

UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN



Graduate Students' Association

AGENDA PACKAGE

Council Meeting

Wednesday, January 28, 2025; 17:00

Meeting Location: GSA Common

Online: Zoom

Graduate Students' Association

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.

NO	ITEM	ACTION	PAGE
1	Call to order		1
2	Approval of GSA Council meeting minutes ↳ December Council Meeting	Decision	2-6
3	Decision on 2026-2027 Health and Dental Fee	Information	
4	Motion to approve a 5% increase to both the Health and Dental Plan Fees for the 2026-2027 academic year	Decision	
5	Decision on 2026-2027 GSA Fee	Information	
4	Motion to approve a 5% increase to GSA Fee for the 2026-2027 academic year.	Decision	
5	GSA executive reports a. President b. Vice President Finance and Operation c. Vice President Student Affairs d. Vice President Indigenous Engagement e. Vice President External	Information	7-15
	Other matters: Discussion on committee meeting attendance		
6	Adjournment		

December Council Meeting Minutes

University of Saskatchewan-Graduate Students' Association (GSA)

Wednesday, December 17th, 2025; 17:00-19:00

Meeting Location: Online (Zoom)

"As Council gathers, we acknowledge that we are on Treaty C 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

Council Chair: Clement Abdallah

Vice Chair: Shamsuddeen Ma'aruf

Recording Secretary: Aiminayanate Pepple

a. Call to Order

- Clement Abdallah welcomed every council member. The meeting was called to order at 5:18 PM.
- A land acknowledgment was observed, recognizing Treaty 6 territory and the Métis homeland.

b. Rules and Regulations

Clement Abdallah briefed council members on the:

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

c. Approval of Agenda

The chair asked for the approval of the meeting agenda.

Mover: Palash Roy

Seconded by: Luke Dojack

Yes: 17

No: 0

Abstention: 0

Motion carried.

d. Motion 1: Approval of GSA Council Meeting Minutes

✓ **November 26, 2025, Council Meeting**

Mover: Shreya Tiwary

Seconded by: Mary-fidelma Ndupu

Yes: 17

No: 0

Abstention: 0

Motion carried.

e. Resignation of the Vice-President External

- The president, Palash Roy, informed the council about the resignation of the VP External, Biraj Saha, after 7 months of service with immediate effect on December 1st, 2025.
- Resignation was based on conflicting schedules.
- Suny Bui was recommended by the executives to be appointed as the new VP External due to time constraints and the inability to conduct a By-election.

f. Motion 2: To Appoint SUNNY BUI as Vice-President External Affairs

- Sunny Bui won the election with 14 votes as the new GSA Vice-President External Affairs.

Graduate Students' Association

g. GSA Executives Reports

➤ **President – Palash Roy**

- The USSU has agreed to manage the spring-summer transit pass for graduate students on behalf of the GSA, with the option to opt out.
 - ❖ In view of this, the GSA hopes to communicate to graduate students in due time about the cost and duration of the transit pass.
- The president recognized the effort of Lindsay, the VP Finance, for the successful annual audit of the current fiscal year and the proper maintenance of records through her years of service in the GSA.
 - ❖ The GSA, through its banking partner, RBC, is seeking to engage in short-term and low-risk investment options with a proposed start date in January 2026.
- The GSA, in discussion with the President's Executive Committee, aims to organize EDI toolkits for the campus community.

- The GSA, in collaboration with Student Health and Wellbeing, the Sustainability Committee, the International Students and Study Abroad Centre, and the University of Saskatchewan Students' Union, will host the annual Holiday Hangout for students.

➤ **Vice-President Finance and Operations – Lindsay Carlson**

- The GSA annual audit has been completed for the year 2025.
 - ❖ Details of the financial report will be posted on the GSA website.
 - ❖ Continuation of audit service with Buckberger Baerg & Partners LLP.
- The GSA's organized low-cost professional portrait was successful with 67 students in attendance.
- VP Finance voted on the following issues:
 - ❖ Against the proposed increase of fees regarding late registration, late payment of tuition, and rescheduling of final examinations in the fee review committee.
 - ❖ Balance of international and domestic students to the national NSERC competition within the scholarship and awards committee.

