

## Graduate Students' Association



### **GSA Executive Committee Meeting Tuesday, September 20<sup>th</sup>, 2016 - GSA Commons 05:02 P.M. – 07:00 P.M.**

**Present:** Z. Ghaith (President), N. Absher (VP Operations), K. Sharma (VP Finance), C. Gaspar (VP External), S. Sapal (VP Student Affairs)  
**Absent:** A. Kiani (VP Academic)

- 1. Call to Order**
- 2. Approval of Chair**
  - 2.1. Ghaith nominates himself. All in favor.
- 3. Approval of Minute Taker**
  - 3.1. Ghaith nominates Absher. Seconded by Gaspar. All in favor.
- 4. Approval of the Agenda**
  - 4.1. Sharma and Absher move a motion to add 6.16 to 6.17. 6.11 to 6.15. Absher seconded it. All in favor. Agenda is amended. Ghaith moves a motion to approve the agenda as amended. Seconded by Gaspar. All in favor.
- 5. Approval of the Minutes of GSA Executive Meetings:**
  - 5.1. Minutes of GSA Executive Emergency Meeting on August 30<sup>th</sup>, 2016**
    - 5.1.1. Postponed until next meeting.
  - 5.2. Minutes of GSA Executive Meeting on August 7<sup>th</sup>, 2016**
    - 5.2.1. Ghaith moves a motion to approve this meeting minutes as posted. Sapal seconded. All in favor.
- 6. Items for Actions/Information**
  - 6.1. Presentation by Mitacs**
    - 6.1.1. Mitacs is a national research network, funded by provincial and federal government.
    - 6.1.2. Three programs that affects graduate students. First is step workshop which trains students in business, communication. Secondly, Global programs is international mobility. There's money for students coming to Canada and for students going outside Canada. It's open now, till Nov 9<sup>th</sup>. 12-24 weeks project in any country. \$5000 funding for any project. Thirdly, there're awards to France and Japan, and those are competitive. Mitacs would like help advertising these services to graduate students.
    - 6.1.3. Ghaith mentions that we can host the seminar in the GSA Commons, and if material is provided, we can advertise it on our social media.

**6.1.4.** There's also industrial opportunities and work with any company outside of Canada. There's no deadline for this. It's called GPA program, and up to \$7500 is matched. Travel subsidy is available. In terms of domestic programs, these are industry related. Accelerate and elevate (only post-docs) are the two domestic programs. Accelerate is an internship of 4 months and 6 months block. Company provides \$7500, and Mitacs matches it and this goes towards to the professor. The student has to receive a minimum of \$10,000, and the student must balance work and school. Anywhere in Canada. There's travel subsidy for these too. A master student can do 4 months block, and PhD student can do 6 months block. No deadlines for this.

**6.1.5.** Absher will help connect Zsuzsanna with the office manager to host the seminar at the GSA Seminar. Absher will also help publicize these programs.

**6.1.6.** Ghaith recommends making these programs more accessible and connecting them with industries. He also mentioned that the GSA is running a survey and offers asking a couple of questions about Mitacs program.

## **6.2. Three Minutes Reports**

### **Sharma:**

- First Financial Literacy workshop. 50+ attended. Received cheque from RBC to sponsor it.
- \$1000 form student care was received.
- Spoke with Kevin Smith and sent him the TVC funding agreement. Waiting for response.
- Dealing with backdated cheques recently.
- No response from Mr. George Foufas.
- Attended Scholarship Selection Committee.
- Attended NSERC and dean's scholar committee.

### **Gaspar:**

- Lunch with David Szuki.
- Met with CFS about day of action.
- Attended University Council Orientation
- Attended Campus Rec meeting. Registered students.
- Attended lunch with Arts and Science.
- Participated in the React Campaign.
- Will meet with Eleonore for the GSA Survey.
- Haven't gotten a proposal about the GradThink
- Contacting venue for Gala.
- Health Chat occurred on Sept 14<sup>th</sup>.

### **Sapal:**

- Have been in touch with Jason from SSLR and met with a grad student interested in joining the survey committee.

- Sat on Equity and International committee.
- Reaching out to students for council.
- Met with campus activation.
- Making a poster of wine & Cheese.
- Meeting Renata soon about activation of student bodies by us.
- Lunch with Arts and Science.

