

UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN

**GSA**

**Graduate Students' Association**

**AGENDA PACKAGE**

**Council Meeting**

**Wednesday, March 25, 2026; 17:00**

**Meeting Location: GSA Common & 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.*

<b>NO</b>	<b>ITEM</b>	<b>ACTION</b>	<b>PAGE</b>
1	Call to order		
2	Approval of Agenda	Decision	1
3	Approval of GSA Council Meeting Minutes 🗓️ February 25 <sup>th</sup>	Decision	2-8
4	Motion to Receive Diversity Committee Meeting Minutes 🗓️ January 16 <sup>th</sup>	Decision	9-10
6	Motion to ratify GSA Social group (Black Graduate Student in Saskatchewan Association (BGSSA))	Decision	23 (Appendix B)
7	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	11-21
	Other Business: Announcement of call for Nominations		
8	Adjournment		



## Graduate Students' Association

**February Council Meeting Minutes**  
**University of Saskatchewan-Graduate Students' Association (GSA)**

Wednesday, February 25<sup>th</sup>, 2026; 17:00-19:00

Meeting Location: GSA Common (In-person)

*Attendance: See appendix A*

**Vice-Council Chair: Shamsuddeen Ma'aruf**

**Recording Secretary: Aiminayanate Pepple**

**a. Call to Order**

- The vice-chair, Shamsuddeen Ma'aruf, welcomed every attending member, as well as the University's President, Vice-Provost Students & Learning and the Dean of CGPS. The meeting was called to order at 5:14 PM.
- A land acknowledgment was observed, recognizing Treaty 6 territory and the Métis homeland.

**b. Rules and Regulation**

Shamsuddeen Ma'aruf briefed attendees of 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 vice-chair asked for approval of the meeting agenda.

- A council member moved for a motion which involved the provision of honorarium towards council members' attendance. He requested that this motion be discussed during the February council meeting.
- Due to the tension observed during the meeting, Aiminayanate Pepple moved for the adjournment of this motion to the next meeting.
- Modupeoluwa Olakunle seconded the adjournment.
- The February council meeting agenda was thereafter approved by council members in

attendance.

**d. Approval of GSA Council Meeting Minutes**

✓ **January 28<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Council Meeting**

**Mover:** Laila Valila

**Seconded by:** Sunny Bui

**Yes:** All in approval

**No:** 0

**Abstention:** 0

Motion carried.

**e. Introduction of Invited Guests by the Vice-Chair & Remarks from Invited Guests**

The council's vice-chair introduced the guest and invited each guest to give a remark.

❖ **University President - Dr. Vince Bruni-Bossio**

- The President expressed concerns about the needs and success of students.
- The president informed graduate students about the university's new strategic process in the coming year.
- The ideas and involvements of graduate students would be appreciated in achieving this new process.
- The president also acknowledged the strength and values as a collective identity of the university which is revealed in terms of research and teaching by students and faculties, university commitment towards equity and inclusion as well as truth and reconciliation aimed at giving students a warm experience.

❖ **Interim Vice-Provost, Students and Learning - Dr. Marjorie Delbaere**

- Dr. Marjorie Delbaere was glad to attend the meeting.
- Dr. Marjorie Delbaere acknowledged the importance of graduate students and her positive experience working with graduate students.
- Dr. Marjorie Delbaere further revealed her goal toward supporting graduate students particularly in collaboration with the CGPS.

❖ **Dean CGPS - Dr. Debby Burshtyn**

- Dr. Debby Burshtyn recognized the Treaty 6 territory and the Métis homeland.
- Dr. Debby Burshtyn acknowledged the importance of the university's strategic planning process and the envisaged influence it is expected to have on the university community.
- Dr. Debby Burshtyn stated the involvement of graduate students in this plan through the graduate student students' association, GSA, to assist in the identification of students' needs with the launch of the paperwork to occur this year.

- A graduate student intern was recently employed to assist in developing a framework for the improvement of the competency level of master's thesis programs.