➤ **Vice-President Student and Academic Affairs - Mandela Alema**

- The annual Holiday Hangout will be organized for students by the GSA in collaboration with the USSU, ISSAC, Office of Sustainability and Student Wellness Centre from the 29th - 30th of December 2025.
- The GSA is set to launch an intramural sports team in the Winter 2026 with the aim to encourage students' well-being and social involvement.
 - ❖ The sport activity will begin with basketball, volleyball, and futsal (indoor soccer).
 - ❖ Graduate students are encouraged to apply using this link
<https://forms.office.com/pages/responsepage.aspx?id=0GyrJH5Ikebw9qcQjJ3bBuNyrSOKFBns1IDZV3O2BUNIQ0STRKREpRRzZXMDBBRjJGNEZTV1VPMi4u&route=shorturl>

➤ **Vice-President Indigenous - Laila Valila**

- The VP Indigenous attended the CFS Conference and the following motions were voted on:
 - ❖ Removal of the English language exam for international students following graduation.
 - ❖ National strike against graduate pay-rates.
 - ❖ Changes in CFS core services.
- GSA aims to increase communication and advertisements of CFS services.
- The VP acknowledges involvement in the USSU/GSA Anti-Racism Symposium held on the 19th of November 2025.
- Invitation has been extended to campus Indigenous and non-Indigenous groups regarding the upcoming Indigenous Career Fair and Intercultural Exchange.

- The VP in discussion with the CGPS Faculty advocated for more funding for course-based programs.

h. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 5:52 pm by Clement Abdallah.

Appendix A

	Academic Council	Councillor	December 2025
1	Agricultural and Resource Economics Graduate Students' Society	Councilor – Aminata Ba Alternate – Cornelius Mensah	P
2	Animal and Poultry Science Graduate Students' Association	Councilor - Megan Dubois Alternate - Beatriz Montenegro	P
3	Biology Graduate Students' Association	Councilor - Portia Mohrbutter Alternate - Laura Dyson	P
4	Chemistry Course Council	Councilor - Shreya Tiwary Alternate - Segun Liyansan	P
5	College of Medicine Graduate Student Society (CMGSS)	Councilor 1 - Griffin Lehnert Alternate 1 - Christopher Chivers	A
		Councilor 2 - Amber Jurke Alternate 2 - Hetvi Darji	A
6	College of Kinesiology Graduate Society	Councilor - Sunny Bui Alternate - Karissa Johnson	P
7	Computer Science Graduate Council (CSGC)	Councilor - Md Shamimur Rahman Alternate - Mary-fidelma Chioma Ndupu	P
8	Education Graduate Students Association (EGSA)	Councilor - Kiegan Lloyd Alternate – Rumpa Banik	A
9	Engineering Graduate Community Council (EGCC)	Councilor 1 - Farzana Haque Reeti Alternate 1 - Binod Sapkota	A
		Councilor 2 - Adit Raj Chalise Alternate 1 - Corwyn Shomachuk	P
10	English Course Council	Councillor - Hamid Yari Alternate - Jasmine Redford	A
11	Geography and Planning Graduate Student Council (GEPL)	Councilor - Emily Ireland Alternate - Prakash Sapkota	P
12	History Graduate Student Association	Councilor - Jessy Lee Saas Alternate - Julia-Rose Miller	P
13	Nursing Graduate Students Association	Councilor - Kirsten Witter Councilor - Aja Tost	A