### **Absher:**

- Met with Sustainability Office to plan a forum/symposium for graduate students to present their research on sustainability. Looking into opportunity to host a Carbonless concert!
- Participated on the React Campaign for Sexual Assault Awareness on campus.
- Met with Peter and helped put out information for the USafe App.
- Met with WUSC to explore opportunities to collaborate on a project.
- Met with chairperson applicants.
- Met with CFS to plan a workshop around Sexual Assault Awareness Week on Consent Culture.
- Working with the U of S bookstore to get GSA products.
- Communicated various announcements to our members.
- Attended Wellness Strategy Team meeting.
- Helped out for the GSA Orientation and launched the GSA App during that day.
- Hosted, co-facilitated the first Health Chat of the year and found a volunteer yoga instructor from Moksha Studios.
- Launched the GSA Community Engagement page on the website.
- Met with Kayla Madder to explore the possibility of starting a Comfort Room at the GSA.
- Lunch with Arts and Science.

### **Ghaith;**

- Had 24 meetings.
- Worked with CFS to hire a fieldworker and to pass a motion to have academic leave for the day of action.
- Working on survey.
- Had two-day interviews for dean of library search.
- Met with CGSR dean search committee.
- Working with university council to get representation for grad committees.

### **6.3. Recycling**

**[N. Absher]**

**6.3.1.** Absher explained that executives must notify their attendees of recycling prior to their events and workshops to ensure the Commons is sustainable. Ghaith suggested making an announcements an announcement at the beginning of each event.

### **6.4. GSA Guppies**

**[C. Gaspar]**

**6.4.1.** Gaspar registered 4 teams. She had spent \$200 for the teams. Sharma mentioned that the executives weren't notified. Ghaith suggested to have a formal discussion around spending. If these aren't in the budget line. Sharma stated that if any spending is above 10% for any budget line, the executive must notify everyone (GSA Bylaws 2.5). Gaspar stated that this spending was in the minutes from the previous meeting and was collectively decided on.

**6.5. GSA Council Cheques** **[Z. Ghaith]**

**6.5.1.** Ghaith stated that last meeting VP finance was tasked to figure out how to calculate these cheques. Sharma explained that there's no formula to calculate these cheques, and the office manager isn't aware of these calculations. The previous VP Finance and President aren't aware. Sharma stated that this is on her priority list and will deal with it. Sharma asked Sapal to give her names of the councilors that the cheques will be written to. Ghaith explained that attendance is in a folder with the office manager, and the cheque goes out to the council.

**6.6. GSA Credit Card** **[Z. Ghaith]**

**6.6.1.** Ghaith asked Gaspar and Sharma on a policy for the credit card. Sharma explained that she has gone through a proposal Gaspar sent to her. It needs to be amended, because office manager is the only one with the authority to use it. However, VP finance needs to be aware of this card. She also explains that a raise of \$2000 is reasonable. Ghaith agrees \$2000 is reasonable also. His concern is that the VP finance has access to the budget and the card, so this will be sensitive in terms of the budget. Therefore, he supports the office manager to have authority (PIN Number to the credit card) only but only with discussion with the other people who have signing authority.

**6.6.2.** Gaspar stated other GSAs use their office manager to have access to the credit card. If the office manager is absent, then we can assign another executive to be responsible.

**6.6.3.** In the case of the office manager's absence, the best practice is to give it to VP External or President. Absher recommended having a minimum number of days that the credit card is refilled. Sharma explained that it will be automatically refilled. Ghaith reiterated that the Visa will be increased \$2000, and that VP external will have access to it in the case of the absence of the office manager (72 hours). Ghaith stated that only approved GSA business will be covered by the credit card. Sharma explained that there is a fee of transactions when using the credit card.

**6.6.4.** Ghaith moved a motion to increase the visa limit to \$2000 to the policy. Seconded by Sapal. All in favor. Motion carries. Ghaith moved a motion to add the VP External to be the card holder for GSA approved business in the

absence of Office Manager (72 hours) in the policy. Seconded by Sapal. All in favor. Motion carries. Ghaith moved a motion to amend (b) to include only GSA business. Seconded by Sapal. Motion carries.

**6.6.5.** Absher suggested tabling this policy to vote on the final draft during the next meeting. Ghaith stated VP External will make amendments and circulate it next meeting.

