



Graduate Students' Association
University of Saskatchewan

GSA Annual Report 2019-2020

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Vice President External

April 14th, 2020

INTRODUCTION

Since I started my position as the V.P External on May 1st, 2019, I felt as if I was faced with a huge responsibility. Of course, yes it was a massive responsibility, but I was not alone. I had the executives, friends and GSA staff ready and willing to accept my flaws and help me achieve the goals that was set out for the GSA. So many things have been done this period, but I can mention just the few things below with some exciting pictures.

1) **Canadian Federation of Students (CFS)**

Formed in 1981, the Canadian Federation of Students is a bilingual national union of over one-half million students from more than 64 university and college students' unions across Canada. The Federation provides students with an effective and united voice, provincially and nationally, and creates space and opportunity for students across the country and province to join in creating change and winning victories on and off campus.

I participated as a delegate in the meetings and the lobby week. Through students' unions, members have a say in setting the policies, direction and priorities of our Federation, including how funds are spent. All major decisions are made at provincial and national general meeting annually. The opportunity to network with other student government leaders was an opportunity of a lifetime and I am happy I attended.

2) **Health Chats**

There are various Mental and Physical health workshops for both the Fall and Winter Term. The GSA guppies play intramural games in the University as part of physical health. Besides the GSA Guppies, this year, we decided to collaborate with the wellness centre to increase the scope of wellness activities to include more graduate students. Some are in collaboration with the GSA and where held at the GSA commons. Registration was usually at their website www.usask.ca/stayhealthy

	Date	Time
Sexual Assault movie	September 17 th	5pm – 7pm
Random Acts of Green	September 18 th	11am – 12pm
Failing forward	September 24 th	12pm – 4pm
Mental Health First Aid (2 day training)	October 8 th and October 10 th	8am – 4pm
First Aid/CPR (1 day training)	October 12 th	8:30am – 4:30pm
Self Defence	October 16 th	12pm – 1pm
Consent and Dating in Canada	October 24 th	2pm-3pm
Inquiring minds	November 5 th	1pm – 4pm
First Aid/CPR (1 day training)	November 9 th	8:30am – 4:30pm
Mental health (by Jessie)	November 20 th	3pm – 6pm
Bringing in the bystander	December 17 th	3pm – 4:30pm
Zumba (eventbrite)	Usually on Fridays	6pm – 7pm

3) Adopt a Plot

The garden patch is a community-driven urban agriculture initiative of the Saskatoon Food Bank & Learning Centre, located in the 900 block of 3rd Avenue North in the heart of Saskatoon. I am excited to report that 525 pounds of fresh produce have been harvested from Adopt-A-Plot rows



so far this season! That is an amazing number that represents a significant amount of students, families and individuals being helped because of our hard work. We finished harvesting the Adopt-A-Plot rows by the end of September! It was largely weather dependent

During the Adopt a Plot program, seeds, tools, instructions, and support throughout the season will be provided. The fall harvest will go directly into emergency food baskets at the Saskatoon Food Bank & Learning Centre. In addition, gardening skills were gained. We met every Wednesday @5pm and Saturday @11am.





  **GARDEN PATCH**
SASKATOON FOOD BANK & LEARNING CENTRE 

Certificate of Appreciation

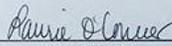
Presented to

GSA (Usask)

For Participating in:

the 2019 Adopt-a-Plot Growing Season

This year you volunteered **73 hours** and grew **213.3 lbs** of
Produce for Emergency Food Hampers at the Saskatoon Food Bank
& Learning Centre Garden Patch