#### f. Questions and Answer Session

- As you know, recent federal policy changes have led to a significant decline in the acceptance of international students, and our university has felt the impact as well. What steps is the university planning to take to address this, given how much international students contribute to our diversity, equity, and the university's academic and research strength?
  - Dr. Marjorie Delbaere recognizes the removal of provincial attestation letter (PAL) requirement for graduate students as a positive step towards this challenge.
  - Dr. Marjorie Delbaere also highlighted the efforts being made to fairly allocate PAL slots to graduate students who need it across various departments and colleges.
  - Dr. Marjorie Delbaere and her team have developed strategic plans aimed at increasing enrollment of students.
  - Dr. Marjorie Delbaere and the University president stated the intentional meeting with IRCC to understand important requirements necessary for successful students' applications.
- Given the rising cost of living, tuition fees, healthcare, and the ever-increasing differential tuition rate, what specific policies have been put in place or are being put in place to better support lower-income students? In particular, I would like to ask if freezing tuition fee increases and the differential tuition rates have been considered. Every year, we get hundreds of applications from students for the Need-Based Bursary, and as much as it helps, there is only so much it can do.
  - Dr. Debby Burshtyn shared her concern about the effect of the rising cost of things and tuition.
  - Dr. Debby Burshtyn informed graduate students about the 6.81% institutional fund increase for 2026/2027 graduate research funding with subsequent 2.8% increase in later years.
  - Beginning September 2026, the minimum funding for Ph.D. Students will be \$25,000 CAD per year. However, the CGPS is still working on getting a minimum funding for master's research students.
  - Dr. Debby Burshtyn hopes an increase in research funding will help to alleviate the cost of tuition and inflation.
- Where do you see opportunities to develop deeper reciprocity between a u15 research-intensive institution's mission for research acceleration and the critical mission of teaching and learning?
  - The University President highlighted the need to engage with graduate students' opinions to strengthen research and teaching.

- What is the university doing to support PhD students whose supervisors do not have matching funds for their graduate program? I am asking because a PhD is core research and involves a lot of work, which can be hard without funds. To create the kind of research that the world needs require funding, and it will be helpful if the university looks into supporting PhD students without funding, no matter how little.
  - Dr. Debby Burshtyn stated that there is no current answer to address this issue, however, she indicated to look into the issue and hope for students to get funding to finish their studies on time.
- In the strategy to increase the reputation of the university in the QS ranking, are there any actions that graduate students can take?
  - The University president stated his goal of producing qualified graduate over ranking system.
  - The president also stated the need for the engagement of students' opinion on this issue.
  - Dr. Marjorie Delbaere encouraged students' active engagement in research.
  - Dr. Debby Burshtyn also urged graduate students to participate in leadership positions outside of the university.
- Considering that the physics department requires competency testing for new PhD students, even when they have graduated with a B.Sc. and M.Sc. from UofS. What does it say about the university when we openly doubt the credentials and competency of our own graduates, and what advice would you give to UofS graduates, where, despite putting in years of time and countless volunteer hours, we feel so incredibly discouraged by the university's assumption of incompetence despite high grades and no evidence of any failures or lack of competency? Shouldn't we be encouraging our students to paths for success, instead of discouraging them by making them go back to undergrad and waste months of research time, potentially adding extra semesters to their time here? This is diminishing student pathways to success as well as tarnishing the reputation of UofS graduates and our history of academic excellence. I firmly believe this is doing harm to students and the university, and I am calling on everyone involved to restore ethical treatment of students to the physics department. When I spoke to the physics dept, they told me this is a requirement from CGPS. How can students feel supported when the official position of the CGPS is to tell students they are incompetent until proven otherwise?
  - Dr. Debby Burshtyn indicated that the CGPS will follow up on the issue by meeting with the department.
- ✚ A concern was raised regarding the fairness in the selection of awardees of the Tri-Council Canada Graduate Scholarship at the institutional level considering the values of the university and what can the university do to address this issue?
  - Dr. Debby Burshtyn acknowledged the concerns of students regarding the issue.

However, there seems to be limitations getting across reviewers as reviewers are meant to be anonymous to applicants.

- **What are the plans of the university to improve funding to course-based students?**
  - Dr. Debby Burshtyn and Dr. Marjorie Delbaere highlighted the purpose of funding which was intended to grant access to students who cannot afford programs due to financial constraint.
  - Dr. Marjorie Delbaere acknowledged the efforts of course-based students in paying the expensive fees and stated that the university is also making efforts to reach out to donors for the funding of different programs despite the limitation of funds.
- ✚ **Is the minimum funding of \$25,000 CAD for all PhD students across departments or for only students starting in September 2026?**
  - Dr. Debby Burshtyn stated that the CGPS hopes to include currently enrolled graduate students.
- **Several opinions exist that the university seems to be currently tilted towards being more financial-oriented. What steps are being taken to provide an academic and cultural-oriented environment?**
  - The president highlighted the current funding provision from the provincial government which is aimed towards encouraging academic activities.
  - Furthermore, the president suggested the development of mission driven projects as well as being strategic in solving problems to improve and sustain the strengths and values of the university community.

