



**University of Saskatchewan - Graduate Students' Association**  
**Executive Meeting Minutes**  
**January 17, 2019**

**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 4:20 PM.

**2. Approval of the Agenda**

The President asked if there were any additions or amendments to the agenda as circulated. The President wished to add Item 4.4: Breakfast Initiative.

*Motion to approve the agenda as circulated and amended moved by the VP Student Affairs and seconded by the VP External.*

***Motion carried.***

**3. Approval of the December 20, 2018 Executive Meeting Minutes**

The President asked whether there were any further amendments to the December 20, 2018 Executive Meeting Minutes.

*Motion to approve the December 20, 2018 Executive Meeting Minutes moved by the VP External and seconded by VP Student Affairs.*

***Motion carried.***

These minutes have been posted to the website.

#### **4. Items for Action**

##### **4.1 Search Committee – Dean, College of Agriculture and Bioresources (as per email dated January 7, 2019)**

A graduate student is being requested to sit on the Search Committee for the Dean, College of Agriculture and Bioresources. As with all senior admin search committees, the composition, as approved by the University Board of Governors, must include a graduate student appointed by the GSA. Furthermore, the graduate student must be a member of that particular College.

The President reached out to the Soil Science Course Councillors, who have been actively engaged, to see whether one of them would be interested in sitting on this search committee.

Jennifer Bell indicated that she is interested; therefore:

*Motion to approve Jennifer Bell to serve as the graduate student representative, appointed by the GSA, on the Search Committee for the Dean, College of Agriculture and Bioresources moved by the VP External and seconded by the VP Student Affairs.*

*Motion carried.*

##### **4.2 Funding Request – Chemistry Course Council**

The VP Finance and Operations indicated that he had received a funding request from the Chemistry Course Council with a thorough description and budget of the event; Graduate Student Symposium. The President welcomed Douglas Fansher, the co-organizer of this event, to the Executive meeting and asked him to provide a brief description of the event. Fansher mentioned that the Graduate Student Symposium is currently a bi-annual event and is an opportunity for both staff and graduate students to interact in a formal setting.

Fansher mentioned that the event will take place on May 16 and 17. He mentioned that two speakers will be invited, one of them a member of Contango, a company in innovation place, who will speak about research and how the speaker started the company. Fansher stated that most of the participants of the event are graduate students, probably from 70 to 80 students. He explained that this event provides an opportunity for students to know a little bit more about what other research groups are doing through poster exhibition and presentations.

The VP Finance and Operations asked about the cost of rent of the place where the symposium will take place. Fansher answered that there will not be any rent cost since the symposium will

take place in Thorvaldson. Fansher mentioned that the main sponsors of this event are the GSA, the Chemistry Course Council (CCC), Department of Chemistry, College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (CGPS) and College of Arts and Science. Only the CCC has guaranteed financial support.

The President thanked Fansher for attending the meeting and mentioned that when the GSA sponsors an event, the GSA logo is expected to appear on the posters and an announcement should be made at the event. Fansher agreed to include the GSA logo on posters and advertising material. The President indicated that the decision was based on the budget and not on the event. The President thanked Fansher for providing the proposal and attending the Executive meeting to provide further information.

*The VP External moved to approve funding in the amount of \$500 to the Chemistry Course Council for the Graduate Student Symposium. This motion was seconded by the VP Finance and Operations.*

*3 in favour and 1 abstention (Sahtout).*

*Motion carried.*

#### **4.3 GSA Commons Use – SUNTEP**

The President indicated that the Saskatchewan Urban Native Teacher Education Program (SUNTEP) has requested to use the GSA Commons. SUNTEP used to book the GSA space through the IGSC. Since the IGSC is currently evaluating their direction, they are not able to book the GSA Commons for SUNTEP. Unfortunately, under these circumstances, SUNTEP is not able to use the GSA Commons free of charge as they are not a ratified group with the GSA. The GSA Executives discussed deeply the options available. In summary, it was agreed that SUNTEP be referred to the USSU, as the undergraduate student representatives, who could provide assistance with regards to booking options for undergraduate students. The President will directly communicate with SUNTEP and refer them to the USSU.

#### **4.4 Breakfast Initiative**

The President mentioned that one of the Faith leaders contacted us to see whether the GSA would host a few breakfasts as part of the Breakfast initiative program, which the GSA initiated with the Faith Leaders Council in the fall 2018. The President indicated that the idea is for the GSA to host two breakfast sessions, spending a maximum of \$70 dollars each. The food provided could include apples, muffins, and light snacks. The dates are January 23 at 8AM and March 13 at 8 AM in Marquis 104.

