



**University of Saskatchewan - Graduate Students' Association**  
**GSA Executive Meeting Agenda**  
**Tuesday, January 23, 2018- GSA Commons, 4:30PM – 6:30PM**

**Present:** Z. Ghaith (President); A. Kiani (VP Student Affairs); N. Sahtout (VP External); I. Efimoff (Indigenous Liaison)

**1. Call to Order / Opening Remarks**

Meeting called to order at 4:40pm.

**2. Approval of the Agenda**

*Efimoff moved to approve the agenda as written. Kiani Seconds. All in favour. Motion carried.*

**3. Approval of the December 15, 2017 GSA Executive Minutes**

*Kiani moved to approve minutes as written on the website. Seconded by Sahtout. All in favor. Motion carried.*

**4. Approval of the January 9, 2018 GSA Executive Minutes**

Minutes will be uploaded to website as soon as possible.

*Efimoff moved to approve the minutes as written. Seconded by Kiani. All in favour. Motion carried.*

**5. Items for Actions**

**5.1. Funding Request: Psychology Graduate Student Association**

Brandon Sparks was welcomed as a guest to discuss three events that the Psychology Graduate Students' Association will be taking a part in; Mardi Gras, which is done in collaboration with SPSS, Trivia Night and the Year End Bowling.

Mardi Gras will be held on February 9, 2018 and is held in collaboration with SPSS (Saskatchewan Psychology Student Society), the undergrad version of PGSA. This has been hosted a few years by SPSS in which they have a large Mardi Gras themed event at Louis' Loft, with food, costumes, music. This year PGSA wants to help them so that they can raise funds for SARBI to help support the charity and ensure that they can stay open, as all the money raised will go directly to them. In this effect, they have cut the ticket price in half to increase the number of people attendance (this year \$10/ticket, down from \$20), decreased the costs associated with hosting the event, and finding funding to help reduce the costs as well.

Kiani asked how many graduate students will be in attendance. Sparks said that last year there was about 30 graduate students but expects more this year as the ticket price has decreased. There also seems to be more Psychology graduate students that are more engaged and attending more of the social events. This year will expect greater than 30 graduate students as not only

Psychology graduate students attend. Efimoff asked whether Sparks has sought funding from other sources. Sparks mentioned that the Psychology department will provide a small donation towards the Trivia Night or the End of Year Bowling. Efimoff has asked whether SPSS has obtained funding. Sparks mentioned that they have gone through USSU to obtain funding for this event. Sahtout asked about how the environment of the attendees is. Sparks mentioned that last year, people were quite responsible and the event, although officially ends at 2 am, dwindled down at around 12:00 am. Sparks reiterated that people were respectful, and there was a large focus on the food, music, clothing, and culture of Mardis Gras, as opposed to drinking.

Ghaith mentioned that these events sound very exciting. Ghaith discussed that perhaps Mardi Gras could be held in the GSA Commons because ratified Academic Councils get the Commons for free and for a minimal fee after 7:30 pm. Ghaith asked about alcohol. Sparks mentioned that the reason for having this at Louis is so that individuals wanting alcohol could purchase it directly from the bar.

Ghaith asked if there was a specific amount of money being proposed for sponsorship for the three events. Sparks indicated that he understood the maximum is CAD 500 and he is unaware how much money is available to provide so understand that whatever the Executives deem appropriate is greatly appreciated by PGSA. Ghaith understands the value of all of these events and therefore explained that any decision is based on the budget and not the event, as all events are valuable to graduate students. Ghaith also mentioned that any sponsorship from the GSA should be announced and the GSA logo should be used on any printed material; a means to create a connection with the students. Sparks mentioned that the Mardi Gras posters have already been printed and Ghaith mentioned that as long as sponsorship is mentioned elsewhere, there is no need to reprint the poster.

Sparks mentioned that the sponsorship request is for all 3 events. He mentioned that last year was the first year to host the End of Year Bowling event and it was successful and fun because a lot of senior Psychology graduate students, who were just returning to the city from clinical rotations, attended. At this event PGSA pays for their bowling, depending on the number of people that RSVP. PGSA also pays for 3 / 4 cabs at the end of the night so that they can go to Winston's, so that the ride home from Winston's is more affordable, and because the initial kick-off event each year for the PGSA is hosted at Winston's. Ghaith thanked Sparks for coming to the meeting and reminded him that any decision is based on the budget and not the event.