#### **g. Motion to ratify the GSA Social group (Iranian Students Association)**

- The Iranian Students Association was voted to be ratified.

**Mover:** Laila Valila

**Seconded by:** Palash Roy

**Yes:** All in approval

**No:** 0

**Abstention:** 0

#### **h. GSA Executives Reports**

##### ➤ **President – Palash Roy**

- On the behalf of the GSA, the president expressed concerns about the Tumbler Ridge incident and the violence in Mexico. The president sympathized with University students from Tumbler Ridge and Mexico.
- The president stated his support for Iranian students which was also expressed in a meeting

with the university's provost.

- This support was extended to the suggestion of the formation of the Iranian Students Association which is expected to be ratified in the February meeting.
  - The President represented the GSA in the campus planning discussions to highlight the concerns of the association such as:
    - Extended space for the GSA Childcare Centre.
    - Maintenance on GSA Building as well as possible relocation.
    - Advocated for a dedicated drop-off childcare space within the PAC and recreation facilities.
  - A business plan has been developed for the childcare initiative through the assistance of the Edwards School of Business.
    - The proposal includes a five-year plan with estimated budget of \$10 million CAD.
    - The GSA hopes to raise this fund through investment plan and fundraising option.
  - The GSA is still in the process of securing a transit pass to include the spring and summer session and hopes to send a referendum to graduate students soon.
- **Vice-President Finance and Operations – Lindsay Carlson**
- A financial literacy session was held online on the 5<sup>th</sup> of March 2026 from 1:00 pm - 2:00 pm.
  - The application for the Winter 2026 GSA-CGPS need-based bursary began on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of February 2026 and ends on the 20<sup>th</sup> of February 2026.
    - A total number of 337 applications were received.
    - There are 35 awards available with each award valued at \$1,000 CAD.
    - Recipients were notified on March 13<sup>th</sup>, 2026.
- **Vice-President Student and Academic Affairs - Mandela Alema**
- The winter 2026 intramural sport activity was successful. The VP Student Affairs appreciated the efforts of the coordinators and participants.
  - The Diversity Committee celebrated the International Mother Language Day observed on the 21<sup>st</sup> of February 2026.
  - The Diversity Committee will host a “Mini Folk Fest” on the 20<sup>th</sup> of March 2026.
  - Two members of the Diversity Committee have been selected to represent the GSA in an engagement session with Leadership and Diversity Group of the Saskatoon Open Door Society.
- **Vice-President External Affairs – Sunny Bui**
- The VP reminded students of the deadline for nominee application for the GSA Awards and Gala
  - The VP met with the Campus Planning on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of February regarding the maintenance of

the GSA Commons and acquisition of a childcare facility.

- A meeting was held with the Saskatoon Transit Company regarding the review of transit fares for graduate students.
  - ❖ Saskatoon Transit Company is in the process of reviewing transit fares.
  - ❖ An update will be communicated with graduate students in due course.

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

- The VP attended the OVPI meeting regarding future funding opportunities for indigenous programs.
- The VP met with the Director of Gordon Oakes and was introduced to the staff of Gordon Oakes.
- A new mandatory fee called institutional fees will be included to the students' fees.
- The sustainability committee hopes to host events centered on promoting environmental awareness.

**i. Any other Business of the Day (A.O.B)**

➤ **Announcement of call for Nominations (GSA Executive Election Schedule)**

- The president announced that the process for the nomination and election of new GSA executives would begin in March 2026.

➤ **Opinion on the introduction of honorarium for council members**

- The President reminded council members of the voluntary will of their roles.
- The president stated that only motions and items listed in the agenda are discussed during the GSA meetings.
  - If a motion had to be included in a meeting, especially if it would involve a change in the bylaws of the GSA:
    - ✚ A request should be sent to the GSA president.
    - ✚ This is followed by a discussion with GSA board of directors.
    - ✚ If the motion is considered after the discussion, a vote will be made to approve the motion during a special general meeting or annual general.
- Lastly, the financial limitation of GSA was highlighted, noting that the association is unable to pay council members for attending meetings.

