

Graduate Students' Association



GSA Executive Retreat Meeting Agenda

Sunday, May 15, 2016 - GSA Commons

09:40 A.M. – 5:39 P.M.

Present: Ziad Ghaith (President), Nafisa Absher (VP Operations), Shailza Sapal (VP Student Affairs), Carolyn Gasper (VP External), Ali Kiani (VP Academic), Dana Carriere (VP Aboriginal Liaison), Kusum Sharma (VP Finance).

1. Call to Order

1.1. Meeting called to order at 9:40 A.M.

2. Approval of Chair

2.1. Ghaith calls for nominations. No response.

2.2. Ghaith nominated by Sharma. All in favor. Motion passes.

3. Approval of Minute Taker

3.1. Absher nominated by Ghaith. All in favor. Motion passes.

4. Approval of the Agenda

4.1. Motion was circulated to everyone prior to the retreat.

4.2. Ghaith recommends amending the agenda as the executives go through it during the retreat. All agree.

5. Approval of the Minutes of GSA Executive Meetings:

5.1. Minutes of GSA Executive Meetings on May 10th, 2016

5.1.1. Sapal moves a motion to keep 6.6 in camera. Kiani seconded the motion. All in favor.

6. Session 1 - Old Business (9:00 -9:30 a.m.)

6.1. University Council/CFS/Student Forum/other

[Z. Ghaith]

6.1.1.1. Ghaith moves a motion to revote for all the committees according to the terms of references of each committee. Seconded by Sapal. All in favor.

6.1.2. University Councils Committees:

Academic Programs Committee: Absher will sit on this committee.

Teaching, Learning and Academic Resources Committee: Gasper and Carriere are both interested to sit on this committee. They will consult Patti McDougall if both can sit on the committee.

Planning and Priorities Committee: Ghaith will sit on this committee.

Research, Scholarly and Artistic Work: Kiani will sit on this committee.

International Activities Committee: Sapal will sit on this committee.

Scholarships and Awards Committee: Sharma will sit on this Committee

University Council: Ghaith states that the GSA bylaws highlights that the VP Academic is the voting member on this council, and another GSA executive serves as an observer. However, over the past four years, the president has served as the voting member, and the VP Academic was the observer. This is inconsistent with the GSA bylaws. Therefore, the executives must decide who to nominate for the voting and observer seats. Gasper will work to fix the Governance Review Committee. Ghaith moves a motion to vote on the voting and observer seats on this council. Kiani nominates himself to be the voting member. Sharma nominates Ghaith as the voting member. All in favor of Ghaith as the voting member. Motion passes. Ghaith will be the voting member and Kiani will be the observer at the University Council.

All were in favor of this.

6.1.3. CGSR Committees:

Earned Degrees Committee: Gasper will sit on this committee.

Equity and International Committee: Sapal will sit on this committee.

Awards Committee: Sharma will sit on this committee.

Executive Committee: Ghaith will sit on this committee.

Interdisciplinary Committee: Gasper will sit on this committee.

Graduate Programs Committee: Absher will sit on this committee.

Graduate Academic Affairs Committee: Kiani will sit on this committee.

All were in favor of this.

6.1.4. Student Forum:

Sapal nominates herself and Ghaith for this forum. All in favor.

6.1.5. Wellness Strategy Team Committee:

Sapal nominates Absher. All in favor.

6.1.6. Vice Provost Indigenous Engagement Student:

Carriere nominates one student.

Ghaith nominates two students.

Executives vote. All executives are in favor of Carriere's nomination. Carriere will contact the student to notify him of his involvement in this committee.

6.1.7. CFS:

Sapal nominates Gasper for the national representative position. This is a paid position.

Gasper nominates Absher for the provincial representative position.

Carriere nominates Ghaith for the provincial representative position. Ghaith backs down.

All were in favor of this. Gasper and Absher will be the GSA representatives on the CFS.

6.2. Planner Updates

[C. Gasper]

6.2.1. Gasper states that it's time to order the planner. The budget is \$5000, however, the order came to a total of \$4767 for 1700 planners. Half was recently paid, and the remainder will be paid. I Have a Plan is one of the sponsors of the planner. Gasper is also receiving welcoming messages from the University of Saskatchewan president, Premier, Minister of Education.

6.3. GSA Website

[N. Absher]

6.3.1. Absher updates the executives on the new website, and requests the executives to email her their photos as well as bio's to upload. Absher also states that it is important to make the GSA website more comprehensive. She requests the executives to email her any recommendations of content to add on the website.

6.3.2. Ghaith recommends forming a website committee. This committee will work to update the content of the website and add services, such as accommodations, Q & A, Guppies teams, community engagement, International students, discounts, ISIC,

ads, SPC card and links of various other services on campus. Sapal, Sharma, Kiani, Ghaith, Carriere and Gasper volunteered to be on this committee.

