

**University of Saskatchewan
Graduate Students' Association**

BOARD MEETING

Minutes from Tuesday, May 2nd, 2017 Special General Meeting

Present: Ziad Ghaith (GSA President); Jordan Bonkowski (VP Operations & Finance); Arinjay Banerjee (Council appointee); Isaac Pratt (transition* appointee); Levi Johnson (director, 2 year term); Wanda Seidlikoski-Yurach (director, 2 year term); Robert Henderson (Chair*); Chris Maierhoffer (Council appointee) (Remote); Jaylene Murray (transition* appointee); Brenda Byers (non-voting recording secretary, pending official board approval); Sherri Rohovich (GSA office manager, non-voting, resource to the board)

Regrets:

Logan Pizzey (director, 1 year term);
Alumni seats (2, pending appointment at AGM);

Organization of Meeting: Robert Henderson, Interim Board Chair, and Brenda Byers acted as secretary (once approved by the board).

Distributions: GSA Balance Sheet; Profit & Loss Statement

OPEN SESSION

- 1) **CALL TO ORDER:** 5:08 pm the meeting was called to order.
- 2) **Introductions (Robert)**
 - a) Welcome everyone and thank-you for volunteering your time.
 - b) These initial meetings will be less formal than the council meetings since we will be setting process as we go, so we will operate by consensus rather than making motions to accept agenda and minutes.
 - c) Board member introductions – there are some members that have not been on boards before but many have had a number of experiences on boards
- 3) **Appointment of Recording Secretary (nominee: Brenda Byers)**
 - a) carried
- 4) **Agenda items**
 - a) accepted
- 5) **Remarks from the Chair (Robert)**
 - a) We will have an in-camera session each meeting.
 - b) Minutes from the Board meetings are not to be shared with anyone who is not on the board.
 - c) Note: The GSA committee minutes are always posted for transparency.

- d) It is a policy to have a senior staff person present in the open portion, so Shari is taking on this role.
- e) Open debate is encouraged and Robert invites everyone to discuss items should you want to, with him at any time.
- f) In the first few meetings there will be more discussion than normal.
- g) Legal council (Nancy Hopkins) will come in and provide an orientation for the board.

6) Briefing: Overview and status of the GSA*

- a) Ziad will discuss the current Executive status and retreat. Also Robert asked the board to provide input to the retreat.
- b) Ziad asked Isaac and Shari to also provide input into the history of the GSA.
 - i) He spoke about the GSA crisis which occurred in the past and there is still some remnants of this affecting the relationship with the University administration.
 - ii) Since then the professionalism has been increased through improvements of the governance and financial management, also all meetings were attended if at all possible and all council meetings were transparent and focused on strategic planning and results (i.e. supervisor agreements).
 - iii) Shari mentioned the bookkeeper has helped a lot.
 - iv) Services provided by the GSA: Health and Dental; UPASS; (these two items is the majority of the operational budget); The remaining operating budget is about \$250,000 which covers staff salary and general expenses, bursaries etc.
 - v) The GSA represents approx. 4000 graduate students, each grad student provides \$35 each term, with no fees over the summer.
 - vi) Wanda asked: How often will the financial statements be presented? Last year transactions were listed on the website. Going forward Ziad hopes to have statements distributed each month. Every board meeting a revenue compared to budget statement will be presented. Jordan will decide what other statements will be provided and we can discuss what the board would like each meeting.
 - vii) The current financial distribution materials were done on a cash basis (note: they are NOT accrual based statements), but will be eventually.
 - viii) Wanda asked do we not need these statements for maintaining the not-for-profit status. The GSA has been submitting unaudited income and balance sheets each year but the bylaws state the GSA should be getting audits each year.
 - ix) Jordan asked, why is the GSA separate from the University? To have autonomy since they have different interests and different priorities.
 - x) Question: How is the new executive transition going? The old and new executive have met and transferred information. For example Jordan is sitting on 10 committees covering Operations and Finance.