**j. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:10 pm by Shamsuddeen Ma'aruf.

**Diversity Committee Meeting Minutes**  
**University of Saskatchewan – Graduate Students’ Association (GSA)**

**Date:** January 16, 2026

**Time:** 5:00 – 6:00 p.m.

**Location:** Zoom

**1. Attendance**

Present:

Mandela Alema (Chair)

Arash Amanlou (College of Pharmacy & Nutrition)

Saba Kamran (College of Education)

Cornelius Mensah (Agricultural & Resource Economics)

Regrets:

Farnoosh Tabatabaieian (Anatomy, Physiology & Pharmacology)

Kaushal Ashvinkumar Patel (School of Public Health)

**2. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 5:11 p.m. The Chair provided a land acknowledgment, welcomed members and invited introductions. The agenda was reviewed with no amendments.

**3. Agenda Items**

**3.1 Cultural and Diversity Event**

Discussion:

Arash proposed organizing a “Mini Folk Fest” featuring graduate students in traditional attire, cultural performances, music and dancing. He suggested hosting the event on a Friday evening (5:00–8:00 p.m.) to maximize attendance. A potluck format and submission of music from participants’ home countries were also proposed.

Concerns were raised regarding the potluck format due to potential food safety issues and possible impact on attendance. Alternative suggestions included catering food. Additional ideas included organizing a sports competition or a “Networking Bingo” activity to promote interaction. It was noted that the GSA intramural program already supports sports engagement, and the committee expressed preference for a diversity-focused event.

Decision:

- The committee approved organizing a “Mini Folk Fest” as a Food and Music event featuring traditional attire, cultural performances, and dancing.
- Prizes will be awarded for best traditional outfit/costume.
- Cultural groups and social clubs will be invited to mobilize participation and contribute food where feasible.
- The GSA will allocate budget to purchase selected dishes representing Asia, Africa, North and South America, and Europe.
- Tentative date: March 20, 2026.

**3.2 Black History Month Celebration**

Discussion:

A proposal was made to celebrate Black graduate students who are parents and who balance academic and family responsibilities rather than focusing solely on academic performance. The celebration will highlight challenges, achievements, aspirations, and overall contributions.

Decision:

The committee approved the proposal and will identify three deserving Black graduate student parents to be featured.

### **3.3 International Mother Language Day**

Purpose: To promote linguistic diversity and multilingualism and to encourage the protection of languages, particularly endangered languages.

Decision: Saba Kamran volunteered to share video recordings from a previous project featuring students speaking in their mother languages for use in the celebration.

### **3.4 Engagement with Saskatoon Open Door Society (SODS)**

Discussion: A request was received from the Leadership and Diversity Group of the Saskatoon Open Door Society (SODS) for a 30-minute engagement session with the Diversity Committee to discuss leadership and diversity within the GSA, including participation in a survey.

Decision: Saba Kamran and Cornelius Mensah volunteered to participate in the engagement session.

## **4. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 6:16 p.m.



**Graduate Students' Association**



## **President:**

Dear GSA Councillors,

During this reporting period, the GSA focused on advocating for graduate student needs, strengthening engagement, and improving communication between students, administration, and external partners. Efforts were directed toward enhancing student support systems, addressing key concerns, and advancing strategic priorities set at the beginning of the term.

### **Governance Update: Senate Elections to the Board of Governors**

At the March 23, 2026 Senate Executive Committee meeting, a proposal to revise the Senate election process to the Board of Governors was discussed, including the creation of a Board Nominations Committee and changes to nomination procedures. During the discussion, I emphasized the importance of ensuring graduate student representation by recommending that the student member on the proposed committee be a graduate student, noting that graduate students currently do not have direct representation on the Board of Governors. This was raised to help address a representation gap and ensure graduate student perspectives are considered in the nomination and selection process.

### **Student Non-Academic Misconduct Policy Updates**

Senate Executive Committee meeting, proposed administrative updates to the Standard of Student Conduct in Non-Academic Matters were reviewed. The changes aim to address outdated elements of the current policy and improve flexibility in processes, particularly through expanded use of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR), updates to committee composition, clarification of the Secretary's role in initiating discussions, and adjustments to rigid reporting timelines. These updates are intended as interim improvements ahead of broader revisions and consultations planned for later in 2026, and will be brought forward to Senate for approval at the April 25, 2026 meeting.

### **GSA Partnering with Swan Pizza**

Following discussions on opportunities to secure discounts for graduate students, the GSA has partnered with Swan Pizza to provide discounted pricing for all Graduate Student Councils and Social Clubs when ordering pizza. This initiative aims to support student events and reduce costs for graduate student groups. Further details regarding the partnership and how to access the discount will be shared through an upcoming GSA news announcement.