14	Physics and Engineering Physics Graduate Association of Students at University of Saskatchewan (PEGASUS)	Councilor - Jeisson Vanegas Alternate - Mona Zolghadrshojaee	A
15	Plant Science Graduate Students' Association (PSGSA)	Councilor 1 - Luke Dojack Alternate 1 - Makenna Mitchell	P
		Councilor 2 - Giri Raj Paudel Alternate 2 - Sachinthya Attanayake	P
16	School of environment and Sustainability Student Association	Councilor 1 - Nelly Ataawomba Afuubi Alternate 1 - Jethro Opara	A
		Councilor 2 - Jabed Chowdhuary Alternate 2 - Anas Ansari	A
17	Sociology Graduate Students Association	Councilor - Meaghan Boily Alternate - Leah Houseman	P
18	Soil Science Graduate Students Association	Councilor - Nemat Dindarloo Alternate - Levi Lundell	P
19	The School of Public Health Students' Association (SPHSA)	Councilor 1 - Motajo Modupeoluwa Olakunle	A
		Councilor 2 - Angelica Caresse Uy Alternate - Sun Thai	A
20	Toxicology Graduate Student Association	Councilor - Chantel De Lange Alternate - Catherine Roberts	A

Executive member	Name	December 2025
Executive President	Palash Roy	P
Exec. VP Finance and Operations	Lindsay Carlson	P
Exec. VP Academic and Student Affairs	Mandela Alema	P
Exec. VP External Affairs	Sunny Bui	P
Exec. VP Indigenous Engagement	Laila Valila	P

EXECUTIVE REPORTS

President:

Dear GSA Councilors,

I am pleased to provide you with an update on my activities as President over the months of December and January. Below, I highlight recent initiatives, accomplishments, and our upcoming priorities.

GSA Transit Pass

Since our last update, we have continued our efforts to engage with transit services, though progress has been slower during the holiday period. We've managed to establish communication and are scheduled for another meeting regarding potential changes to our fees and the possibility of holding a referendum to add a spring/summer bus pass. If the referendum passes, we expect the spring/summer pass to be available to graduate students starting in spring 2027. We will continue to keep you updated as we move forward with this process.

GSA Childcare Initiative

Thanks to the support of CGPS, we have secured CAD 1,000 to develop a childcare business proposal, a much-needed initiative. We are currently in discussions with the Interim Vice Provost of Students and Learning to determine how best to utilize this funding. Our plan is to collaborate with the Edwards School of Business to develop a comprehensive proposal and offer honoraria to those involved in the process. We aim to have the proposal finalized in the coming months.

GSA & Education Minister Everett Hindle

We continue to work on scheduling a meeting with our provincial Education Minister, Everett Hindle, to discuss the challenges faced by graduate students in Saskatchewan, including issues surrounding childcare. We are awaiting confirmation and will keep you updated on the outcome of this important conversation.

GSA Discussion about Alumni Email in PEC

During our recent meeting with the University President's Executive Committee (PEC), we discussed the future of the alumni email service. While we advocated for the retention of this service, it was determined that the project is financially unsustainable, as fewer than 5% of alumni actively use their UofS email addresses. However, alumni will still have the option to pay a minimal fee if they wish to retain their email address. Going forward, the university will notify graduating students nearly a year in advance to allow ample time to transition to a different email address.

GSA Advocacy for International Mother Language Day

In alignment with our Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion initiatives, GSA is advocating for the recognition of International Mother Language Day on campus. Given the linguistic diversity at UofS and the ongoing loss of many languages, we believe this would be a meaningful initiative to celebrate. We are

currently in discussions with the Deputy Provost's office, the Language Centre, and CGPS. I welcome any suggestions from council members on how the university can best celebrate this day and further promote linguistic diversity.

Iranian Students and the Current Situation

Many of you are aware of the current situation in Iran. On January 12th, GSA released a statement of solidarity, and on January 20th, we hosted an event specifically for Iranian students. This event, organized in collaboration with Student Health & Wellness, UofS Student Affairs and Outreach, and ISSAC, provided a platform for Iranian students to share their experiences and challenges. GSA, together with the University, is actively working to support Iranian students during this difficult time. While discussions with senior university leaders are ongoing, we will provide further information as soon as we have confirmed details.

GSA Investments

I am pleased to officially announce that GSA is moving forward with investing its funds in low-risk investments, specifically in the form of Guaranteed Investment Certificates (GICs). Our VP Finance, Lindsay, has been working diligently to finalize these arrangements, and I want to commend her for her exceptional efforts. She is doing an outstanding job managing this process, and I am confident that this will benefit the GSA in the long term. For more details, please refer to Lindsay's report.

