



University of Saskatchewan- Graduate Students' Association

Council Meeting

Wednesday, November 27, 2024; 17:00-19:00

Meeting Location: Online (ZOOM)

AGENDA

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.

Item		Page	Action
1. Call to Order			
2. Approval of Agenda		1	<i>Decision</i>
3. Welcoming the Dean of CGPS		2	<i>Information</i>
4. CFS Membership Benefits Presentation			<i>Information</i>
5. GSA Executives Reports		3-10	
5.1 President's Report			<i>Information</i>
5.2 Vice President External Affairs Report			<i>Information</i>
5.3 Vice President Academic and Student Affairs Report			<i>Information</i>
5.4 Vice President Finance and Operations Report			<i>Information</i>
5.5 Vice President Indigenous Engagement Report			<i>Information</i>
6. Other Business			
7. Adjournment			<i>Decision</i>

Welcoming the Dean of the College of Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies (CGPS)

We are pleased to welcome Dr. Debby Burshtyn, Dean of the College of Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies (CGPS), to the GSA Council meeting on December 18th, 2024.

Dr. Burshtyn brings extensive experience in graduate education and mentorship. Prior to her role at the University of Saskatchewan, she served in numerous leadership positions at the University of Alberta, including as Graduate Coordinator, Associate Dean, Vice-Dean, and Interim Vice-Provost and Dean. Her work has consistently focused on enhancing graduate education, promoting mentorship, and adapting graduate programs to meet evolving career and funding landscapes.

As an advocate for graduate student success, Dr. Burshtyn has led initiatives to improve the quality of graduate programming, design career planning workshops, and develop learning outcomes that connect education to career readiness. Her contributions to the Canadian Association for Graduate Studies (CAGS) Task Force on Excellence in Graduate Programs further reflect her dedication to advancing graduate education nationwide.

This session will provide an opportunity for council members, graduate students, and GSA executives to engage in meaningful dialogue with Dr. Burshtyn. We invite you to ask questions, share your thoughts, and discuss graduate student concerns, programs, and opportunities.

We look forward to hearing from Dr. Burshtyn and fostering a collaborative relationship to strengthen the graduate student experience at the University of Saskatchewan.



University of Saskatchewan Graduate Students' Association
Presented by the GSA President.
Report to the Council: November 2024

Dear Council Members,

"The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams." – Eleanor Roosevelt. As we wrap up the month and the year, it is necessary to believe our dreams and remain focus in working towards them, challenges are inevitable, however our ability to adapt and persevere will lead us to succeed. I am pleased today to present my report for December, the last month of the year 2024.

Toys and Kids Clothe Drive

Following the success of our massive warm clothing drive, we have launched a Toy and Kids' Clothing Drive, which will run through January 2025. This initiative reflects our commitment to supporting student parents and emphasizes GSA's dedication to establishing a daycare center. This facility will provide a nurturing environment for children while enabling parents to focus on their studies and complete their programs within the allotted time.

December 2024 Hangout

The Graduate Students' Association, in collaboration with the Student Wellness Centre and ISSAC, is organising a December Holiday Hangout for students who will be in Saskatoon during the holiday season. This event is a great opportunity to relax, connect, and enjoy the festivities with fellow students. Stay tuned! The dates are 27, 28 and 30th December from 2pm-9pm at the GSA commons.

In wrapping up this eventful month, December has been a time of great engagement and activity, as we bring the year to a close and prepare for the exciting opportunities ahead. From launching impactful initiatives like the Toy and Kids' Clothing Drive hosting the December Holiday Hangout and attending several meetings, the GSA remains committed to fostering a vibrant and supportive community.

As we transition into the new year, let us continue working together with the same unity and determination that have brought us this far. **"The best way to predict the future is to create it."** – Abraham Lincoln.

David Ohene-Amoako
President, Graduate Students' Association
University of Saskatchewan



Dear GSA Councilors,

I am writing to provide you with an update on my November and December activities as the Vice-President External.

