



University of Saskatchewan - Graduate Students' Association

Executive Meeting Minutes - March 27, 2018

Present: D. Bennett (VP Finance and Operations), Z. Ghaith (Hon. President), A. Kiani (VP Student Affairs), I. Efimoff (Indigenous Liaison), N. Sahtout (VP External).

Regrets: None

1. Call to Order / Opening Remarks

The President called the meeting to order at 5:35PM. The President welcomed us and encouraged all present to be efficient in the discussions of these important matters.

2. Approval of the Agenda

The President noted that the agenda had been circulated in advance as per the usual practice. He asked if there were any amendments to the agenda.

3. Approval of the March 10/2018 Meeting Minutes

The President noted that the minutes are posted on the website and they were circulated via email. He sought out any additions, changes, and/or amendments. Hearing none the VP Finance and Operations moved to approve the minutes as circulated. Seconded by the VP External. All in favour. The motion carries unanimously and the minutes are approved.

4. Items for Action

4.1 Motion (E005-2018): Request for Funding form History Graduate Students Committee for the De Brou Memorial Lecture (Proposal Attached via Email).

The President notes that HGSC sent an email which was forwarded to the team. They are requesting funding in the amount of \$60 for an event they are hosting. The funds will go to poster printing. The President stated that due to the nature of the event and the

specificity of their request he saw no need for HGSC to come and present to us in person. He asked if there were any concerns. The Indigenous Liaison asked how many graduate students will be attending. The President noted that a general number of attendees (not a specific number of graduate students) was circulated in the email.

The VP External moves to fund HGSC for \$60. Seconded by the Indigenous Liaison. All in favour. Motion carries unanimously.

The VP Finance will contact the HGSC to make the necessary arrangements.

4.2 Motion (E006-2018): Motion to assign a GSA member to the University Staff Excellence Award Committee (Information attached via Email).

The President notes that the GSA must assign someone to this committee. This committee meets once per year to review submissions and nominations for the Staff Excellence Award. This award is for staff not faculty and it used to be called The President's Award. The VP Student Affairs has sat on this committee as has the VP Operations and Communications. The VP External notes she has nominated someone in the past. The President noted that given staff work is relevant to the portfolio of the VP Finance and Operations that he should sit on this committee. The President moved to appoint the VP Finance to this committee. Seconded by the Indigenous Liaison. All in favour. Motion carries unanimously.

The VP Finance and Operations will contact them with this update.

4.3 Motion (E007-2018): BIRT VP Finance and Operations contact our legal counsel within 72 hours to seek further clarification re: stale-dated cheques

VP Finance and Operations stated he was concerned about this matter since the last meeting, and sought out some more information by speaking to an accountant that he knew (he noted that obviously he did not want to spend GSA money asking an accountant or lawyer unless absolutely necessary). VP Finance and Operations notes that he tried to detail the circumstances as accurately as possible. The President told the VP Finance that there may be some more information about this issue that was brought forward by the previous office holder in a Board meeting but that information does not appear to have been captured in the minutes. The answer VP Finance and Operations received was that a debt is a debt and cheques that can be substantiated need to be reissued upon request.

The VP Finance and Operations noted that he respects the democratic decision making process that this committee undertook last week, he thinks it is more important to follow the appropriate rules, especially as it involves money and as the Corporate Treasurer, he would be at fault. VP Finance and Operations requests that with the permission of this committee, we undertake a formal legal clarification on this matter. The VP Finance and Operations further noted that there will obviously be costs in this matter that may be in excess of any cheques that have been requested to be reissued but it seems like a necessary expenditure and is the only way he feels he can offer the substantiation that members of the Executive Team want.

The VP External queries if we should move this to the confidential session. The VP Finance and Operations noted that he submitted it to the open session in interests of transparency and open democratic governance and would prefer it be kept in the open session. The VP Student Affairs and the Indigenous Liaison were comfortable with either eventuality as was the VP External. This item remained in the open session.

VP Finance and Operations also noted that in the last meeting where this was discussed it was mentioned that this will impact our current budget, but that VP Finance and Operations offered the clarification that this isn't the case at all. It would impact the budget year the cheque comes from. Generally unspent funds don't carry over into the next budget. Whatever funds that happen to be left over just remain in our account.

The President thanked the VP of Finance and Operations for bringing this back to the committee to address his concerns. The President stated that he sees the value in contacting the lawyer to ensure we have the right direction in the policy. He sees this as a good investment in the future and to ensure it will be included in the policy as the Governance Committee reviews it. He is strongly supportive of having the right policy for the future for the GSA.

The VP Finance explained the retainer for the lawyer and how future amounts will be taken from this amount until it is exhausted. The President noted this money stays in the trust account for the GSA as a client and is a common practice for lawyers. He reiterated that it will be nice to ensure that we have the right information in our policies and bylaws.