7. Session 2 – Team Building (9:30 a.m. -11:30 p.m.)

7.1. Executive Duties

- 7.1.1. Ghaith recommends that executives should go over the bylaws, know their personal portfolios and responsibilities. Informal communication is important → do this by visiting the commons and having coffee with one another. It's crucial to build healthy relationships amongst one another.
- 7.1.2. Sapal recommends working as a team and helping one another as a team.
- 7.1.3. Gasper states that it is important to build our relationships to have a successful year for our members.
- 7.1.4. Ghaith states that in the case of an urgent situation, he should be the official spokesperson, Absher would take over in his absence. Any communication to the graduate students would go through Absher via CGSR. All in favor.
- 7.1.5. GSA would like to have two lists, one including all graduate students, and another including post-docs. Post-docs should be included in the communication that is relevant to them, as they are members of the GSA. Absher will talk to CGSR.

7.2. Executive Meetings

- 7.2.1. Ghaith reminds the executives that they cannot miss more than 5 meetings.
- 7.2.2. Carriere states that in the case of a personal circumstance, the absent executive should write email their regrets to the executives.
- 7.2.3. Ghaith recommends keeping an excel sheet to follow the attendance of councilors. Sapal will be responsible for this.
- 7.2.4. Ghaith moves a motion that if an executive violates the GSA bylaws of missing more than 5 meetings, the executive committee can bring this to the council. Seconded by Gasper. All in favor.

7.3. Executive Communication

- 7.3.1. Absher proposes a 5-minute time limit on each item during executive meetings. All in favor.

7.3.2. Absher will make calls for agenda items a week prior to meetings by Absher. Executives must send agenda items 3 days before the meetings. After the minutes are written, it will be circulated prior to posting it online. All in favor.

7.4. Executive Decision Making

7.4.1. Ghaith moves a motion to vote on the following: 1) abstention votes do not count as a yes/no. 2) in the case of a tie, the motion will not pass. Seconded by Sapal. All in favor.

7.4.2. Ghaith moves a motion to accept email or online voting on urgent situations that may arise prior to executive meetings and for that particular executive to keep record of this and bring it to the next executive meeting. Seconded by a Gasper. All in favor.

7.4.3. Ghaith moves a motion to have a 24-hour response time frame during business days to emails, and if there is no reply, this means that the silent executive understands and agrees with the decision. Carriere amends this motion to have it be a 48-hour response time frame. All in favor.

8. Break #1: Lunch and Social

9. Session 2 – GSA Ongoing Services/initiatives (1:00 – 2:30 p.m.)

9.1. ISAC Cards

9.1.1. Ghaith suggests Absher and Gasper to become trained to issue this card. Publicize it amongst students and Gasper will engage USSU. Sharma will add this to the budget line and bring this to the council for approval.

9.2. U-Pass

9.2.1. Absher will publicize this and send out reminders in August, December & April. Stickers are picked up at USSU.

9.3. GSA Commons

9.3.1. Absher is responsible for the commons.

9.3.1.1. Indigenize the commons by presenting various Indigenous artwork → Ask Patti McDougall for donations of artwork. Goal is to have artwork at the commons by the fall.

- 9.3.1.2. Positive Space Initiative.
- 9.3.1.3. Potential development of the GSA → Ghaith will talk to CGSR.
- 9.3.1.4. Install surveillance cameras.
- 9.3.1.5. Publicize the booking of the commons. Executives can book the commons for personal events twice a year for free, however, if they needed a coordinator, it would be out of pocket.
- 9.3.1.6. Executives are interested in providing a new service at the commons. Absehr will consult with the bookstore to sell GSA goodies at the commons.
- 9.3.1.7. GSA commons will buy a coffee bar for the members.

9.4. Health & Dental Plan

- 9.4.1. Gasper and Sharma will contact the USSU regarding the health provider.
- 9.4.2. Gasper and Sharma will be the contact with our health insurance provider.

9.5. Social Groups

- 9.5.1. Social groups get ratified. This will be voted upon at the executive meetings and approved at council meetings. Ratification begins August 31st, 2016 through Fluid Survey.
- 9.5.2. Sapal will take lead of this.
- 9.5.3. GSA will request that the social groups come to the executive meetings and explain their plans for the funding/sponsorship of their events.

9.6. GSA Academic Council

- 9.6.1. Ghaith recommends that the executives begin recruiting for councilors. The GSA will also send a request for councilors from each department or academic unit. 60 councilors are ideal.
- 9.6.2. GSA plans to tabulate the attendance of the GSA Academic Council.

9.7. Human Resources – Coordinators + GSA Staff

- 9.7.1. GSA plans to hire a new coordinator in August. Hiring committee will need to call for applicants, screen through applications and interview candidates.

9.8. GSA Social Media and Website

- 9.8.1. Absehr plans to increase diversity and will activate the GSA twitter account.

9.9. Monthly Newsletter

9.9.1. Absher and Ghaith will take lead on this. Absher will send reminders for items and compile it at the end of the month beginning in September.