*Motion to approve the use of the GSA Workshops / Initiatives budget line for the two above mentioned breakfasts on January 23 and March 13 moved by VP Finance and Operations and seconded by the VP Student Affairs.*

***Motion carried.***

#### **4.5 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:

- Cheque 3898 on January 16, 2019 to Chip Bookkeeping Services Inc. RE: December 2018 Bookkeeping of \$1025.00.

*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 Lease Agreement**

The President informed the Executives that the lease agreement between the University and the GSA expires in April. The yearly administration fee is twelve dollars plus GST. The President asked the executives if they had any questions about the new lease that was circulated by email. The President indicated that this is a good opportunity to renew the lease with the University for another 10 years so as to keep operating as has been done.

## **5.2 STING proposal**

The President asked the Executives their opinion about the STING proposal and request for funding as circulated by email. The VP Student Affairs mentioned that since the amount of money is considerable it would be a good idea to have a formal report stating how the GSA funds will be used. The President mentioned based on the email, 75% of the funds has been guaranteed and they are looking for the remaining 25%. The VP External mentioned that if we were to be partners, it would be expected that the GSA is advertised properly with logo and name. The VP Finance and Operations commented that the amount of money they are requesting is substantial, for the GSA, and would probably require an increase in the student membership fees.

The President mentioned that supporting this initiative could imply an increase in the membership fees for graduate students by about \$3.5 per student per year. This represents about a 5% increase and would generate about \$12k next year. Half of this amount would be allocated for the STING proposal and another half would be used to fix computers at the GSA Commons and the offices. The President mentioned that we could go between 3% to 5% increase. This proposal is a 3 years commitment. The Executives agreed that a recommendation to Council would be well documented by the Board, after Council has had an opportunity to look over the proposal.

## **5.3 Discussion on First/Aid Sessions**

The VP External provided an update about the First/Aid Sessions for this term. The arrangements with the instructor is ongoing. She asked to set a registration fee of \$135 per student, although the VP External tried to negotiate a \$120 cost per student. However, she indicated that even at \$135 per student, the students are still saving around \$30. The VP Student Affairs mentioned that it is important to make it clear to her that she might get fewer students interested than last time, because of the increase in the cost, and that she should also be made aware that the GSA cannot guarantee a certain number of participants. The sessions for this term are scheduled to be held on February 16<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>.

## **5.4 Committee Meeting Reports**

*Sustainability Committee.* The VP External informed the Executives that the City of Saskatoon wants to share some information with student on how to be more sustainable. They are looking for

a place to host this event. SENS was contacted initially and they asked the GSA to provide the space to host this event for all graduate students. The VP External mentioned that the City of Saskatoon will do the advertisement and the GSA will send an email to the graduate community.

*Diversity Committee.* The VP External mentioned that the diversity committee was planning an event aimed at having live presentations from speakers of diverse backgrounds and identities. The speakers are yet to be confirmed and the event title is still in the brainstorming stages. The President offered to connect individuals from last year's diversity committee with the VP External. For the event, the diversity committee would like to provide a diverse meal including African, Asian, Canadian, and other dishes/delicacies. They are still exploring the costs of food. The Executives agreed to use monies from the GSA Workshops/Initiatives budget line

### **5.5 Appreciative inquiry**

The President mentioned that we are going to host, in collaboration with CGPS, an event where students and faculty will sit to talk about the positive aspects of the student-supervisor relationship, what tools can be developed to improve the relationship apart from the student-supervisor agreement. This plays an important role in mental health and student wellness. The event will be held in the GSA Commons on February 14th from 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM.

### **5.6 Update Audit Process**

The VP Finance and Operations indicated that the audit process for the 2016 GSA financial records has been completed. Currently, the bookkeeper and auditors are working on the 2017 and 2018 financial records. The President hopes that the 2017 audits will be completed prior to the AGM and that the 2018 audits prior to term completion.

## **6. Other Business**

The VP Student Affairs asked the Executives to promote with their friends and social circles the research conference at the GSA, which will take place on Feb 27 and 28. He mentioned that the deadline for abstract submission is on February 1<sup>st</sup>. The VP Student Affairs mentioned that this is a good opportunity for graduate students to hone their presentation skills in preparation for external conferences, because they can practice in a friendly environment.

The President anticipated that notification for the GSA Awards and GSA bursaries will go out in the first week of February.

#### **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 5:58 PM.