### **GSA Leadership Nomination**

The call for nominations for GSA leadership positions has been released by the Elections Committee. I encourage councillors to consider putting their names forward to serve on the GSA Board of Directors. This is an opportunity for experienced and committed leaders to contribute meaningfully to the graduate

student community and help guide the organization's direction.

### **GSA Awards**

Nominations for the GSA Awards are now open. I encourage you to recognize the contributions of your peers and supervisors by submitting nominations. Councillors are also invited to take part in the process and are encouraged to RSVP as soon as possible. If you encounter any issues or have questions, please contact the VP Academic.

### **Notice of Motion for Upcoming AGM**

Notice of motion will be brought forward at the upcoming AGM regarding several governance and organizational matters, including the GSA Governance Committee financial budget, the re-establishment of the Governance Committee, the introduction of a Leadership Circle policy, the establishment of a Childcare Committee, and other related initiatives.

### **Meeting Attended as President**



<b>25<sup>th</sup> February</b>	<b>GSA Soup &amp; Bannock</b>
<b>25<sup>th</sup> February</b>	<b>GSA Council</b>
<b>26<sup>th</sup> February</b>	<b>GSA Childcare Discussion with University Leaders</b>
<b>26<sup>th</sup> February</b>	<b>Meeting with Red Swan</b>
<b>27<sup>th</sup> February</b>	<b>Executive Meeting</b>
<b>27<sup>th</sup> February</b>	<b>Grad Student Issue</b>
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> March</b>	<b>GSA Award Committee</b>
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> March</b>	<b>University Governance Committee</b>
<b>4<sup>th</sup> March</b>	<b>GSA Awards Committee</b>
<b>5<sup>th</sup> March</b>	<b>PEC Meeting</b>
<b>9<sup>th</sup> March</b>	<b>University Residence</b>
<b>10<sup>th</sup> March</b>	<b>USSU President and VPOIP</b>
<b>18<sup>th</sup> March</b>	<b>Global Village</b>
<b>19<sup>th</sup> March</b>	<b>University Council</b>
<b>23<sup>rd</sup> March</b>	<b>Senate Executive Meeting</b>

Thank you for your continued engagement and leadership. I look forward to discussing these updates

further at Council.

**Regards,**

**Palash R. Roy (he/him)**

**President, Graduate Students' Association (GSA)**

**PhD Student, Department of Computer Science, University of Saskatchewan**



**Graduate Students' Association**



## VP Finance and Operation:

Dear GSA Councilors,

Please find below an update on my early March activities as the Vice-President Finance and Operations.

### 1) Understanding Taxes: Final Financial Literacy Series Event

The final event in our Financial Literacy Series will be held via Zoom on Monday March 30, 2026 from 2:00-3:30 pm. Please [join us for this online event](#) to learn more about how to file taxes in Canada from a Benefits Outreach Officer from the CRA, including a 30 minute Q&A where you can ask questions unique to your situation. Please share this event with your councils. I would like to thank Susan Winmill (Student Finance and Awards) and Brenna Maxwell for their assistance in bringing these events to students.

### 2) Winter 2026 GSA-CGPS Need-Based Bursary Distributed

We received 337 applications to the GSA-CGPS need-based bursary, which is the most that have been received for a single term during the 2024-2025 or 2025-2026 academic years. Forty-one students were awarded the \$1,000 bursary this term. GSA and CGPS collaborate to award \$110,000 in bursary funds to students in need each academic year. I would like to thank the members of the Bursary Selection Committee for their commitment to GSA this year.

### 3) Submit event funding requests for your council

We have received unprecedented demand for event funding this academic year, and less than 20% of the available budget remains. Funds are available on a first-come, first-served basis, and requests will be declined once the budget is fully dispersed.