9.10.GSA Bursaries

9.10.1. Absehr will organize a committee that includes the VP Academic, VP finance and 3 councilors. Absher will refer to the bylaws when working on this. The Bursary will be announced in July. Absher will consult with the Crisis Aid Program to improve the bursary selection rubric and content of the application.

9.11. GSA Crisis Aid Program

9.11.1. GSA initiated this last year and funded \$10,000. Sharma and Ghaith will follow up with this program.

9.12.GSA Guppies

9.12.1. Carriere will continue this initiative, however, Gasper will take over once Carriere is done her term.

9.13.GSA Health Chat

9.13.1. Gasper & Absher will continue leading this.

10. Break#2: Tea/Coffee

11. Session 4 – GSA Initiatives for the upcoming year (3:00 -5:00 p.m.)

11.1. GSA Survey

11.1.1. Sepal will take care of this.

11.1.2. GSA will form a survey committee. Executives decide to launch the surveys by November. Kiani will help Sapal.

11.1.3. Ghaith will highlight this in the proposal to CGSR.

11.2. Orientations

11.2.1. Sepal will take the lead. GSA plans to host 2000 graduate students.

11.2.2. Call for volunteers will be made on the website, email & social media. Absher and Sapal will work on the communications.

11.3. Graduate Students Achievement Week

11.3.1. GSA decided to merge the 3-minute thesis and the conference.

11.3.2. Carriere will help to improve the achievement week.

11.4. Social Events

- 11.4.1. A social event every month.
- 11.4.2. September is wine and cheese.
- 11.4.3. October – cultural event
- 11.4.4. November – game night
- 11.4.5. December – Christmas party
- 11.4.6. January – welcome back
- 11.4.7. February – speed dating
- 11.4.8. March – movie night
- 11.4.9. April – going away social

11.5. Workshops

- 11.5.1.1. One workshop per month.
- 11.5.1.2. Two finances workshops in October and end of January
- 11.5.1.3. Industry talks – Ali will take care of this.
- 11.5.1.4. Kiani, Jebenessa & Ghaith offered to organize workshops.

11.6. Indigenization

- 11.6.1. Ghaith, Kiani & Carriere will take the lead to form a committee to discuss ways of indigenizing course material.
- 11.6.2. Kiani will organize workshops relating to indigenization.

11.7. Tuition Consultation

- 11.7.1. GSA decided to incorporate this in the GSA survey. Sapal and Ghaith will take the lead on this initiative.

11.8. Tax Filing

- 11.8.1. Sharma will take care of this. She will consult with the Edward School of Business and organize workshops.

11.9. GSA App

- 11.9.1. Absher will be the lead for the GSA app, and it is expected to launch prior to orientation.

11.10. GSA Garden

11.10.1. Gasper is the lead for this initiative. The garden will be outside of the commons. GSA is applying for the sustainability grant worth \$300 to help plant the garden.

11.11. Sustainability

11.11.1. Gasper will work on this to reduce waste. She will also sit on the Green Committee to reduce food waste and creating a green space. Ghaith will help.

11.12. CLS

11.12.1. Ghaith explains that the GSA worked with CLS which is ran by the law department. The GSA paid \$5000 to provide legal services to graduate students on academic and non-academic issues. Sharma, Ghaith & Kiani will visit the CLS to follow up on this initiative.

11.13. Town Halls

11.13.1. Ghaith explains that the GSA holds town halls to discuss important issues. GSA would like to invite the university leaders to have a discussion about the graduate student representation at the University committee. However, this will require the amendment of the University of Saskatchewan Act. Ghaith will write a proposal to the University of Saskatchewan Admin and Ministry of education to amend this Act.

11.14. GU15 Conference

11.14.1. March or April 2017, GSA will host the first GU15 in Saskatoon.

11.14.2. Gasper will take the lead, and Ghaith will co-lead. All executives volunteered to help.

12. Break #3: Tea/Coffee

13. Session 5 – Scheduling (5:30 – 6:30 p.m.)

13.1. Executive Meetings

13.1.1. July 19th, August 16th, September 6th & 20th, October 11th & 25th, November 8th & 22nd, December 6th & 20th, January 10th & 24th, February 7th & 21st, March 7th and 21st, April 4th & 18th.

13.2. Council Meetings (every Thursday)

13.2.1. June 21st, July 5th, August 23rd, September 27th, October 18th, November 29th, December 13th, January 31st, February 28th, March 28th, April 25th (AGM).

13.3. GSA Events

13.3.1. GSA Achievement Week: March 20th – 24th (subject to change)

13.3.2. Orientation: September 1-9, 2016 (Sapal will contact USSU to confirm when their orientation is held).

13.3.3. Social events: Fridays for social events. September 30th(Wine & Cheese), October 28th, November 25th, December 16th, January 27th, February 24th, March 31st, April 25th after the AGM (end of the year social)

14. Adjournment at 5:39 P.M.