will return July 15.
- Clarification was made that the Vice Chair role is a volunteer (unpaid) position; candidates confirmed their awareness.
- Candidates were asked to elaborate on qualifications, motivations, and goals:
 - *Mohammad Shafiqul Islam Khan* highlighted prior student club involvement, professional memberships, and desire to integrate into Canadian academic culture. He acknowledged needing to review GSA bylaws more thoroughly.
 - *Clement Abdullah* emphasized extensive student leadership experience in Ghana and Germany, aiming to improve council meeting attendance by increasing departmental visibility of GSA representatives. He also referenced his current research on graduate student wellness, health, and racism.
 - *Zinat Akbarzadeh* stressed the importance of inclusive communication, transparency, and fostering a respectful environment, citing prior involvement with student-led clubs.
- Mandela Alema asked follow-up questions:
 - To *Mohammad Shafiqul Islam Khan*: Why his initial remarks focused on personal integration rather than student community contributions, and whether he had reviewed GSA governing documents. Mohammad explained his professional background, club involvement, and acknowledged he had not yet reviewed the bylaws in detail but intended to do so.
 - To *Clement Abdullah*: How he planned to increase meeting attendance. Clement proposed strengthening departmental-level visibility of GSA reps and leveraging his research insights on graduate student wellbeing to encourage participation.
- After Q&A, the Chair confirmed that voting would proceed.
- A secure voting link was circulated in the chat for council members only.

Motion 4: Call for Self-Nominations: VP Indigenous Engagement

- The Chair opened discussion on filling the Vice President Indigenous Engagement position, noting it had remained vacant after both the general election and by-election.
- The Chair stated that according to bylaws, vacant positions may be opened at the next AGM or council meeting.
- Mostofa Kamal raised a point of order, stating that under current bylaws, executive vacancies may only be filled by council if less than four months remain in the term. Otherwise, they must follow the general election process. He argued that proceeding with a self-nomination at this time would violate governing documents.
- The Chair requested that Mostofa provide a screenshot of the relevant bylaw clause for review.

Vice President Indigenous Engagement Vacancy

- Discussion was held on the process for filling the **VP Indigenous Engagement** vacancy.
- **Mostofa Kamal** argued that according to the Constitution and bylaws, an executive vacancy can only be filled by council if less than four months remain in the term. Otherwise, it must follow the general election process.
- **Luke Dojack** suggested that if this is a concern, a motion to amend the bylaws should be considered, but noted that bylaws cannot be amended at a council meeting.
- The **Chair (Shaily Tandekar)** cited **Bylaw 4.8.3.9**, which states:

“If no nomination is received after the extension of the nomination period, the Chief Electoral Officer shall refer the vacant position to the next general meeting or council meeting, whichever comes first, to appoint a graduate student to fill the position until the by-elections.”

- The Chair clarified that this bylaw has already been followed, and the position remains vacant. Therefore, the position is being re-opened for **self-nomination**.
- **Mandela Alema** agreed with the Chair’s interpretation but noted the bylaw specifies “appointment,” seeking clarification on the process.
- The Chair explained that, due to the sensitivity of the VP Indigenous Engagement role, she preferred **self-nomination** from Indigenous students rather than direct appointment. She confirmed the **Elections and Referenda Committee** would oversee the process in line with the bylaws.
- Members agreed that interested students could self-nominate by emailing the GSA.

GSA Executive Reports

a) Vice President Finance and Operations – Lindsay Carlson

- Announced the **Spring/Summer Term GSA Need-Based Bursary** is open. Approximately **\$111,000** will be distributed, with one-third allocated in this call.
- Thanked outgoing **Bursary Selection Committee members** (Vincent, Jessica, Sarah, Mary Portia, and Nixon) for their commitment.
- Reported the GSA has transitioned to **digital invoicing (QBO)** to improve efficiency, record-keeping, and reduce errors.
- Informed council that the **barbecue grills** previously stored in the GSA Commons shed can no longer be stored due to University of Saskatchewan's removal of small structures. Facilities have prohibited indoor storage, outdoor chaining, or new storage structures, and suggested selling the grills and using Marquis Catering instead.
- Expressed concern that this limits services available to councils and sought suggestions for solutions.

Discussion:

- **Mostofa Kamal** suggested verifying with the **fire department** whether storage of grills in the existing storage room could be allowed, noting available space and secure access.
- Lindsay agreed to follow up, as Facilities had not provided clear justification beyond citing fire code.

Discussion on Bursary Distribution

- Mostofa Kamal raised concerns regarding bursary distribution, noting that based on his experience, a disproportionately high percentage of recipients are PhD students, despite Master's students making up a larger share of the graduate population. He requested a report on bursary recipients by program type (Master's vs PhD) for the past five years, if possible.
- VP Finance Lindsay Carlson responded that the bursary rubric was revised in the past year to better prioritize financial need and reduce unfair disadvantages. She confirmed she could provide data for the past year, but not earlier, and would include this in her next report.