7) Initiation of Strategic Planning: 2016 progress and outlook*

- a) The board needs to come up with a strategic plan and the incoming executive should be given a list of priorities. For example:
 - i) ***Review of the GSA representatives on the Univ. committees, Senate and BoG.
 - ii) ***Student Supervisor Agreement
 - iii) ***Cleaning up the finances
 - iv) *** Student Affairs and External portfolios integration with the Board goals (ex. The Think GRAD conference held at the U of S meeting of the G15 student associations from across Canada, next one is in August at McGill, Ziad support UofS continuing to

- take a lead role, minimal cost \$1000); A general discussion around how much the GSA should be reaching out to the other G15
- v) Question: How does the membership provide input into the strategic planning? Ziad also recognises the importance of planning, but it has been inconsistent whether the new executive completes this process or not. A survey was started last year but was not distributed, it is currently to be approved by the Ethics Committee (this has delayed the survey by 6 months). The hope is to get this distributed and use this input to a strategic planning session.
 - vi) Wanda mentioned many boards have a transition period of a year with the incoming president. However, the plan is to have better documentation of the processes to assist with this transition of knowledge from one year to another.
 - vii) *** UPASS may also be an item, due to the discussion about opting out and the summer extension of the UPASS. Maybe this should be added into the survey as well, to collect information. There is a different price for grad vs undergrad students and there are two totally different agreements. There was a recent meeting with the transit, Ziad suggests we get someone with experience to attend the next meeting and assist with the negotiations going forward. There is a link on the website to view all the minutes for this and all other GSA meetings.
 - viii) Wanda asked what is considered confidential vs not confidential. Answer: Personal information, sensitive financial (i.e. salaries), and negotiations would be considered confidential.

BREAK 5 minutes

- ix) ***The GSA needs to get access to the graduate students emails or at least a listserv, only the CGPS has access and GSA emails are censored and sometimes are not as timely as they should be (ex. SGM or AGM). Idea: All listservs from each academic unit could be used.
- x) ***Unions relations. Question: Can a post-doc be a councillor of the GSA? There needs to be a better definition of the types of members and the rights of each. There is a union that is in the planning for the post-docs.
- xi) **The items marked with *** will be sent to Ziad for input to the executive retreat agenda.**

8) Preliminary Mandates for Executive; Committee Appointments*

- i) The committees are not limited to the executive, so a draft of potential committee appointments has been created. This is Ziad's initial thoughts and he can provide more detail of each committee and the time commitment. Many are flexible who sits on them. He encourages all to sit on at least one or more of these not allocated so far.
- ii) **CGPS Graduate Council Members at Large** – will be allocated to Arinjay Banerjee instead of Wanda.
- iii) Also, Robert will work to change the fact that the VP of Finance is stated as the representative on many committees and rather have a more generic representative from the GSA be stated instead to a more generic GSA rep to reduce the number of committees that Jordan is required to sit on.

- iv) How will Robert graduating effect his role, since he will be officially an undergraduate in the college of medicine going forward. Since he does not vote he is okay as chair, also the committees he is on will also require no voting. Jaylene mentioned there should be a transition plan.
- v) Last year each committee had a GSA representative and the University acknowledged this as a good step and commitment of the GSA, so Ziad sees this as a priority next year as well. So, if someone cannot make a meeting they should arrange to send a proxy, when it is appropriate.
- vi) **University Council** – Ziad asked if someone could step up and take on this role.
- vii) Reporting? The executives have in the past have reported in the executive meetings. But now that it has widened their may be reports submitted to the council meetings for distributions (avoiding reporting on any confidential discussions).
- viii) PLEASE NOTE: Ziad would appreciate others taking on more roles if they can.

9) Board work plan; proposed meeting dates for summer 2017 (5-7pm):

- a) Thursday, 8 June;
- b) Tuesday, 11 July;
- c) Tuesday, 1 August

The time was set due to board members commitments during the day hours. Wanda suggests an afternoon session for a strategic planning session. Tentatively June 8th has been selected.

10) Other Business

- What does the board expects from the executive for each meetings. An action plan? A report from the executive meetings, retreat report and work plans from each executive. Wanda has a template to send to Ziad to use as a starting point. Ziad can determine what level these reports should be at and they have enough detail to measure the executive performance.
- Wanda asked how we determine what the reporting should look like. Yes there has been some discussion but there needs to be policies and guidelines that makes sense. On what these processes are but also to define the roles and responsibilities of the Council, Executive and the Board to ensure clarity.

11) Adjournment

- a) Board adjourned at 9:00 pm.