



We acknowledge that we live and work on Treaty 6 Territory and the homeland of the Métis. We pay our respect to the First Nations and Métis ancestors of this place and reaffirm our relationship with one another.

GSA Meetings on July 3, 17, and 31, 2024

Time: 5:00 pm to 7:00 pm

Attendance: David Ohene-Amoako, Lindsay Carlson, Nickson Joseph, Jennifer Amarualik-Yaremko, Reza Golpayegani

Regret: None

Guest: None

All executives approved all of these actions.

President:

1. Requesting that Nickson the VP of Student Affairs organize a well-engaging orientation for the fall and winter terms, varied from the previous year.
2. Appreciated how the GSA chair and GSA Recording Secretary coordinated the council meeting.
3. Updated executives on the results of his meeting with university authorities about making tuition payments in three installments.
4. Informed the executives of the discussion with the CGPS dean on the daycare establishment which is still in progress and seeking their support in executing that task.
5. Discussed an upcoming conference in the US which he is still following up to see how beneficial to GSA and keep executives updated.

6. College of Agriculture has contacted GSA regarding finding a GSA representative (can be a general member, need not be an executive) to represent graduate students on a committee for the College of Agriculture and Bioresources Dean Review Committee. David with Nickson will contact the GSA Agriculture Council members and ask them to select a student for this task.
7. Discussed the Canadian Federation of Students Conference in Toronto October 6-11.
 - a. Participating is free but flight is at GSA cost.
 - b. Will discuss who will attend later with more details.
8. Provided a recap of GSA Volunteer Recruitment events for executives who could not attend.
 - a. Jen asked what kind of duties these volunteers would be responsible for.
 - b. Asked Reza to create a Whatsapp group for all GSA volunteers.
9. Updated executive board about the applications of new committee members.
10. Reported to the executive board about the CFS Rise conference.
11. suggested making GSA a safe environment for each other by resolving the issues in a professional way.

VP Finance:

1. GSA Executives worked together to contact all GSA council representatives to introduce ourselves and open a line of communication prior to the first council meeting. Lindsay did not receive any responses; and inquired whether any council members replied to other executives' emails. No one received a reply, but council meeting attendance was good.
2. Updated executive board about her meeting with ISSAC about GSA's funding of Travel Awards.
 - a. Lindsay had received complaints from students that they applied for the award and never heard back. However, the website clearly states that only successful applicants will be contacted. Lindsay met with Bassey Bassey of ISSAC, who

shared the following data regarding the dispersal of travel award funding:

Fiscal Year	Number of Grad Students	Amount Paid
May 2021 - Apr 2022	44	\$12,712.92
May 2022 - Apr 2023	200	\$75,039.11
May 2023 - Apr 2024	164	\$65,326.94

- b. Bassey also stated that ISSAC is a few months behind in processing applications, so funding in winter 2024 was delayed. Lindsay asked that 1) ISSAC would contact all applicants to let them know the status of their funding (denied), 2) ISSAC provide better criteria regarding how students are selected for funding (denied). Based on the meeting however, applications are a first-come, first-served basis, and all eligible applicants will be funded until all funds are used.
 - c. Bassey said that nearly half of travel awards are to graduate students, and GSA's entire \$8,500 contribution goes to graduate students.
 - d. Bassey noted that ISSAC plans to increase the amount of funds provided to each student due to inflation (current maximum funding is \$500 for international trips).
3. During the meeting with ISSAC, Lindsay learned that the 2023-2024 GSA Executives failed to remit the budgeted \$8,500 in travel award funding to ISSAC (typically paid at the beginning of fiscal year). Lindsay proposed that GSA pay ISSAC \$17,000 for 2023-2024 and 2024-2025 to fund graduate student travel awards. All executives approved and a cheque will be issued.
 4. Lindsay investigated the GSA contribution to the Crisis Financial Aid program, given that the travel award payment was not made last year. This contribution was made for 2023-2024, and Frank Kusch (Crisis Aid Program Manager) thanks GSA for the support. Frank shared that ~\$600,000 in funds are provided each year, with graduate students receiving approximately half of that total. Lindsay proposed increasing the budget allocation to this program from \$7500 to

\$10000, given the increasing need/economic situation and GSA's inability to house its own crisis financial aid program.

5. Updated executives on efforts to rectify academic council funding for two groups who did not receive their funding last year.
6. Updated executive board about the office manager's salary review process - Lindsay, Jen, and David met with Steve Laycock Compensation Manager in the HR Department at USask. He provided data from the Willis Towers Watson Salary Benchmarking Survey to give us a median and range of Office Manager and Senior Office Manager Salaries across Canada and within Saskatchewan.
7. Reported that the office manager is going to delay his vacation because coordinators are not ready to take charge of all office duties. Paul will work remotely for most of July, only coming into the office when needed, and coordinators will staff the Commons and do daily tasks assigned by Paul.
8. GSA financials overview, discussion of proposed budget changes (updated proposed budget emailed to all executives last week). Major budget item changes include:
 - a. Realistic Commons income (\$10K decrease from the previous budget, but Commons has not brought in \$30K revenue in as many years as Lindsay can tell).
 - b. Removing defunct revenue sources (Cold Beverage Agreement, Notary Service... now an expense code)
 - c. Adding investment and interest income code
 - d. Increasing crisis financial aid contribution to \$10,000
 - e. Increasing funding for academic councils (number based on max possible funding with funding increased to \$6/member [plan to propose in policy/bylaw committee meeting] and current membership values plus some buffer - this value should be reassessed annually).
 - f. Increasing budget allocation for the Gala, as more is typically spent than fundraised.
 - g. Decreasing funding allocated to frequently underspent budget lines (postage, commons coffee, and tea, legal expenses) based on the last 5 years' audit.