**6.7. GSA Orientation Volunteers** **[Z. Ghaith]**

**6.7.1.** Ghaith claimed that we promised volunteers to organize a volunteer appreciation. Sapal suggested to invite the volunteers to wine and cheese, otherwise, we could buy cake and celebrate them at a different event. Absher recommended having an appreciation night and hand out certificates.

**6.7.2.** Ghaith stated that some students asked GSA to accommodate for a variety of dietary restrictions, including kosher and GF. This is a recommendation for next year's orientation. Sapal mentioned that the patties were patties COR and GF. Sapal stated that this will be publicize it next time.

**6.8. GSA Social Media Promotion** **[Z. Ghaith]**

**6.8.1.** Ghaith stated that the social media is a great way to reach out students. Ghaith suggested VP Operation to promote \ the Facebook page to reach more students. Ghaith asked if there's a budget line for this. Sharma explained that there's no budget line for this. Sharma stated that promotion to friends would be more reasonable instead. Ghaith explained that the GSA social media is not only for our friends, but all graduate students. This is a reasonable way to engage more students. Absher agreed with that. Gaspar recommended to have these social media on the business cards. Ghaith moved a motion to allocate 60\$ from the new initiatives budget line towards promoting the Facebook page. Seconded by Gaspar. 4 in favor. 1 opposed. Motion carries.

**6.9. GSA Council Chair Updates** **[Z. Ghaith]**

**6.9.1.** Ghaith stated that himself and VP Operations met with the applicants. Although, they were great applicants, they decided to not nominate them due to discrepancy in timing or fit of position. President and VP Operation will reopen the applications.

**6.10. Proposals for GSA Ratified Associations** **[K. Sharma]**

**6.10.1.** Sharma is concerned that student associations that are sponsored sometimes invite executives, while other times there are no invitations. Ghaith stated that when we give money to a club, there's nothing in bylaws to invite the executives. This is up to them, and we cannot impose anything on anyone. Sharma claimed that we must come up with a guideline for sponsorships. Last year, the GSA imposed some rules on ISA. Ghaith stated that VP External should take this recommendation to the governance review

committee to add something to the bylaws. Sharma explained that the association should invite all executives and advertise the sponsorship.

**6.11. TVC Funding [K. Sharma]**

**6.11.1.** Sharma is in contact with the University Corp Lawyer, but there hasn't been any response. Ghaith recommended contacting him again. Sharma explained that he offered to give input, but he is not obligated since GSA is an independent organization.

**6.12. GSA Operating Budget [K. Sharma]**

**6.12.1.** Sharma explained that some budget lines are running low, and she will keep an updated budget in the office.

**6.13. Backdated Cheques [K. Sharma]**

**6.13.1.** Sharma stated that there are two old cheques, and recipients want the GSA to reissue these cheques due to auditing and there's no written proof of cheques. Ghaith recommended having this as a recommendation to the governance review committee. Sharam moved the following motion: *whereas* there is no written proof of these cheques.

*Whereas* the auditing has been completed for 2013/14 and 2014/15.

*Be it resolved*, the GSA will not reissue the graduate geological society cheques. Ghatih seconded it. All in favor. Motion passes.

**6.14. Discretionary Funds [K. Sharma]**

**6.14.1.** Sharma is asking what the guidelines are for the discretionary funds. Ghaith indicated that the discretionary funds is there for executives to use it on student initiatives and this was discussed in the GSA retreat. Sharma tabled this item for the next meeting.

**6.15. Sustainability Forum [N. Absher]**

**6.15.1.** Absher explained that it is important for graduate students to have a platform to showcase their research in sustainability. Therefore, she will be working with the office of sustainability to create a forum/symposium during Graduate Achievement Week (GAW). Ghaith stated that we can include it during GAW. Gaspar mentions to make it a theme-based, to allow for more engagement.

**6.16. Comfort Room [N. Absher]**

**6.16.1.** Absher explained that she will be working with Kayla to see if there's any opportunity to utilize one of the empty spaces in the GSA as a comfort room.

**6.17. Wine and Cheese [S. Sapal]**

**6.17.1.** Sapal has been in contact with Noah from Campus Activation Manager. She will make a poster and Absher will be publicizing the event.

**7. Adjournment at 7:10 PM.**