



University of Saskatchewan - Graduate Students' Association
Executive Meeting Minutes
February 14, 2019

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

Regrets: none

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. The VP Student Affairs wished to add an update on the Graduate Student Research Conference and the VP External also wished to include an update on the GSA Awards Gala. Both items were added as items for information.

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

Motion carried.

3. Approval of the January 31, 2019 Executive Meeting Minutes

The President asked whether there were any further amendments to the January 31, 2019 Executive Meeting Minutes.

Motion to approve the January 31, 2019 Executive Meeting Minutes moved by the VP Finance and Operations and seconded by the VP External.

Motion carried.

4. Items for Action

4.1 Funding Request from Plant Science GSA

The VP Finance and Operations indicated that he had received a funding request from the Plant Sciences Graduate Students' Association with a thorough description and budget for the 35th Annual Plant Sciences Graduate Student Symposium. The President welcomed Hu, representative of PSGSA, to the Executive meeting and asked him to provide a brief description of the event. Hu mentioned that 10 students from the Department of Plant Sciences are planning to participate in the 35th Annual Plant Sciences Graduate Student Symposium in North Dakota, USA on March 15-16, 2019.

Hu explained that this symposium brings graduate students together from North Dakota State University, the University of Manitoba and the University of Saskatchewan. This conference is an excellent opportunity, not only to promote plant science research at these universities, but also to promote the thriving agriculture industry in and around the prairies and a networking opportunity for the students. Students from these universities will present their research, which will cover a wide variety of topics related to plant sciences.

The VP External asked what amount would be left after covering the accommodation cost of \$3,760. Hu mentioned that the cost of travel and registration fees are the most important costs to cover after accommodation that represents \$4,240 giving a total of \$8,000. The VP Student Affairs indicated that the GSA contributes to the University Travel fund and each individual attending the symposium are encouraged to apply for it.

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

The VP Student Affairs moved to approve funding in the amount of \$500 to the Plant Science GSA to support their participation at the 35th Annual Plant Sciences Graduate Student Symposium. This motion was seconded by the VP External.

Motion carried.

4.2 Social Group Ratification Request

Satellite Rotary Club

The VP Students Affairs indicated that he had received two social group ratification requests. Firstly, he introduced Nyoni to the Executives, asking her to provide a brief description of the purpose of the Satellite Rotary Club social group and how it would benefit graduate students. Nyoni explained that most of the members of the Satellite Rotary Club were graduate students. The motivation to create this social group was due to the lack of a Rotary Club in the University of Saskatchewan. The purpose of the social group and benefits to the graduate students include; the opportunity to volunteer for the society, to have a chance to gain overseas experiences doing humanitarian services, to connect students with international job opportunities and participate in international projects such as water security projects.

The President asked whether the Saskatoon Rotary Club would fund the U of S group, to which Nyoni gave a positive affirmation. The President further enumerated some of the benefits of a social club being ratified with the GSA and added that since they were receiving funding from another organization, it may be inappropriate to request funding from the GSA. Nyoni explained that the purpose to be ratified with the GSA was to use the facilities of the GSA Commons to organize meetings, run projects, and increase their presence on campus. The VP Student Affairs thanked Nyoni for coming to the meeting and explained that the GSA Council was the body who made the final decisions on the ratifications of social clubs, and that the GSA Executives only provided recommendations to Council on such matters.

The VP Student Affairs moved to recommend to Council the ratification of the Satellite Rotary Club. This motion was seconded by the VP External.

Motion carried.

Women in Chemistry

The VP Student Affairs introduced Khozeimeh to the executives, asking her to provide a brief description of the purpose of the Women in Chemistry social group and how it benefits graduate students. Khozeimeh explained that the Women in Chemistry club was open to everyone and not only to women. The idea was to support minorities which were underrepresented in science. She further stated that the main purpose of this social club was to provide professional development opportunities and an avenue for community support. The VP External asked why the club would seek to be ratified with the GSA only now, since they had existed since September 2017. Khozeimeh responded to that by saying that they had made a lot of progress now, and had become quite enlarged in capacity and needs, as opposed to when they first started with a few number of students usually in attendance.

The VP Student Affairs thanked Khozeimeh for coming to the meeting and explained that the GSA Council was the body who made the final decisions on the ratifications of social clubs, and that the GSA Executives only provided recommendations to Council on such matters.

The VP Student Affairs moved to recommend to Council the ratification of the Women in Chemistry social group. This motion was seconded by the VP External.

Motion carried.

ASHRAE (email correspondence February 24, 2019)

The VP Student Affairs indicated to the Executives that another social group, ASHRAE, had requested ratification. To ensure that this was not delayed to the March Council meeting, he provided context and requested a recommendation from the Executives via email, as this was a new social club and not a re-ratification.