### VP Finance Meetings Attended

2/25/2026	Fee Review Committee Meeting 1
2/25/2026	GSA Council Meeting
2/27/2026	GSA Executive Meeting
3/6/2026	Fee Review Committee Meeting 2
3/6/2026	Bursary Selection Committee Asynchronous Adjudication
3/12/2026	GSA Executive Meeting
3/18/2026	Planning and Priorities 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



## **VP Academic and Students 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 March 2026.

### **1. GSA Intramural Sports Update**

For the first time in its history, the GSA fielded two teams, volleyball and futsal, in the 2026 USask Winter Term intramural competition. The volleyball and futsal teams placed 4th and 8th, respectively. Despite most participants being beginners with varying skill levels, the teams created a supportive and engaging environment in which experienced players mentored newer participants. Notably, the initiative achieved its broader goal of strengthening the graduate student community. New cross-departmental friendships emerged, contributing positively to student engagement and well-being of participants. There is strong interest in continuing the GSA intramural sports program in the upcoming Fall Term. To build on this momentum, it is recommended that recruitment begin early in the academic year to maximize visibility especially among incoming graduate students. Overall, the GSA intramural sports initiative significantly strengthened connections among graduate students across disciplines and fostered greater inclusivity within our community. I would like to express my sincere appreciation to Ernest Leung for coordinating this initiative as well as to all the graduate students who actively participated in the competition.

### **2. Initiative to Highlighting Stories of Black Graduate Student Parents**

As agreed by the Diversity Committee in February, an initiative was launched to highlight the stories, challenges, achievements, aspirations, and contributions of Black graduate student parents. Three nominees were identified, and their inspiring stories are being featured on the GSA website and across GSA social media platforms. In recognition of their contributions and experiences, my office allocated a portion of my discretionary funds in the form of gift cards as a small token of appreciation for their participation in this initiative.

### **3. Winter 2026 GSA-CGPS Need-Based Bursary**

As a member of the GSA-CGPS Need-Based Bursary Committee, chaired by VP Finance, I assisted in evaluating the 2026 GSA-CGPS need-based bursary applications. As noted in the report of VP Finance, forty-one graduate students were awarded bursaries of \$1,000 each this term. Through this joint initiative, the GSA and CGPS allocate a total of \$110,000 annually to support graduate students experiencing financial need.

### **3. Student and Academic Affairs Update**

My portfolio continues to champion and advocate on behalf of graduate students in academic and student-related matters. I have remained engaged with relevant university stakeholders to ensure graduate student perspectives are represented in policy discussions and institutional decision-making processes. My office remains committed to advancing academic excellence, student well-being, equity, and meaningful engagement while ensuring that graduate students' voices are effectively represented

at all levels of the University.

#### **4.0 Meetings attended**

1. March 9<sup>th</sup>, 2026: Meeting with Iranian Student's Association Executives
2. March 12<sup>th</sup>, 2026: GSA Executives Meeting
3. March 16<sup>th</sup>, 2026: Graduate Program Committee (GPC)
4. March 18<sup>th</sup>, 2026: Graduate Academic Affairs Committee (GAAC)

March 19<sup>th</sup>, 2026: University Council meeting



**Graduate Students' Association**



**VP External:**

Dear GSA Council,

I am writing to report on my activity for the month of March and last part of February 2026.

**GSA Awards and GSA Gala**

My main focus this past month has continued to be the GSA Awards and Gala, which has remained a significant priority within the VP External portfolio. In line with the approach established in my previous reports, this work has focused on strengthening coordination, improving continuity, and supporting the long-term sustainability of the event.

This month, it was decided to extend the awards application deadline to March 27 in order to maximize participation and ensure strong representation across categories. At this stage, nearly all award categories are well-filled. Adjudication preparation is underway, with some committee members already granted access to review applications and the remaining access pending receipt of signed confidentiality agreements.

Committee coordination also advanced this month. An initial committee meeting was held to review award criteria, the adjudication process, key dates, and planning expectations for the Gala. Discussion also included event organization matters such as master of ceremonies options, entertainment, slide preparation, outreach related to awards, and division of responsibilities. A follow-up accommodation meeting was also held to brief an additional committee member on the same materials and expectations.

Progress on Gala organization continues to move well. Invitations have been distributed broadly, and sponsorship packages have been circulated to academic units and external sponsors. I also met with a local business near the university to discuss sponsorship, promotional collaboration, and distribution opportunities, including support connected to more than one location. Any event surplus generated this year is intended to support the awards program and contribute toward a more self-sustaining funding approach for future years, including strengthening the long-term viability and value of the awards. This aligns with the broader goal I identified earlier of restoring the event's prominence and building a more sustainable planning model going forward.

**Childcare Initiative**

Advocacy on graduate student childcare remains ongoing. Both the provincial minister responsible for this file and the relevant federal representative have agreed to meet regarding this issue, and I am currently awaiting confirmation of meeting dates.

This builds on the multi-level advocacy approach already underway, which has included engagement at

the provincial, federal, and university levels in order to communicate the seriousness of childcare barriers faced by graduate student parents.