1) **GALA 2025**

a. **Awards Application**

Based on the approval received from GSA Awards Committee members. I will open the applications for awards from late December until Feb 1st. There would be no extension for awards applications.

b. **GALA 2025 Council Guests**

Name of GSA council members who are going to be invited to GALA 2025 is shared with the GSA chair which will be shown on the screen. Please let me know if anyone is missing from that list.

c. **GALA 2025 Venue**

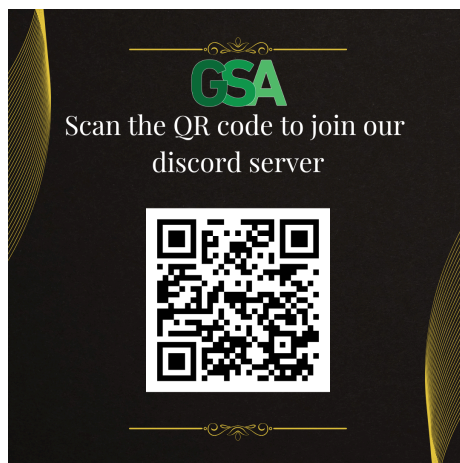
I have already contacted Marquis Hall regarding booking the venue for **April 12th, 2025** and am waiting for their confirmation a deposit of \$500 will be paid to reserve the space for the mentioned date. Marquis Hall has a **capacity of 180 seats** for our guests.

d. **GALA 2025 Souvenir**

I have ordered 500 pens with GSA logo which cost us \$1102.54. 200 of these pens will be used for GALA night, the rest of it will be used in other GSA events like winter orientation, etc.

2) **GSA Discord Server**

I have created a discord server for better communication between GSA members. You can join by scanning the following QR code.



3) Meetings Attended

- 11/27/2024 GSA Council Meeting
- 11/29/2024 GSA Executive meeting with GSA Office Manager
- 12/10/2024 Awards & Scholarships committee meeting
- 12/11/2024 Meeting with Ali Versi (Student Care)
- 12/12/2024 Meeting with Former GSA VP External about GALA 2025
- 12/14/2024 Meeting with Culinary Services for GALA 2025
- 12/17/2024 Meeting with Rachel Fidler for inviting Indigenous Elders to GALA 2025

Please feel free to contact me with questions or concerns.

Thanks,

Reza Golpayegani

He/Him

Vice-President of External Affairs (gsa.external@usask.ca)

M.Sc. Student, Department of Computer Science

University of Saskatchewan



Dear GSA Councilors,

I am writing to update you on my November and December activities as the Vice-President Academic and Student Affairs.

Note: Initiatives and discussions related to confidential matters concerning individual students are not made public.

1) GSA Winter Orientation 2025 Planning

Winter Orientation 2025 is planned to be held on 17th of January 2025 at GSA Commons. Dr. Debby Burshtyn, Dean CGPS is the invited chief guest of the day. There will be a couple of information sessions for the incoming students to expose various facilities of the university to the newcomers. Free lunch and T-shirts will be provided. A survey link (google form) is made and is active for getting a rough estimate of participants.

2) Initiation of Student-Supervisor Agreement Revisions

Efforts were made to reach out to Associate Dean's office at CGPS and university vice-president research's office to initiate a revision for the student-supervisor agreement. Graduate students will be notified shortly, via PAWS and through respective academic councils, to give suggestions that we will need to consider while revising the above-mentioned document.