Efimoff informed the Executives that the Trivia Night was well attended by graduate students. Ghaith informed the Executives that there is CAD 4800 budgeted for Graduate Student Club Funding. Taking into account the number of requests that come at this time of year, Ghaith suggests that we can provide 350 for this event.

***Ghaith moved a motion to approve 350 for PGSA. Kiani seconded. All in favor. 1 abstention by Efimoff.***

## **5.2. Funding Request: Bangladeshi Student Association**

Naveed Ahmed was welcomed as a guest to discuss the series of events that will be hosted by the Bangladesh Students Association. The BSA will be hosting a few major events this year, one of

which is February 2, of which the purpose is to integrate the newcomers with the existing community, as well as give a farewell to graduating students. Another event will be held on February 21<sup>st</sup>, to celebrate the International Mother Language Day; the entire International community will be invited to this. Another program will occur on April 14<sup>th</sup>, to celebrate the first day of the Bengali New Year. The BSA also held a games night at the end of December and a sports event at the end of summer. The BSA hopes to receive some funding from the GSA.

Efimoff asked whether the BSA has looked for funding from other sources. For the February 2<sup>nd</sup> event, the majority of costs will be covered by the tickets (CAD 10 for members, 15 for non-members). If the BSA sells the expected number of tickets, there will be a CAD 1000 deficit. Depending on the deficit, they will seek funding from some Faculty, Alumni and community members.

Efimoff asked how many graduate students will be in attendance at each of these events. The BSA expects that 30 to 40 will be in attendance. Efimoff further asked if the hall has already been rented and was told that the Queens theatre in the Education building has been booked. Efimoff asked how many attendees will be there and was told that there will be undergraduates, alumni, faculty and members of the community, with a total of about 200 – 250.

Ghaith summarized that there will be multiple events; International Mother Language Day will be held on February 21<sup>st</sup> and another event on April 14<sup>th</sup>, which celebrates the Bengali New Year. The community assists in hosting these events. At each of these events, the expected number of graduate students in participation is probably likely to be more than 30.

Ghaith informed our guest that the funding depends on the budget and not on the event, as all events are appreciated and important. Funding from the GSA cannot be used to purchase alcohol. Funding from the GSA requires that the sponsorship must be announced and that the logo should be available on any printed material. Efimoff explained that the maximum amount of funding that can be given to any student group is CAD 500, as per our governing documents. Ghaith thanked Naveed for joining us and informed him that a decision will be relayed via email within a day.

***Ghaith moved a motion to approve 350 for BSA. Kiani seconded. All in favor. Motion carried***

### **5.3. Commons Office Duty**

- January 24: Naheda 9-4:30
- January 25: Naheda 9-4:30
- January 26: Iloradanon 9-12, Ziad 1-4:30
- January 29: Naheda 9-4:30
- January 30: Ali 9-12, Ziad 2-4:30
- January 31: Naheda 9-4:30
- February 1: Naheda 9-4:30
- February 2: Iloradanon 9-12, Ziad 1-4:30
- February 5: Naheda 9-4:30
- February 6: Naheda 9-1:30, Ziad 2-4:30
- February 7: Ali 9-2

- February 8: Naheda 9-4:30
- February 9: Iloradanon 9-12, Ziad 1-4:30
- February 12: Naheda 9-4:30
- February 13: Ali 9-12, Ziad 2-4:30

#### **5.4. GSA Commons Fees**

Sahtout has received requests for the use of the GSA Commons discounted price. The events would be geared towards both undergraduate and graduate students and the wider community.

Efimoff worries about giving discounts to certain organizations as the GSA also works in collaboration with other organizations, but does not provide discounts to others. Efimoff needs a more logical rationale for providing the space for free. Efimoff requires more clarification for this. Efimoff suggested that there could be a bulk policy for those requesting to use the space.

The Executives are uncomfortable to provide discounts for certain groups while not providing the same discount for others. Efimoff indicated that there should be a policy to provide a clear procedure for how the space can be booked and at what price. This should be discussed in the governance committee, perhaps with some guidance from the Executives.