The Indigenous Liaison notes that we should get this sorted out to ensure that cheques are distributed based on a proper legal framework. It will have an administrative cost up front but it will likely make itself up in costs after a couple of fiscal cycles.

The VP Finance and Operations notes we will have proper legal standing to make these decisions properly. The VP External requested a slight amendment to the wording of the motion. The VP Finance and Operations was fine with that and moved the motion. Seconded by the Indigenous Liaison. All in favour. Motion carries unanimously.

The President and the VP Finance will make the proper arrangements.

4.4 Motion (E008-2018): Whereas GSA bylaws 5.2.4 restricts expenditure amounts above certain amounts or percentages of budget lines without a majority vote of the Executive. BIRT following expenditures be authorized:

- Payment via JV to Culinary Services in the amount of 1153.66 on March 19/2018 for 3MT Lunch
- Payment to Creative Touch Wedding Designs in the amount of 2725.93 on March 16/2018 (for Gala costs not wedding costs)
- Payment to E.M. in the amount of 839.37 for costs and expenses related to 3MT (all receipts and invoices attached to claim form)

The VP Finance and Operations noted that this motion is included to comply with our bylaws. The motion was moved by the VP Finance and Operations. Seconded by the President. All in favour. Motion carries unanimously.

5. Items for Information

5.1 Update on GSA Survey

The Indigenous Liaison wanted to keep everyone in the loop. She contacted the Ethics Office to ensure she was the principal investigator. In order to ensure the PI was updated it was necessary to submit an amendment to ensure we are following the proper procedure. While doing this she submitted the section on adding prizes and the questions specializing in our Queer communities since we had to submit an amendment anyways.

The Indigenous Liaison noted there was some confusion on their part with the retirement of a key staff person there. The amendments are small changes but she wants to follow the procedure as she is the PI and anything that goes wrong could come back and affect her reputation. She further noted that Survey Monkey is just ready and waiting but she will double check the logic of the survey one more time.

The President asked if the survey could still go out in April. The Indigenous Liaison notes we can send out the communications via CGPS. The President suggests it to be sent out in a separate email as per our agreement with them on this matter.

5.2 Update on the GSA Bookkeeper

The VP Finance and Operations met with the recommended bookkeeper and it was a positive meeting. VP Finance notes that this is a challenging time of the year to change bookkeepers as it is right in the middle of tax season and financial year ends. VP Finance notes that with the change in bookkeeper it seems like a problematic time to even think about changing our auditors so unless there was a specific motion brought forward to do so he will not explore that possibility.

The VP External noted that we have strong records from our 2017 bookkeeping but we should at least have everything up to 2016 audited by the current auditor. The VP Finance and Operations has been in contact with the auditor and is hoping for updates on progress ASAP.

The VP Finance also noted that the bookkeeper will help with the generation of certain tax forms going forward.

5.3 GSA Free Tax Clinic

The VP Finance and Operations reported that there will be free tax clinics where GSA members can get assistance with their Canadian Income Tax provided they meet a few criteria in their tax situation (such as no capital gains or losses or they haven't filed for bankruptcy). The times and dates are April 2 from 4:00 - 7:00PM, April 4 from 4:00 - 7:00PM, and April 6th from 4:00PM - 7:00PM. The volunteer training was provided under the auspices of the Canada Volunteer Income Tax Program which is part of the CRA and we are utilizing the Ufile Software which we have free access to as CFS members. To thank the volunteers for their time and efforts VP Finance will use his discretionary fund to print certificates of appreciation, the President agreed to sign letters

of thanks for them, and also VP Finance is organizing and paying for a pizza party to take place right after the last session. The VP Finance and Operations invited any Executive to volunteer for this important project.

The VP Finance and Operations notes that he is using lots of word of mouth advertising and ISSAC is notifying students about the event. He is hesitant to create an event as we have a limited number of volunteers and time spots.

The President noted that the event has already been advertised by some departments.

6. Other Business

The President asked if there was any other business to be shared with the Executive Committee. The VP External noted that we still need to sell gala tickets. VP Finance has sold 5, Indigenous Liaison has sold 5 and has more lined up to sell, the President has sold some to professors. The VP External noted that we have a piano player for dinner and a trumpeter to introduce the Lt. Governor.

The President advised the VP External to make sure to audition the trumpet player to ensure he is of regal quality. The President also thanked the VP External for all her hard work on this event. He noted that everyone is looking forward to the event and he is confident it will be one of the best.

7. Confidential Session

8. In Camera Session

9. Adjournment of Meeting

The President declared the meeting adjourned at 7:06PM without objection.