GSA Fees (Health & Dental, GSA Fees)

I would like to inform you that there will be a 5% increase in the Health & Dental fees for the upcoming period. Additionally, we will need to adjust the GSA fees to reflect how students are utilizing our services. The increase in GSA fees will be modest, just over 1 CAD. This adjustment is necessary to ensure we can continue to support essential services and meet the growing needs of our members. VP Finance, Lindsay, will provide further details on these adjustments during her presentation.

GSA Holiday Hangout

One of our flagship events, the GSA Holiday Hangout, was held over two days and was both successful and well-attended. While the numbers listed on paper represent only a portion of the attendees, we were able to accommodate even more participants than anticipated. This success would not have been possible without the collaboration of our campus partners, including the Office of the Provost, Student Health & Wellness, USSU, Office of Sustainability, and ISSAC. A special thank you to Mandela and all the volunteers who contributed to the event's success. Further details can be found in the VP Academic Mandela's report.

GSA OPUS Session during Welcome Week

In collaboration with OPUS, GSA hosted a short welcoming session for new and returning students. The session focused on how students can turn their research into business ideas, showcasing the opportunities available through UofS OPUS. It was a great opportunity to engage with students and introduce them to our services.

GSA Indigenous Intercultural Exchange & Resource Fair

For the first time, under the leadership of our VP Indigenous, we hosted a remarkable event focused

on learning about Indigenous culture. I would also like to commend Laila for securing sponsorship for the event, ensuring that no GSA budget was used for this initiative, an excellent example of leadership and innovation. Kudos to Laila for her hard work in organizing this successful event. Further details are available in her report.

Meeting or Events Attended as President

December 16	Meeting with CGPS Dean
December 18	University Council
December 22	GSA & OPUS
December 22	Meeting with CARA
January 5	Tuition Fees Discussion with Senior Leaders
January 8	PEC Meeting
January 12	Meeting with PSAC
January 14	Meeting with Vice Provost TLSE
January 14	Meeting with Gordon Oakes
January 15	CFS Provincial Executive Committee meeting
January 16	ISSAC
January 16	Meeting with SHW
January 19	Meeting with SHW & Peace Officer
January 19	Meeting with CGPS Associate Dean
January 20	GSA Iranian Students Event
January 20	Health & Dental
January 21	Meeting with CGPS Dean
January 21	Meeting with Residence
January 21	GSA Indigenous Resource Fair Event
January 22	GSA & PSA
January 22	CGPS Faculty Council Meeting
January 23	GSA Executive Meeting
January 25	GSA RAAC Committee meeting

Thank you for your ongoing support and dedication to our community. Please feel free to reach out with any questions or suggestions as we continue to work together to serve the needs of our graduate students.

Regards,

Palash R. Roy (he/him)
President, Graduate Students' Association (GSA)
PhD Student, Department of Computer Science, University of Saskatchewan

VP Finance:

Dear GSA Councilors,

Happy New Year! Please find below an update on my January activities as the Vice-President Finance and Operations.

1) Health and Dental Plan Renewal

The GSA Executives met with our Studentcare representatives in December to review claim trends from last year's plan, then again in January to discuss renewal costs. Usask requires GSA to submit fees for the next academic year (2026-2027) in January or February of the current year. Because of this deadline, Studentcare must estimate what GSA's plan cost will be for the following year based on only three months (September – November) of plan use data. The GSA Executives will continue to work with Studentcare representatives to fully understand drivers of plan cost increases, and work to maintain a balance of excellent benefits and affordability for graduate students. GSA must submit our 2026-2027 fees for review by the fee review committee by February 2.

2) Upcoming financial literacy events

I am working to plan two financial literacy events for the winter term, including a virtual information session on saving and investing, as well as an in-person session focused on answering tax filing questions for graduate students. Details will be announced soon.