#### University Planning and Representation

This month, I attended a planning and priorities meeting focused on the university's strategic planning process. Discussion centered on what motivates graduate students to learn, what attracts students to the university, what institutional strengths should be built upon, and which values should guide the university moving forward.

In these discussions, I emphasized the importance of faculty and student diversity, community and belonging, access to graduate student space, career pathways, experiential learning opportunities, and stronger connections between the university and the broader community. I also highlighted the importance of indigenization, commitment to reconciliation, diversity, and opportunity as core values that should remain visible in institutional planning. These conversations were useful in ensuring that graduate student perspectives were represented in broader university planning discussions.

#### Accessibility and Student Learning

I also attended a meeting that included a presentation on accessibility in learning and strategic admissions. The presentation focused on accessibility recommendations in teaching and learning, including clearer and more structured course design, accessible formatting standards, and diversified methods of assessment intended to reduce student confusion and improve inclusion in learning environments.

#### Administrative and Governance Work

In addition to the above, I attended regular executive and council meetings as part of the ongoing governance and operational responsibilities of the portfolio. These meetings supported continuity on active files and allowed for continued coordination on awards, advocacy, and broader GSA priorities.

#### Meeting and Events Attended

February 26<sup>th</sup>: Red Swan (College Drive) Sponsorship Meeting

February 27<sup>th</sup>: GSA Executive Meeting

March 2<sup>nd</sup>: GSA Awards Committee Meeting #1

March 4<sup>th</sup>: GSA Awards Committee Meeting #1 (time accommodation; President led this meeting; VP External was unavailable)

March 5<sup>th</sup>: PEC Meeting focused on the UPlan 2035. USask's new strategic plan.

February 12<sup>th</sup>: GSA Executive Meeting

March 17<sup>th</sup>: TLARC Meeting re: Presentation on Accessibility in Learning & Strategic Admissions

March 25: GSA Council Meeting



Regards,  
Sunny Bui (il/lui/he/him/his)  
VP External, Graduate Students' Association  
PhD Student, College of Kinesiology, University of Saskatchewan



**Graduate Students' Association**



## **VP Indigenous Engagement:**

Dear GSA Council,

I am writing to report on my activity for the month of February, 2026.

### **Gordon Oakes 10 Year Anniversary**

On February 3rd, the Gordon Oakes Red Bear Centre celebrated its 10th year anniversary with Indigenous student leaders and Faculty. At this event, a plaque was presented for the late Gordon Oakes Red Bear and current Centre directors announced objectives for the next ten years.

### **City of Saskatoon Naming Committee**

An invitation extended by the City of Saskatoon provided an opportunity for me to be involved with naming the University Heights (3) district. This event followed proper ceremony and opened with a pipe ceremony. While the results of the committee are yet to be released, three youth from campus were involved with the process.

### **Oyeteki Funders Workshop**

This workshop was facilitated with the goal of introducing MasterCard representatives with Indigenous programs on campus to showcase what has been established with sponsored funding. I participated with Aurora Wolfe to showcase her Cousins program and share what the GSA offers for Indigenous students. Overall, the objective is to enter another period of sponsorship with the MasterCard Foundation.

### **GSA Co-Hosted Soup and Bannock**

On February 25th the GSA co-hosted the monthly soup and bannock at Gordon Oakes. The event was well attended and all Executives volunteered with sign-ins, distributing food and I did a small briefing on GSA support for Indigenous graduate students.