He indicated that ASHRAE was an exclusively scientific and educational social club that was focused on the advancement of the sciences of heating, refrigerating and air-conditioning engineering and related sciences. The Executives unanimously agreed that this was within the context of a social club and none had any concerns with regards to recommending to Council the ratification of ASHRAE as a social club.

4.3 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 3917 on February 15, 2019 to Chip Bookkeeping Services Inc. RE: 2017 Year End preparation for audit bookkeeping services of \$1,845.27 Invoice #2915.

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

Motion carried.

4.4 CFS Prairie RISE

The President commented that the CFS Prairie RISE is a summit which engages people from across Canada. The dates of the summit are March 1st to 4th in Regina, and the GSA has the ability to send two representatives. Most of the Executives commented that they have other commitments during those days. The President will send emails to members of the diversity committee and to a few Indigenous graduate students to gauge interest. Unfortunately, all contacted individuals had commitments. At a later date, the VP External offered to attend, with another graduate student, from March 1st to 3rd, as he had to invigilate an exam on the 4th.

4.5 CFS National Graduate Caucus

The VP External expressed interest in attending the CFS National Graduate Caucus conference in Ottawa from March 15 - 17, 2019. The National Graduate Caucus is a separate caucus within the Canadian Federation of Students, uniting more than 60,000 graduate student members of the CFS.

Motion to approve the VP External to go to the CFS National Graduate Caucus conference moved by the VP Student Affairs and seconded by the VP Finance and Operations.

Motion carried

1 abstention (VP External)

5. Items for Information / Discussion

5.1 Appreciative Inquiry

The President thanked the Executives who attended the appreciative inquiry. The VP Student Affairs mentioned that it was good to focus on the student-supervisor relationship and discussing other resources to improve the agreement and the relationship. The VP External mentioned that most of the people who attended the appreciative inquiry were people who did not use the student-supervisor agreement; he expressed a common wish that more faculty members would be engaged. The President mentioned that she had a list of 30 faculty members, but in the end, most of them could not attend the meeting due to prior commitments. The President added that it was good that students came and that there was diversity, of both students and faculty, from different colleges.

5.2 Breakfast Initiative

The President contacted the Associate Director, Culinary and Residence Services to see what potential pricing might be available for providing breakfasts to 30 - 40 students for the Breakfast Initiative. The goal would be to use this as promotion to gain support from colleges / schools and offices and units on campus, as well as the community. The Breakfast initiative has been successful and students have appreciated the sense of community that it brings. The President commented that this initiative should be sustainable for the next Executives. The main idea is to get funding from the University so that there would be sponsors on different days. The food would be brought to the space in the future from culinary services so the GSA would only help in promoting the initiative and perhaps sponsoring one or two, depending on the availability of funds.

5.3 Tuition Consultation

The President mentioned that CGPS will host a tuition consultation on March 4th. The President emphasized the importance of us attending the tuition consultation and making sure to inform our graduate student peers across campus.

5.4 Graduate Student Research Conference

The VP Student Affairs mentioned that there will be keynote speakers for each of the sections of the Research Conference. He mentioned that there were 21 responses from the registration website. The VP Student Affairs encourages the Executives to invite their friends to attend the conference.

5.5 Gala update

The VP External provided an update on the GSA Gala. He mentioned that this year there wouldn't be an official DJ, since it represents a considerable investment and there are budgetary constraints. The VP Student Affairs asked whether we were allowed to play our own music with our own equipment. The President commented that the Office Manager could ask the Delta Bessborough since they have their own policies for these events. The VP External agreed to pursue this direction. The VP External commented that he had requested sponsorship from the various colleges and schools on campus and has received many positive responses so far.

5.6 STING Sponsorship

On January 22, 2019, the Associate Director of Innovation Enterprise, University of Saskatchewan, attended the GSA Council meeting to discuss a three-year funding proposal request. The proposal is intended to assist in the building of a new student engagement program on campus that is designed to grow entrepreneurial technology commercialization awareness among undergraduate and graduate students. The program has an associated budget of over \$1.7 million dollars over three years. The office is working on securing commitments from both the public and private sector off campus, and from colleges and other organizations on campus. The GSA was approached in the hopes of committing \$5000 a year, for three years, to support the initiative.

The Executives discussed this initiative thoroughly and while the program in itself is a great step to providing opportunities for students and Postdoctoral fellows, the following points were brought up;

- There were limitations to the STING program as it seems that students with a business background were more likely to succeed in obtaining positions;
- It wasn't clear as to how this would impact the graduate student population as a whole, especially when other students would not be able to partake in the learning and training opportunities that would be provided.

Based on the above, the limited budget of the GSA, and input from Council members, the Executive committee does not recommend providing sponsorship to this initiative at this time

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 6:22 PM.