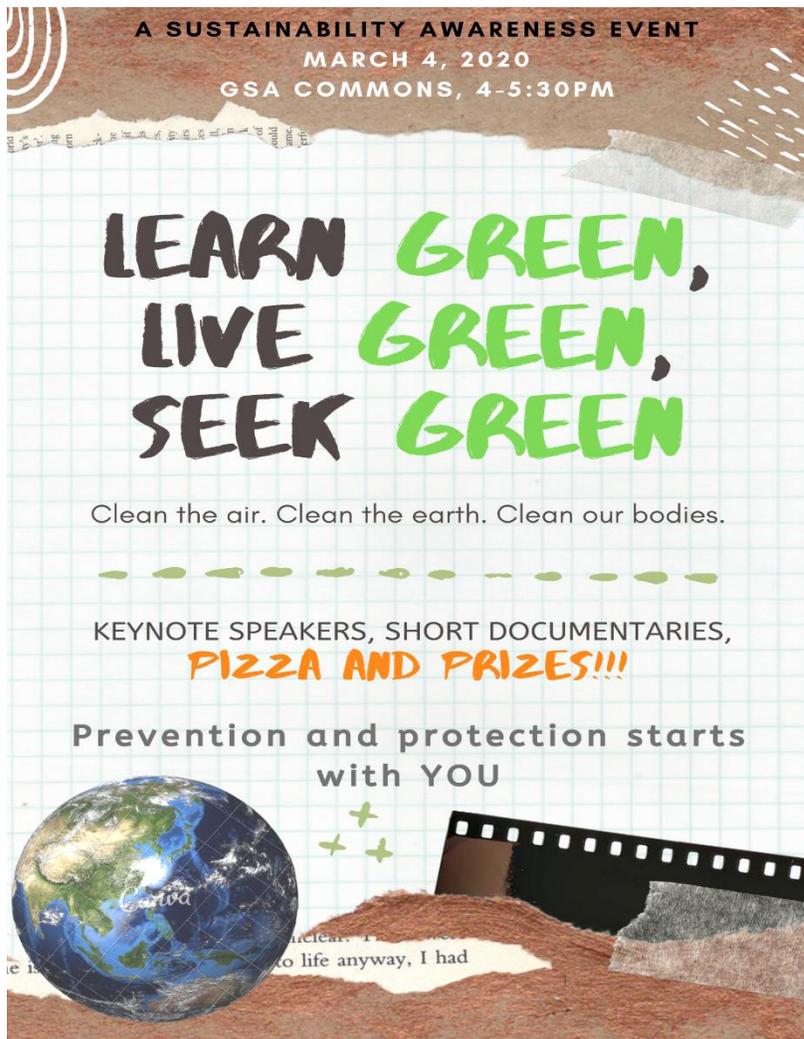
Laurie O'Connor,
Executive Director



Natasha King,
Urban Agriculture Program Manager



4) Sustainability Committee



In the present era, we all are aware of the environmental problems which emerged recently. Due to increasing human population there is an urgent need to complete the basic needs of every human being, these are food, shelter and clothes. To complete this basic need we are creating more pressures on earth, it may be either directly or indirectly. Also, one of the major causes for most of the problems is lack of proper awareness and increasing community awareness is an easy way to create future sustainable for human. Although majority of sustainability related problems are not country specific, some sustainability practices including recycling the solid wastes within office and houses might differ across countries. This is particularly important for the graduate student

community as many of them just came to Canada and they might not have the proper knowledge of the waste management in their home and workplace and office. We believe this workshop will benefit the graduate students and the community.

The workshop consisted of up to three short documentary which will be streamed after a short presentation on the topic from an expert in that area. Matt Wolsfeld from the Office of Sustainability and Gift Marufu from the Grounds Department presented on sustainability topics. Our goal is for attendees to come away with a great appreciation of the ways in which they can incorporate sustainable practices into their own lives.

GSA sustainability committee is hoping that this workshop will promote sustainability practices in everyday life of all students in general and graduate student specifically. The theme was: Learn green, Live green, Seek green. The workshop was held at the GSA commons on March 4th, 2020