Reports from Executives

- **VP Academic and Student Affairs (Mandela Alema):** Presented goals focusing on academic advocacy, funding opportunities, mental health supports, and revitalizing academic/social events. He also reported on attending national stakeholder meetings on student health plans and policy advocacy (mental health, high-cost prescription drugs, and English/French proficiency requirements for work permits).
- **VP External Affairs (Biraj Saha Aronya):** Outlined plans to strengthen engagement with graduate students, highlighted national advocacy campaigns on affordability

and equity, and reported on attending the Canadian Federation of Students meeting and Alumo stakeholder sessions.

Vice Chair- Election Updates

- The Vice-Chair election did not reach quorum (12 votes received). Voting will remain open via email until quorum is reached, after which results will be announced.

Bylaws and Policy Updates

- Mostofa Kamal noted that updates from previous AGMs/Special AGMs have not been reflected in the governing documents. Chair Shaily Tandekar clarified that in the October 2024 Special AGM, only the budget was approved; no bylaw or policy changes were made. Updates from the 2025 AGM are in progress and will be uploaded soon.

Other Business: Presidency Election Update

- VP Finance Lindsay Carlson provided clarification regarding the Presidency election: following the revocation of a candidate's eligibility and subsequent appeal, the matter is under review by the Ethics Committee and Elections & Referenda Committee.
- Chair Shaily Tandekar added that until a final decision is made, Palash Roy will not act as President. VP Finance Lindsay Carlson will assume Presidential duties on an interim basis, as per bylaws.
- Mostofa Kamal suggested seeking legal advice given the complexity of the situation. The Chair noted this suggestion will be taken into consideration.
- Council agreed that the Ethics Committee's report will be shared once a final decision is made.

Adjournment

- The meeting was adjourned at 6:43 PM.

Appendix A

Academic Council	Name of Councilors and (alternates)	June 2025
Biology Graduate Student Association	Portia Mohrbutter Ayicia Nabigon (Alternate)	P
Chemistry Course Council	Marco Justino Loza Taghavi (Alternate) Ozra	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
Computer Science Graduate Council (CSGC)	Thulani Hewavithana Norah Ridley Mary Fidelma Ndupu Mumtahina Ahmed (Alternate)	P
Engineering Graduate Community Council (EGCC) – Biological	Sumana Majumder Emmanuel Ezechinyelu (Alternate)	P
Engineering Graduate Community Council (EGCC) – Biomedical	Danyil Dmytriiev Bashu Gautam (Alternate)	P
Engineering Graduate Community Council (EGCC) – Chemical	Parvaneh Koranian Sara Nath (Alternate)	A

Engineering Graduate Community Council (EGCC) – Civil, Geological & Environmental	Anukul Basnet Bashu Gautam (Alternate)	A
Engineering Graduate Community Council (EGCC) – Electrical & Computer	Deepa Upadhyaya Subedi Bashu Gautam (Alternate)	A
Engineering Graduate Community Council (EGCC) – Mechanical	Kiranbir Kaur Faizan Ansari (Alternate)	P
English Course Council	Lydie Hua Gwen Rose (Alternate)	A
Geography & Planning Graduate Council	Emily Ireland Prakash Sapkota (Alternate)	P
Kinesiology Graduate Student Council	Matthew Chapelski Karissa Johnson (Alternate)	P
Nursing Graduate Student Association (NGSA)	Jordan Sherstobitoff Ewurabena Sacky-Forson Hayen Chei Luri (Alternate) Stella Aluko (Alternate) Kristen Witter (Alternate)	P
Plant Science	Luke Dojack (Rodensky Teramene)	P
Physical Therapy Student Society (PTSS)	Patrick Janzen-Brown Taya Stang (Alternate)	P

SENSSA	Jethro Opara Chelsea Ohenewaa Nyarko (Alternate)	A
School of Public Health (SPHSA)	Wasim Al-Khanati Omar Bardouh Theresa Agbeyei Isfar Chowdhry (Alternate)	P
Sociology GSA	Meaghan Boily Leah PHouseman (Alternate)	P
Soil Science Graduate Student Association	Kelsey Acton Andrea Cline Chloe Canning (Alternate) Levi Lundell	P
Animal and Poultry Science GSA	Megan Dubois Gus Halibert (Alternate)	A
Toxicology Graduate Student Association (TGSA) Academic Councilor	Chantel De Lange Summer Selinger (Alternate)	P
History Graduate Student Association	Catlin M. Woloschuk	A
Physics & Engineering Physics (PEGASUS)	Jeisson A. Vanegas Carranza Nicholas Simonson	P
Johnson Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy Student Association	Harjot Tur-harjot	A

	Bazal Khalid (Alternate)	
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Executive member	Name of executive member	June 2025	August 2025	Oct 2025
Exec. President	-	-		
Exec. VP Finance and Operations	Lindsay Carlson	P		
Exec. VP Academic and Student Affairs	Mandela Alema	P		
Exec. VP External Affairs	Biraj Saha	P		
Exec. VP Indigenous Engagement	-	-		