



**University of Saskatchewan - Graduate Students' Association**  
**Executive Meeting Agenda**  
**January 31, 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 4:04 PM.

**2. Approval of the Agenda**

The President asked if there were any additions or amendments to the agenda as circulated. The fundraising request from the Plant Sciences was tabled to the next meeting. The VP Student Affairs wished to add an update on the 3MT as information.

*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 January 17, 2019 Executive Meeting Minutes**

The President asked whether there were any further amendments to the January 17, 2019 Executive Meeting Minutes.

*Motion to approve the January 17, 2019 Executive Meeting Minutes moved by the VP Student Affairs and seconded by VP Finance and Operations.*

***Motion carried.***

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

##### ***4.1 Funding Request from BRASA***

The VP Finance and Operations indicated that he had received a funding request from the Brazilian Student Association with a thorough description and budget of the event; Carnival BRASA-LASA. The President welcomed Berkenbrock, the President of the BRASA, to the Executive meeting and asked him to provide a brief description of the event. Berkenbrock indicated that the purpose of this event is to commemorate different places in Brazil, where a Carnival is part of the culture and local celebrations, as well as to commemorate other countries in South America, where Carnivals are part of their official calendars.

This year, they will partner with the Latin American Student Association to have the opportunity of different cultures to participate and celebrate their Carnivals together. The VP External asked Berkenbrock to explain a little bit more about the dancers on the budget description. Berkenbrock explained that this year, BRASA is hiring 2 professional dancers to dance samba. The VP Student Affairs asked if LASA would get benefits for this event as a ratified group with USSU. Berkenbrock mentioned that they will be able to use Louis' Loft to host this event. The VP Student Affairs asked for further explanation about the revenue and t-shirts. Berkenbrock explained that revenue for this event will be obtained from ticket sales, and the first people to come to the event will enter into a draw of prizes, and get a T-shirt. The VP External asked about the distribution of funds from USSU. Berkenbrock explained that he is not fully aware of the USSU contribution since LASA is following up that part directly with them but if necessary he can provide more information later by email.

The President asked how many graduate students are expected to participate in this event. Berkenbrock responded that the approximate number of grad students would be around 40 from BRASA and 30 from LASA. The President additionally asked about the excess revenue. Berkenbrock mentioned that extra revenue will be used for non-profit events on campus, such as pizza events for graduate members without charge. The VP Finance and Operations asked if they have contacted other sponsors, apart from the USSU and GSA. Berkenbrock replied that they have contacted other companies outside campus and any contributions will be used for prizes.

The VP Student Affairs asked about the organization of the event. Berkenbrock answered that the event will have two purposes; cultural and to celebrate and gather together in the Carnival.

The President thanked Berkenbrock 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. Berkenbrock agreed to include the GSA logo on future posters and advertising material. The President indicated that the decision was based on the budget and not on the event. The President thanked Berkenbrock 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 \$250 to the BRASA for the BRASA-LASA Carnival event. This motion was seconded by the VP Finance and Operations.*

***Motion carried.***

#### ***4.2 Funding Request from NSA***

The VP Finance and Operations indicated that he had received a funding request from the Nigerian Student Association with a thorough description and budget of the event; Allure event. The President welcomed Yusuf, the VP Communications of the Nigerian Student Association, to the Executive meeting and asked him to provide a brief description of the event.

Yusuf explained that the main focus of Allure event was to celebrate Black History month and Valentine's Day as well. Yusuf explained that the event will start at 6:00 PM and finish at 1:00 AM. NSA invited influential speakers from the Nigerian community, USSU, ISAAC, in order to explain their roles and how their organizations help and collaborate with the Nigerian community. Yusuf mentioned that after the speakers, they will have professional musicians, and the main performer, who came from Toronto. Additionally, Yusuf mentioned that the NSA, as an undergraduate ratified group with the USSU, has availability to use Louis' Loft for the event. The VP External recommended Yusuf to contact ISAAC to request for additional funds, if required. The President asked where the extra revenue will be used. Yusuf explained that the extra revenue will be put into use for academic events, their Annual General Meeting, and into the association account for next year's projects. The President asked how many graduate students

were expected to attend the event. Yusuf answered that 40% of the total participants will be graduate students approximately.