Meetings Attended

11/29/2024 GSA Executive Meeting

12/03/2024 Meeting with Danyil regarding Social Groups Policy

12/04/2024 Academic Programs Committee Meeting

12/06/2024 Meeting with Dr. Baljit Singh (University Vice President Research)

12/06/2024 Meeting with George Foufas and team (Consumer Services)

12/10/2024 1:1 Meeting with Dr.Jaswant Singh Associate Dean, CGPS

12/11/2024 Graduate Programs Committee Meeting

12/11/2024 Meeting with Ali Versi, Student Care (Annual Claims Report)

Meetings to attend in rest of December

12/18/2024 Graduate Academic Affairs Committee Meeting

12/18/2024 Academic Programs Committee Meeting

12/18/2024 GSA Bursary Selection Committee Meeting

12/18/2024 GSA Tuition Consultation Meeting

12/11/2024 Meeting with Dr.Jerome Cranston, Vice Provost Students and Learning

12/18/2024 University Council Meeting

Please feel free to contact me with questions or concerns.

Thanks,

Nickson Joseph

Vice-President Academic and Student Affairs

Graduate Students' Association

University of Saskatchewan



Dear GSA Councilors,

I am writing to provide you with an update on early December news, as the Vice-President Finance and Operations.

1) Fall 2024 GSA-CGPS Need-Based Bursary Deadline Extended

Due to lack of availability of the Bursary Selection Committee to meet, the deadline for the Fall Need-Based Bursary was extended to December 8. The committee met on December 18 to review applications, and successful applicants will be contacted on December 19. Bursaries will be distributed electronically before the new year.

2) UPass Opt-Out

The UPass opt-out application is now open through January 17, 2025. Students who are eligible to opt out should fill out the application as soon as possible. Students must opt out every term. GSA has received student feedback that the opt-out criteria is not representative of student needs, and we are in discussions with SaskTransit and USSU about possible changes. We want to clarify that GSA does not exclusively control these criteria, but these are resultant from a long-standing agreement between GSA, USSU, and SaskTransit which may not be easy to change rapidly without major agreement renegotiations.

Meetings Attended

10/22/2024 GSA Executive Meeting
10/28/2024 Office Manager Meeting
12/16/2024 Data Storage Meeting
12/18/2024 Bursary Selection Committee Meeting

As always, please feel free to contact me with questions or concerns.

Regards,

Lindsay G. Carlson (she/her)

VP Finance and Operations, Graduate Students' Association (GSA)

PhD Candidate, Department of Biology

University of Saskatchewan

Represented GSA at:

- Several networking and professional development opportunities in Ottawa at the ArcticNet 2024 conference from December 7-14, including personnel from SSHRC, NSERC, PHAC, the Office of the Chief Science Advisor to the Canadian Federal Government, as well as people from various Arctic research organizations in Canada
- CGPS Faculty Council meeting, November 28
- a meeting with the Student Wellness Centre, December 5
- a meeting with the University's Consumer Services division, December 6
- a meeting with Rachel Fiddler clarifying what protocols need to be followed for Elders to attend the 2025 GSA Gala on December 17

Future strategies and things to continue working on:

My thanks goes to Nickson, the VPAS, for organizing the Diversity Committee's first beginnings of a meeting this academic year. We will meet in January sometime.

Organizing respectful Indigenous representation at the 2025 GSA Gala. I have learned from the mistakes of previous years and intend to ensure that the GSA upholds its commitments to the First Peoples of this area in all its doings.

Work continues on building and maintaining relationships with the groups on campus, and I have set up connections with the Provost's office as well as the (very small!) Jewish community that we have here.

Daycare: Unfortunately, there has been little progress. Finding funding for a daycare on campus is entirely a full time job in researching funding needs and writing grant applications, as well as coordinating with government entities on what they need to see from the resources we have available. The GSA does not have those resources, but the federal government does.

Anti-racism authority initiative update: the USSU is drafting a full report on the general needs of students who are facing difficulty in academic work or who are in a personal crisis. It is also assessing those needs in terms of what the University is offering in answer to those needs. My idea for a middle way to address racism on campus kind of got folded into a bigger call for an authority on campus that mediates issues. This will have to be separate from the advocacy bodies that the GSA and USSU were originally meant to be- and because this is a small part of a bigger issue, fixing my small issue alone will not be as effective as fixing the gap in university infrastructure. Fixing that bigger gap is hard to do and must be done with care, and as such, progress is slow.