#### **5.5. Working committee - U of S's current national and international rankings**

Sahtout has been asked to sit on a working committee that will look at the U of S's current national and international rankings, and make recommendations for actions to potentially improve our position in the respective rankings moving forward. In particular, the committee will be looking at our reputation and academic excellence. Ghaith suspects that this will be a couple of meetings plus formation of a document. Sahtout enquires as to whether other Executives would like to sit on this committee. None would like.

*Ghaith moved a motion to approve Sahtout joining this committee so as to represent the views of graduate students. Efimoff seconded. All in favor. 1 abstention by Sahtout. Motion carried.*

#### **5.6. Interim Vice-President Finance and Operations** (email discussion – January 16, 2018)

To recommend VP External (Naheda Sahtout) to the Council/Board to serve as VP Finance and Operations on interim basis, under the supervision of the GSA President, until the by-election is complete.

*Ghaith moved this motion. Efimoff seconded. All in favor. 1 abstention by Sahtout. Motion carried.*

#### **5.7. Signing Authority** (email discussion – January 17, 2018)

Whereas GSA Office Manager (Sherri Rohovich) and GSA Vice President Finance and Operation (Jordan Bonkowski) have resigned from the Graduate Students' Association, as of December 15, 2017 and January 16, 2018, respectively

Whereas the GSA Bylaw indicates that "In the case where one of these positions is vacant, the Executive must appoint another Executive member, within five (5) business days, as a third co-signer by a majority vote of the Executive"

BE IT RESOLVED GSA Executive Committee appoint GSA External (Naheda Sahtout) and VP Student Affairs (Ali Kiani) as temporary signing authority until Office Manager and VP Finance and Operations positions are appropriately filled.

*Ghaith moved this motion. Efimoff seconded. All in favor. Motion carried.*

## **6. Items for Information**

### **6.1. U-PASS Updates**

Ghaith and Sahtout met with Saskatoon Transit on January 16, 2018. There were discussions on multiple topics;

- Potential agreement over the summer
- A potential non-agreement over the summer, in which there could be discounted passes offered from the City, although they mentioned that the discount would probably not be as much as what we get for the Fall or Winter terms.
- A potential opt-in system, in which only interested students would use, although they were not very receptive towards this as they've only ever use opt-out's.

We explained to them the difference between graduate and undergraduate students and the fact that graduate students have to register to maintain status, even though they may not be in the city. Saskatoon Transit were very receptive to our discussions and said that they will study all the potential suggestions and get back to us.

We also discussed the potential issue of them providing the CPI in the summer. The team was very positive about us achieving a plan that would be beneficial to both parties. Ghaith shared the survey that graduate students filled out in late Fall and the Transit team will take these comments into account.

The engagement manager of Saskatoon Transit would like to potentially come visit the graduate students at a Council meeting in March. Ghaith and Sahtout are currently waiting for their response. In the future, the City wants to be more engaged with graduate students. It would be beneficial to have Executives meet Saskatoon Transit during the summer term as a transitional and information session.

### **6.2. Open Educational Resources**

Ghaith received an email back in December from GMCTL requesting to meet with some of the Executives. Sahtout and Ghaith met with Heather from GMCTL in January to discuss Open Educational Resources. GMCTL has been working extensively with students to try and increase awareness to Open Educational Resources. GMCTL wants to engage graduate students as graduate students can participate in creating open resources, in collaboration with professors. This would be a great opportunity as it would count as a publication.

Currently, GMCTL has some projects that are developing open resources. Heather was invited to come discuss to Council the different aspects of Open Educational Resources. Unfortunately she will not be able to attend; however, she will share information that will be shared to council in February.

This is a great opportunity that is funded and it would be of great value to a graduate students CV's. Both professors and students can benefit from this and it is important to spread this resource. In general this initiative should be started by a professor, which can then recruit graduate students to help in the preparation of the open resource.

Sahtout will email Heather to enquire more about the funding opportunities for graduate students and will have that information available for the February council meeting.

## **7. Other Business**

### **7.1. Meeting with Student Affairs and Services**

Sahtout would like to remind the Executives that we will be meeting with the Director of Student Affairs and Services on Thursday January 25 at 5 pm, in his office, to discuss the wellness services and facilitates available on campus for students to access.

## **8. Confidential Session**

## **9. In Camera Session**

## **10. Meeting Adjourn**

*Efimoff moved to adjourn meeting at 6:50 pm. Seconded by Kiani. All in favor.  
Meeting adjourned.*