3) Winter 2026 GSA-CGPS need-based bursary announced

The GSA-CGPS need-based bursary for winter term will open on February 2 and close February 20. Further details will be sent to all graduate students via email next week.

VP Finance Meetings Attended

1/4/2026	Executive Meeting
1/20/2026	Health and Dental Plan Renewal Meeting
1/23/2026	GSA Executive 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

VP Student Affairs:

Dear GSA Councillors and members,

I am writing to provide you with an update on my activities as Vice President Academic and Student

Affairs for late December and January, highlighting recent initiatives and accomplishments.

2025 Holiday Hangout

As part of student-focused initiatives under my portfolio to strengthen social connections among USask students and their families staying in Saskatoon over the winter break, the GSA in partnership with the USSU, ISSAC, Office of Sustainability and Student Wellness Centre hosted the 2025 Holiday Hangout on December 29 – 30, 2025. A breakdown of the participants, their spouses, and their children is presented in Table 1.

Section	Participants (Students)	Spouses	Kids	Total
Dec 29, 10:00–1:00	48	24	24	96
Dec 29, 1:00–7:00	68	35	35	138
Dec 30, 10:00–1:00	41	17	14	72
Dec 30, 1:00–7:00	64	33	32	129

Overall, the event was very successful. The event achieved its objective of creating a welcoming, festive environment with delicious meals, fun-filled activities, and offering a sense of belonging and community for those unable to return home during this special time of year. I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to the Student Wellness Centre, ISSAC, USSU, Office of Sustainability, CGPS, Marjorie Delbaere (Interim Vice Provost, Students and Learning), and Dr. Patti McDougall (Interim Provost and VP Academic) for their generous contributions and financial support. Without their assistance, this Holiday Hangout would not have been possible. I would like to express my profound appreciation to my fellow GSA executives, the Holiday Hangout planning committee; Jocelyn Orb (SHW), Lecia Ellis (ISSAC), Ida Belete (SWC), Maxwell Brenna (GSA), Dana Kwan (Office of Sustainability), and Emily Hubick (USSU), the GSA coordinators (Esther Adeola-Gold, Arezou Askarian Abyaneh, and Dasha Guliak) and all the volunteers who helped to make this event successful.

GSA Info Booth at the 2026 USask Winter Orientation

The GSA had an information booth at the Kick-Off Social of the 2026 USask Winter Orientation, which

was held on January 5 at Louis' Loft. We took the opportunity to meet and welcome newly admitted graduate students to campus and provided information about the GSA (who we are) and the services and support we offer, including the fall and winter bus pass, health and dental plan, etc. We also gave out GSA swag. Approximately 90 graduate students visited our info booth.

I would like to thank the Winter Welcome Orientation team for organizing such an event to warmly welcome our students and foster a sense of community, space, and support. I would also like to specially thank our President, Laila Valila, Vice-President Indigenous Engagement, and our GSA Coordinator, Arezou Askarian Abyaneh, for their assistance at the info booth.

Launch of GSA Intramural Sport Team for 2026 Winter Term

As part of our efforts to promote student well-being and social connection among graduate students, the GSA has launched its first-ever intramural sports teams in the 2026 winter term. We have one co-ed futsal team and one co-ed volleyball team. The teams started playing their first game last week. The volleyball team (games on Tuesdays between 8:30pm – 10:30pm) lost by a small margin, while the futsal team (games on Saturdays between 2:30pm – 6:30pm) won their first game. The volleyball team players are excited to play intramurals and engage with other graduate students. Many of them played volleyball a while ago, and they were excited that they have pick up the sport again.

I would like to thank Ernest Leung from the Edwards School of Business for bringing this initiative to GSA. I would encourage all of us to support our teams by attending their games and cheering them on. Your presence would mean a lot to them.

Meetings attended

1. December 17th, 2025: Graduate Academic Affairs Committee (GAAC)
2. December 17th, 2025: Academic Programs Committee (APC)
3. January 5th, 2026: GSA Conversations regarding tuition with student leaders
4. January 7th, 2026: Academic Programs Committee (APC)
5. January 8th, 2026: Student Executives and PEC
6. January 9th, 2026: Student Council Member Appeals & Hearing Training
7. January 21st, 2026: Academic Programs Committee (APC)
8. January 22nd, 2026: CGPS Graduate Faculty Council
9. January 23rd, 2026: GSA Executives Meeting

VP Indigenous:

Dear GSA Council,

I am writing to report on my activity for the month of December 2025.