- h. Inflation-based increase to the coordinator, chair, recording secretary, and executive fees based on time since the last change.
 - i. Salary increase requested by Paul, final value to be decided by executives at future meetings.
- 9. Lindsay has only received responses from 1 current budget committee member and 2 current bursary selection committee members despite numerous attempts to contact them. Proposed to send the PAWS announcement advertising search for committee members earlier than typical in order to fill these positions before necessary August meetings. All executives agreed.
- 10. Updated executives on the status of the digitization process; direct deposit for coordinators, recording secretary, chair, and executives will be available by the end of July. Wire transfers to Academic Councils, organizations like the Canadian Federation of Students, and Studentcare will be available shortly thereafter.
- 11. Asked to update council meeting dates on the GSA website, as they are not correct.
- 12. Absent the last meeting of July due to field work travel.

VP Academic:

- 1. Discussed the ratification process for council members and changes for this year.
 - a. All ratifications in September rather than scattered throughout the year
 - b. Requirement to submit departmental confirmation of council membership totals
- 2. Update on Fall Orientation..
 - a. The T-shirts will be delivered on July 18.
 - b. Suggestions regarding inviting speakers.
- 3. Asked other executives to give him feedback about his proposed document for Fall Orientation.
- 4. Proposed to meet students at the residence regarding Souris Hall issues.

5. The university is seeking graduate student representation on a committee focused on updating academic misconduct regulations in consideration of AI developments.
 - a. We will suggest a student for that committee
 - i. Two regular GSA members were put forward as possible representatives by Nickson and Lindsay
6. Membership of Grad students from affiliated colleges (i.e., St Thomas More College).
 - a. Follow-up email: two students want to join GSA but the University needs to provide NSID or alternative.
7. Fall Orientation schedule and guest update:
 - a. List of speakers
 - i. All executives will give a speech and introduce themselves.
 - ii. Guest speaker last year was Debby Dean of CGPS.
 - iii. ISSAC representative.
 - iv. USASK Library representative (Katty Ganar was suggested)
 - v. Gordon Oaks Center representative (lari delorm)
 - b. Second section: Information session
 - i. Career services
 - ii. Student Care
 - iii. Student affairs and outreach (Jordan Heartshorn suggested by Reza)
 - c. Departmental Council should also be included (By David)
 - d. The event ends with a launch.
8. GSA 40th Anniversary souvenirs were not discussed so far.
 - a. The executive board decided to put a hold on this matter.

VP Indigenous:

1. Reported to the executive board about her meeting with authorities at the University to discuss deybwewin policy.
2. Discussed executive board and ISSAC trips to Wanuskewin.
3. Mentioned the GSA executive positions are all underfunded for what is expected of us and also do not have enough discretionary funds.

The VP Indigenous Engagement position is especially difficult given other burdens on Indigenous students

4. Proposed that we should improve the GSA onboarding process as we have all been working very hard to find information that should already be easily available to us.
5. Housing problems in the dorms- could help advocate with Nickson for better conditions and a better relationship between GSA, Housing management, residents, and other stakeholders.
 - a. Pest problems in the dorms.
 - b. Ask Consumer Services to find out what they can do.
 - c. We will talk to USSU and Grad students in Souris Hall.
6. Brought up the issue of students asking GSA to make statements on non-local/political issues, and asked the executives to come to an agreement on what should be handled.
 - a. Executives agreed that GSA is an apolitical organization, so it is not necessarily in our mission to be making political statements. This is a slippery slope that may not be in our best interest to do this, because we don't always have a complete understanding of the situation, and people with opposing views may both ask us to make statements.
 - b. Jen suggested that the GSA can promote or support grassroots movements by students if there is a large subset of GSA members participating.
 - c. David suggested that we write a letter of support addressed to the student group who recently contacted us, rather than make a statement about the issue directly.
7. Updated executive board on Souris Hall pests and how they're dealing with it.
 - a. The problem was resolved.
 - b. Suggested to track Staff attitude in consumer services.
8. Suggested beginning a big advertising campaign of some kind to raise awareness about pests with the School of Public Health, MN-S, GSA, USSU, etc.
9. Discussed Faculty In Residence meeting:

- a. Continue the relationship with faculty members at the residence.
- b. Executives are supposed to text Jen for attendance.

VP External:

1. Missed the first meeting in July.
2. Proposed providing more protection for Graduate students' funding through GSA and CGPS.
 - a. Making a student-supervisor agreement an obligation.
3. Moved to support One Health Conference Sponsorship on November 23, and all executives approved.
4. Discussed Pac Representative for GSA with Lauren Heinz.
5. Move to approve meeting minutes of May and June 2024.
6. Suggested to Replace the whiteboard in the executive office with a display.
 - a. Replace it with a TV and HDMI cable on the main desk (All approved) Reza will send an email to Paul to buy it.
7. Proposed adopting a structured approach to managing sponsorships within GSA.