### **Meeting and Events Attended**

**February 2nd, 2026:** JSGS Tuition Convo / City of Saskatoon Naming Event

**February 3rd, 2026:** Gordon Oakes 10 Year Anniversary / Indigenous Student Leadership Committee

**February 6th, 2026:** City of Saskatoon Naming Event

**February 9th, 2026:** Sustainability Committee Meeting

**February 12th, 2026:** Exec Meeting

**February 23rd, 2026:** Oyeteki Funders Workshop

**February 24th, 2026:** City of Saskatoon Naming Event

**February 25th, 2026:** GSA & Gordon Oakes Soup and Bannock / GSA Council

**February 27th, 2026:** Exec Meeting

Maarsi,

**Laila Valila** (*she/her*)

VP Indigenous Engagement | MPA Student

**Graduate Students' Association**



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Appendix A

	Academic Council	Councillor	February 2026
1	Agricultural and Resource Economics Graduate Students' Society	<b>Councillor</b> – Aminata Ba <b>Alternate</b> – Cornelius Mensah	P
2	Animal and Poultry Science Graduate Students' Association	<b>Councillor</b> – Megan Dubois <b>Alternate</b> – Beatriz Montenegro	P
3	Biology Graduate Students' Association	<b>Councillor</b> – Portia Mohrbutter <b>Alternate</b> – Laura Dyson	P
4	Chemistry Course Council	<b>Councillor</b> – Shreya Tiwary <b>Alternate</b> – Segun Liyansan	P
5	College of Medicine Graduate Student Society (CMGSS)	<b>Councillor 1</b> – Griffin Lehnert <b>Alternate 1</b> – Christopher Chivers	A
		<b>Councillor 2</b> – Amber Jurke <b>Alternate 2</b> – Hetvi Darji	A
6	College of Kinesiology Graduate Society	<b>Alternate</b> – Karissa Johnson	A
7	Computer Science Graduate Council (CSGC)	<b>Councillor</b> – Mary-fidelma Chioma Ndupu <b>Alternate</b> – Md Shamimur Rahman	A
8	Education Graduate Students Association (EGSA)	<b>Councillor</b> – Kiegan Lloyd <b>Alternate</b> – Rumpa Banik	P
		<b>Councillor 1</b> – Farzana Haque Reeti <b>Alternate 1</b> – Binod Sapkota <b>Councillor 2</b> – Adit Raj Chalise <b>Alternate 1</b> – Corwyn Shomachuk	P
9	Engineering Graduate Community Council (EGCC)	<b>Councillor</b> – Hamid Yari <b>Alternate</b> – Jasmine Redford	P
10	English Course Council	<b>Councillor</b> – Emily Ireland <b>Alternate</b> – Prakash Sapkota	P
11	Geography and Planning Graduate Student Council (GEPL)	<b>Councillor</b> – Jessy Lee Saas <b>Alternate</b> – Julia-Rose Miller	P
12	History Graduate Student Association	<b>Councillor</b> – Kirsten Witter <b>Councillor</b> – Aja Tost	A
13	Nursing Graduate Students Association	<b>Councillor</b> – Jeisson Vanegas <b>Alternate</b> - Mona Zolghadrshojaee	P
14	Physics and Engineering Physics Graduate Association of Students at University of Saskatchewan (PEGASUS)	<b>Councillor 1</b> – Luke Dojack	P

	Students' Association (PSGSA)	<b>Alternate 1</b> – Makenna Mitchell	
		<b>Councillor 2</b> – Giri Raj Paudel <b>Alternate 2</b> – Sachintha Attanayake	P
<b>16</b>	School of environment and Sustainability Student Association	<b>Councillor 1</b> – Nelly Ataawomba Afuubi <b>Alternate 1</b> – Jethro Opara	A
		<b>Councillor 2</b> – Jabed Chowdhuary <b>Alternate 2</b> – Anas Ansari	A
<b>17</b>	Sociology Graduate Students Association	<b>Councillor</b> – Meaghan Boily <b>Alternate</b> – Leah Houseman	P
<b>18</b>	Soil Science Graduate Students Association	<b>Councillor</b> - Nemat Dindarloo <b>Alternate</b> – Levi Lundell	P
<b>19</b>	The School of Public Health Students' Association (SPHSA)	<b>Councillor 1</b> – Motajo Modupeoluwa Olakunle	P
		<b>Councillor 2</b> – Angelica Caresse Uy <b>Alternate</b> – Sun Thai	P
<b>20</b>	Toxicology Graduate Student Association	<b>Councillor</b> – Chantel De Lange <b>Alternate</b> – Catherine Roberts	A

<b>Executive member</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>February 2026</b>
Executive President	Palash Roy	P
Exec. VP Finance and Operations	Lindsay Carlson	A
Exec. VP Academic and Student Affairs	Mandela Alema	P
Exec. VP External Affairs	Sunny Bui	P
Exec. VP Indigenous Engagement	Laila Valila	P

#### Appendix B

GSA Social Group	
Black Graduate Student in Saskatchewan Association (BGSSA)	Co- President (External): Justina Ndubuka Co-President (Internal): Salome Chika-Igbokwe Vice President: Bryan Okwuba Secretary: Oluwaseun Adekoya Assistant Secretary: Vacant Treasurer: Adelanke Aremo Director Equity and Advocacy (Maureen Amuche Nwobodo) Director Community and Welfare (Lecia Ellis)

	Director of connections and partnerships) (Candy Ochieng ) Director Communications (Usman Idowu)
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