Indigenous Resource Fair and Intercultural Exchange

Throughout this month I finalized plans for this event, including catering, table attending and setting up an Eventbrite link. There are five (5) tables confirmed and an Elder and Knowledge Keeper has confirmed their participation. Going forward, I will need to organize activities for the intercultural aspect of the event.

Potential Changes to Position

There are multiple aspects of my position that I have found issue with, particularly the VP Indigenous's appointment to the Faith Leadership Council. For the upcoming months, I plan to organize changes pertaining to: (a) the annual events in which VP Indigenous hosts; (b) the appointment of VP Indigenous to specific committees and councils; and (c) the engagement factor of the position. There are additionally different means of engagement that this position requires that the others may not; these should be accounted for.

Meeting and Events Attended

December 1st, 2025: Executive Meeting

December 2nd, 2025: Annual Claims Report / Indigenous Students Leadership Committee

December 4th, 2025: RSAW Meeting / President's Farewell

December 8th, 2025: PEC Meeting

December 12th, 2025: Executive Meeting

December 29th: Holiday Hangout

VP External

Dear GSA Council,

I am writing to report on my activity for the month of December 2025 and January 2026

VP External Vote at December 2025 Council Meeting

I assumed the role of VP External of the GSA on January 1, 2026. Thank you for your unanimous vote for this position on the GSA from the council meeting that occurred Wednesday December 17th 2025.

Holiday Hangout

On December 29 and 30, I supported the GSA team in hosting this event at GSA Commons. I provided support on hand and ensure GSA visibility. The event was well attended and well received.

GSA Awards and GSA Gala

The awards are live now for students to register. The deadline for nominee applications is March 13th and the Awards Gala will occur on Saturday April 25th at TCU place. This year, each category will have two to three finalists, all being invited to the gala, where the winner will be announced for the award.

We have been seeking out venues and negotiating different options with various venues across Saskatoon such as The Holiday Inn (Downtown, University), Sheraton Cavalier, Delta, Besborough, Hilton Garden Inn, Marquis, to include a few. TCU place was the one that fit our date and pricing the most. It is my intent is to restore the prestigiousness of this event by adding some entertainment and marketing it to graduate students in creative ways.

GSA Childcare Initiative

Prior to the new year, I sent follow-up emails to Minister Everett Hindley and the Hon. Buckley Belanger from an email sent from my predecessor. Minister Hindley has agreed to meet with us on this initiative. We are waiting for the Hon. Buckley Belanger to confirm and respond. They had responded to the initial email that was sent, not the follow up.

Administrative & Support

Since being voted in at the December 2025 council meeting, I received email access promptly so I could begin to become acquainted with the position as there was no transition report left from previous VP external candidates. My priority was to gain access to all the social media accounts; Facebook, Instagram, Twitter were all recovered and a Threads account was created. Next, I was to understand the level of completion from my predecessor and begin sifting through emails. I followed up on the childcare initiative emails before the new year. After that, I began working on updating the GSA Awards and Gala for the current year.

I aided the VP Indigenous in some preparation for the Indigenous Resource Fair and Intercultural

Exchange. I provided some promotional support for the team via social media advertising the VP Indigenous's events and events forwarded to me by the executive such as the Opus I2B event and Iranian Support Space.

Meeting and Events Attended

December 17th, 2025: Council Meeting

December 29th: Holiday Hangout

December 30th: Holiday Hangout

January 4th, 2025: Exec Meeting

January 8th: PEC Meeting

January 20th: Health & Dental

January 23rd: Exec Meeting

Regards,

Sunny Bui (il/lui/he/him/his)

VP External, Graduate Students' Association

PhD Student, College of Kinesiology, University of Saskatchewan

