



University of Saskatchewan - Graduate Students' Association
Executive Meeting Minutes
December 20, 2018

Present: Naheda Sahtout (President), Jesus Corona Gomez (VP Finance and Operations), Edgar Martinez-Soberanes (VP Student Affairs), Somtochukwu Ufondu (VP External).

Regrets: n/a

1. Call to Order / Opening Remarks

The President called the meeting to order at 5:05 PM.

2. Approval of the Agenda

The President asked if there were any additions or amendments to the agenda as circulated. Seeing none:

Motion to approve the agenda as circulated moved by the VP Finance and Operations and seconded by the VP External.

Motion carried.

3. Approval of the December 6, 2018 Executive Meeting Minutes

The President asked whether there were any further amendments to the December 6, 2018 Executive Meeting Minutes.

Motion to approve the December 6, 2018 Executive Meeting Minutes moved by the VP Student Affairs and seconded by the VP Finance and Operations.

Motion carried.

4. Items for Action

4.1 Cheque remittance

Whereas GSA bylaws 5.4.3 restricts expenditure amounts above \$500, of any budget line, with the exception of salaries and Executive honorariums, without a majority vote of the Executive.

BIRT that the following expenditures be authorized:

- 3 Bursary recipients in the sum of \$1,000.00 each issued on October 31, 2018 for the GSA Fall Bursary Chq# 3843, 3846 and 3842 (missed in previous minutes).
- Reimbursement to the GSA President in the sum of \$589.71 issued on December 6, 2018 for travel expenses for Parliament of World Religions Conference, meeting with external delegates, commons supplies and health chat expenses, cheque 3876.
- Payment to University of Saskatchewan in the sum of \$34,662.46 issued on December 6, 2018 for payment of CFOAPAL, cheque 3883.
- Payment to Chip Bookkeeping Services Inc. in the sum of \$1129.43 issued on December 7, 2018 for November 2018 Bookkeeping services, cheque 3885.

Motion to approve the above expenditures moved by the VP Finance and Operations and seconded by the President.

Motion carried.

5. Items for Information / Discussion

5.1 VP Finance and Operations Winter term Plans

a. GSA Bursary Winter term

20 Bursaries of \$1000 each will be provided in the winter term. The VP Finance and Operations will coordinate one or two meetings with the GSA Bursary Selection Committee in late February to evaluate the applications and select the recipients of the winter 2019 GSA Bursary.

b. Tax File Service

The Tax File service that has been offered by the GSA, and organized by the VP Finance and Operations, will be held in the winter term. This service will be offered using UFile in March. Due

to the popularity of this service, among the graduate community in the past years, volunteers will be sought out and trained.

c. Finance and Operations tasks

Financial records will continue to be organized and kept for audits and for transparency with the GSA members. In collaboration with the Office Manager and GSA Coordinators, focus will be provided to ensure that excellent service is provided to graduate students. Support will be offered to the other Executives during their activities and events, as required, at the GSA Commons; these include the weekly Meditation sessions that was introduced and became popular in the Fall 2018 term.

5.2 VP Student Affairs Winter term plans

a. GSA Winter Orientation

The GSA Winter Orientation will take place on January 9th, 2019 from 3:30 to 6:00 PM at the GSA Commons. The objective of the orientation is to welcome incoming graduate students and give them a brief overview of the services and resources that are provided by the GSA, the University, and its partners. The winter orientation also serves as a crucial opportunity for incoming graduate students to meaningfully interact with their peers and feel more comfortable at the University of Saskatchewan. Unfortunately, I will not be able to attend due to personal reasons. I have left everything planned and the execution will be overseen by the GSA president on the date of the event.

b. Graduate Student Research Conference

I have defined the name for the research conference that will be hosted on February 27th and 28th, 2019. The title is: Research for a Better World - A Holistic Approach. I believe that with this title and theme, students from a wide range of fields will feel welcome to participate. Additionally, the conference will be broken down into various sections to narrow the focus of each session. Registration and abstract submission will be done online on the GSA website and it will be open in early January 2019.

c. Three Minute Thesis Funding Request

I applied on December 10th, 2018 for a funding opportunity by the Saskatchewan Health Research Foundation. This money was going to be used towards the 3MT competition and the research conference. Unfortunately, our application was denied. Please see below the response from the evaluating committee:

“Dear Mr. Martinez-Soberanes

Thank you for your submitted you SHRF Research Connections Grant application "University of Saskatchewan Three Minute Thesis Competition (3MT)" for \$5,000. I regret to inform you that SHRF is unable to provide support for your application. We recognize the importance of attending to this topic; however, the application does not fit the Research Connections purpose and objectives.”

Nevertheless, organization for the 3MT competition is underway and the event will be held in late March.

5.3 VP External winter term plans

a. Health Chats

In January, I plan to invite a few members of the Protective Services to offer a martial arts/self-defence session to our graduate students. Some benefits of self-defence skills include confidence, balance, self-discipline, improved physical condition, self-respect, reflexes, to mention but a few.

In February, I plan to host an arts therapy session with Helen Bzdel. Studies have shown that art therapy can reduce stress and anxiety – two of the most important factors that affect the productivity of graduate students.

b. First Aid

I plan to hold the 4th first aid/CPR session during the February reading break. This is still a tentative date.

c. Awards Gala

This will be held on April 6. The preparations have been underway and I have been meeting with the decorator on a monthly basis. Some colleges (including Studentcare) have also started responding positively to our request for funding. The Awards Committee will hold their first meeting in February.

5.4 President winter term plans

a. Appreciative Inquiry

In early February, and with the assistance of Dr. Keith Walker from the College of Education, we will host an Appreciative Inquiry session with graduate students and graduate faculty advisors. The purpose of this session is to engage graduate students and supervisors in a discussion about the positive aspects of a student-supervisor relationship. One of the main objectives of the session is to understand the aspects of a student-supervisor relationship that are needed for a successful graduate program. The discussion outcomes can be used to develop professional development modules for both students and supervisors to help enhance these positive aspects.

b. Student-Supervisor Agreement

In January, we will be presenting at the Graduate Chair Forum the student-supervisor agreement and the importance of its use. We have been successful in enhancing the visibility of the agreement; however, still more is needed. We have received a lot of positive feedback about the agreement and this is one more step in the right direction towards its implementation. In the meantime, and

c. Faculty Support Manual

We continue to work in collaboration with the Gwenna Moss Centre and the College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies on a faculty support manual. This manual is aimed at providing graduate supervisors with guidance and support so that they can be good supervisors. We hope to be able to present a rough draft of this manual to Council in March. With the development of this manual, there are opportunities to develop a graduate student support manual in the future with the same intentions in mind; to guide and facilitate a graduate students' journey at the University of Saskatchewan.

d. Graduate Student Participation on the Board of Governors

We presented to the Board of Governors in December after obtaining both support from University Council and Senate pertaining to graduate student participation on the Board. We will continue to work towards this goal.

6. Other Business

7. Confidential Session

8. In Camera Session

9. Adjournment of Meeting

The President asked whether there was any other business arising. Seeing none, the meeting was adjourned at 6:30 PM.