*The VP Student Affairs moved to approve funding in the amount of \$250 to the NSA for the Allure event. This motion was seconded by the VP Finance and Operations.*

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

***Motion carried.***

### ***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 3899 on January 16, 2019 to Chip Bookkeeping Services Inc. RE: December 2018 Bookkeeping of \$1,136.25 Invoice #2890.
- Cheque 3903 on January 21, 2019 to Buckberger Baerg Inc. RE: Auditing services of \$8,880.00 Invoice #21733.

*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 GSA Team Building Retreat***

The President indicated that the retreat is an opportunity to discuss past events and get feedback about what went well. The main purpose of the retreat is to have a positive discussion, as well as to have team building activities, develop plans and suggestions for the next GSA and executive team. In summary, the retreat is meant to:

- Reflect on the activities of the year and how to better prepare our Executives and Staff;
- Provide an opportunity to work through team building and trust exercises;
- Identify individual strengths and weaknesses and how to overcome them;
- Discuss action plans for the GSA and how to engage our graduate student community.

### ***5.2 Letter to Premier Doug Ford***

An email was circulated to student unions/associations in Canada seeking support to signing a letter to Premier Ford. This letter would represent the solidarity of student associations. The Executives indicated that this was an important letter to support, as the implications of Premier Ford's policies have a negative consequence to the self-determination of student associations.

### ***5.3 Postdoc Collective Bargaining Agreement***

The President informed the Executives that postdocs now have an agreement with the University that means they will be health and dental insured by the University, for them and their families. Consequently the number of postdocs buying GSA membership for health and dental is going to decrease. The President indicated that this will not impact the GSA budget significantly. They will still need to purchase membership in order to buy the UPASS from the GSA.

### ***5.4 CUPE 1975 Strike***

The President commented that for several months, the University and CUPE 1975, one of the unions on campus, have been working to reach a new collective agreement (the process where an employer and a union negotiate a new contract) with the help of a mediator. The mediator determined that the two groups were not able to reach an agreement. As a result, CUPE 1975 may choose to take job action, which might include a strike. Essential services, which will be determined between the University and the union, will remain intact; however, other services will be suspended during the strike. The President mentioned that there should be no interruptions to the student academics.

### ***5.5 Mental Health Workshop for Grad Students***

The VP Student Affairs mentioned that two students approached him to organize a workshop for mental health. The VP Student Affairs is collaborating with them to do the workshops at the GSA commons and to support them in any other way. The President recommended them to draft a budget in order to know how much will be required for the workshops so that the GSA can support initiative.

### ***5.6 3MT Update***

The VP Student Affairs mentioned that the cost of recording the 3MT is high. He mentioned that last year, it cost approximately \$1,500 dollars. The VP Student Affairs mentioned that this expense can be avoided and used for other means to support the 3MT and Research Conference. The VP External asked whether the recording service can be found at a much cheaper price. The VP Finance and Operations indicated that it can even be done with a good camera or a smartphone. The President commented that it might not be needed because some students have requested in the past to not have their videos posted on the internet. The VP Student Affairs mentioned that there would be no recording of the 3MT competition or of renting the stage and this helps avoid unnecessary expenses.

### **6. Other Business**

The President commented that the Board will need to convene at least twice this term to make recommendations to Council regarding any fee changes. The Board will also provide recommendation regarding the Drug Exemption Policy, the STING sponsorship and the budget. The President suggested having the first board meeting after the next Executive meeting on February 14.

Next Events:

- Appreciative
- Inquiry on Feb 14.
- Art Therapy session on Feb 14.
- University Council on Feb 14.
- Conference on February 27, 28.
- 3MT on March 27.
- GSA Gala on April 6.

### **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 6:35PM.