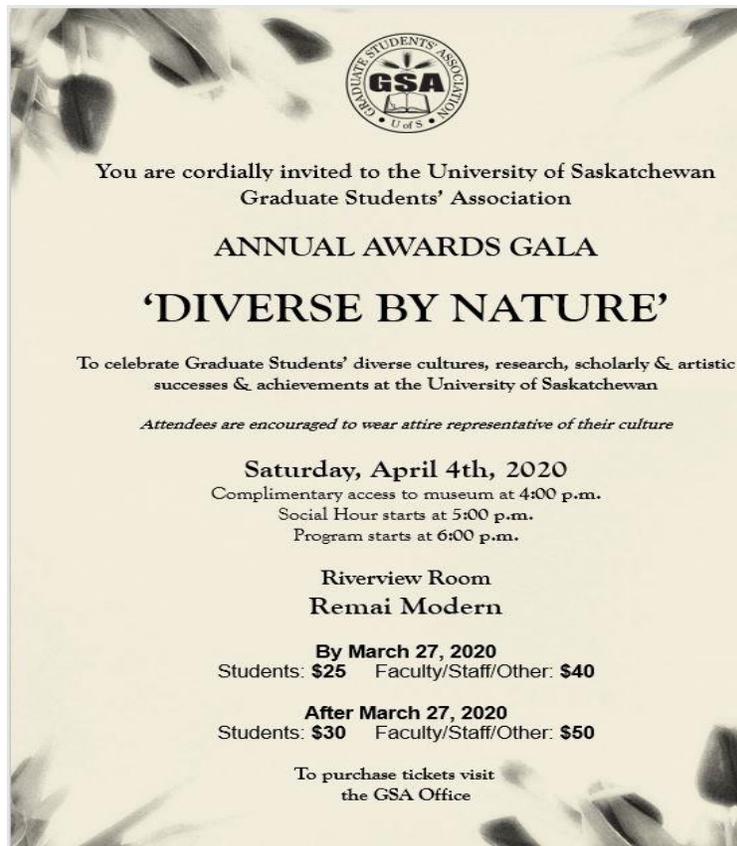
5) **Diversity Committee**

To become an active and relevant part of social responsibilities, we must appreciate and master diversity. It is essential to learn how to cooperate with others whether they be local, national or international. So the diversity committee decided to hold a diversity and inclusion event. Theme is: **Be What the Diverse World Needs**. We will be having discussions on what limits our successes as diverse individuals. Finally, we were to watch a movie titled: **The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind**. This movie shows that our individuality is not a barrier. It also shows how determination can be rewarding and no matter what, knowledge is power.

This committee was to hold their event on March 25th from 4pm till 6:30pm at the GSA commons. However, due to the sudden COVID 19 (Corona Virus disease) pandemic, the event was cancelled.

6) **GSA Annual Awards Gala**

The GSA Awards Gala is instrumental in recognizing and rewarding graduate students for their research, scholarly and artistic pursuits. The awarded graduate students will motivate and serve as valuable role models for the entire graduate student community on campus. The 8th Annual Graduate Student Awards Gala will pay tribute to the successes and achievements made by our graduate students. The **8th Annual Graduate Student Awards Gala**, to be held at the Remai Modern on **Saturday, April 4th, 2020**. Complimentary access to museum at 4pm and doors opening at 5 pm.



However, due to the sudden COVID 19 (Corona Virus disease) pandemic, the GSA Annual Awards Gala was cancelled this year. This was not an easy decision for the Executives to make; however, our utmost priority is the safety and security of our students, campus community and community-at-large. We still recognized the award winners on our social media and through our website. The following were awarded:

1. Professional Excellence: **Allap Judge**
2. Professional Excellence: **Yazmin Ramos**
3. Research Excellence in Interdisciplinary Studies: **Saman Naghie**
4. Excellence in Community Service: **Ajaypal Singh Kahlon**
5. Mark Kroeker Exceptional Leadership Award: **Md Mostofa Kamal**
6. Research Excellence in STEM: **Asghar Dolatkah**
7. Advising Excellence Award: **Punam Pahwa**
8. Research Excellence in humanities, arts, social sciences, law or education: **Britanie Thomas**



CONCLUSION

It was a roller coaster of emotions during this period, but it was worth it. I want to thank Mery, Wajih, Alejandra, Candace, Naheda, Reggie the GSA chair, Osai the recording secretary, the GSA office coordinators and all my friends for their continuous support during this period. For the incoming executives, you can never do it alone, always seek help, it is never enough.

Thank you everyone and I wish you all success in your future endeavours!!!!!!

Chiamaka Ezekwesili

V.P External