



University of Saskatchewan Graduate Students' Association

Retreat Agenda, Executive committee

May 4, 2019 from 9 AM to 5 PM

**Present:** Mery Mendoza (President), Mohammad Wajih Alam (VP Finance and Operations), Alejandra Fonseca (VP Student Affairs), Chiamaka Ezekwesili (VP External), Naheda Sahtout (Guest)

**Regrets:** none

**Absent:** none

SESSION ONE: 9 AM – 12:30 PM

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

The meeting was called to order on Saturday, May 4th at 9:21 AM by the President, Mery Mendoza.

She thanked everyone for committing to the GSA and representing graduate students at the University, community and across Canada. "It is exciting to see dedicated individuals on this year's Executive team and I am looking forward to working with this amazing team" she stated. The GSA is governed by the four executive offices of President, VP of finance and Operations, VP of Student affairs, and VP external, and is supported by its staff members which consists of the Office Manager and coordinators. Everyone is committed to working towards the GSA mission. The president explained that executives participate on this retreat with the purpose of setting goals

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for the year ahead. It was stated that all executives should be engaged and involved in the discussions and ask questions in an appropriate manner.

### 2. Signing of Confidentiality Agreement

In consistency with the GSA Bylaws, it is required that each Executive signs a confidentiality agreement within the first month of their term. Mery indicates that in our position as Executives, we will have access to information that must remain confidential. Not only include confidentiality of others' information but also confidentiality of discussions that occur within the Executive meetings. All executives signed the confidentiality agreement.

### 3. Executive Introductions / Structure of the GSA

The president asked each retreat attendee to introduce themselves. Each attendee shared their background, motivations for standing for election in the GSA, and motivations for representing graduate students. Mery then explained the structure of the GSA and urged the Executives to look through the Constitution, Bylaws, and Policies.

- ✓ The Executive committee consists of the President and Vice-Presidents. The Executive is accountable to Council and Regular Membership.
- ✓ The President and Vice-Presidents sit on the Board of Directors. It is necessary to have a Board so as to maintain Not-for-Profit status. Since all executives of this year are international students, there are two representatives, with Canadian citizenship, that were added to the board to ensure our Non-Profit status.
- ✓ There exists a Council, which consists of;
  - The Executive
  - A representative from each Academic Council
- ✓ Executive meetings occur once / month from May to August and twice / month from September to April.
- ✓ Council meetings occur once / bi-monthly from May to August and once / month from September to April.
- ✓ There is an Annual General meeting sometime between the months of September to April.

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- ✓ The Office staffs consist of the Office Manager and the Commons Coordinators.

It was explained as stated in the GSA Bylaws that Executives must not miss more than 3 Executive meetings in total, and 2 consecutive meetings. It is acceptable if Executives need to teleconference / phone-in to meetings in order to ensure their attendance.

### 4. Committee Appointments

Mery indicates that a graduate student representative sits on University Council committees, CGPS (College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies) committees as well as other committees that are directly related to the student experience or academic life at the University of Saskatchewan. As stated in the GSA Bylaws, the Executives must identify and determine who will sit on these committees.

There was an in-depth discussion about the Governance Committee and the representative graduate student that would sit on this Committee. Mery wanted for all the executives to get familiar with the University's policies and encouraged to participate in the discussions. There was a general consensus that it was important that the individual for this Committee should have a strong understanding to University policies to be of benefit to graduate students.

It was agreed that it is crucial to commit to the committees that we will be appointed to and attend all meetings. This supports the credibility of the GSA and indicates that graduate students are involved and are valuable members of the University community. Most University Council committees meet once a month, as do most CGPS committees. Some of the other committees do not meet as often or meet only during certain parts of the year. Committee terms of reference can be found on the University website. It is important to discuss with the chair of your committee whether a delegation system is possible. For example, if you were unable to attend, could another Executive attend in your place? Some committees may not permit this, so it is important to verify this at the beginning of September.

***Motion: To approve the committee assignments. Moved by Chiamaka. Seconded by Alejandra.***

***Motion carried.***

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Mery will communicate these assignments to the necessary administration and individuals will be notified of meeting dates and meeting documents once they are added to the committee.

Mery also indicates that as per our Policies, Executives sit on certain GSA Standing committees by virtue of their position. These will reconvene starting in the fall term and so further discussions on this will occur at a later time.

It was agreed the following executives will sit on the following committee:

- ✓ *University Council Committee*: It happens once per month. Alejandra will sit on this committee. This is the umbrella of the University. Naheda mentioned that the Vice-President of Student Affairs usually sits on this committee. The President, Mery Mendoza report to council every month, but in absence of the President, the VP of Student Affairs Alejandra will attend. In absence of Alejandra, Wajih or Chiamaka will make the report.
- ✓ *Planning and Priorities Committee*: Mery will sit on this committee. Financials are discussed. The discussions are confidential and it occurs twice per month. The usual timeline is between 11:30 AM to 1:00 PM.
- ✓ *Academic Programs Committee*: The discussion is related to program changes for both undergraduate and graduate. Chiamaka will sit on this committee.
- ✓ *Research Scholarly and Artistic Meeting*: Wajih will sit on this committee.
- ✓ *Teaching, learning and research committee of council*: Teaching methods are discussed. Alejandra will sit on this committee.
- ✓ *Scholarships and Awards*: Wajih will sit on this committee. Naheda mentioned International activity committee will not meet anymore.
- ✓ *Governance committee*: Naheda mentioned her interest to sit on this committee. She also added that she will be away till August. In her absence, Mery will sit on this committee. From September, Naheda will sit on this committee.
- ✓ *Parking and Services committee*: Alejandra will sit on this committee.
- ✓ *Recreational and athletic committee*: Mery will sit on this committee.
- ✓ *Copyright Advisory Committee*: Wajih will sit on this committee.

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- ✓ *CCR committee*: Mery will sit on this committee.
- ✓ *Faith Leaders Council*: Chiamaka will sit on this committee. Next meeting is on May 30<sup>th</sup> at 7pm.
- ✓ *University Senate*: All executives were encouraged to attend. This occurs twice a year. Usually in October and April.
- ✓ *CGPS committee*: Graduate and postdoctoral council and faculty council: all of the executive will sit on this.
- ✓ *CGPS council* happens twice a year. *Faculty council* once a year. It was mentioned that we have total 7 votes from Graduate students. So, we can add 3 from general members. Reggie, Naheda and Britany were contacted and all of them showed interest to be on this committee. These meetings are generally one and half hour long.
- ✓ *Interdisciplinary committee*: This committee meets once per month. Wajih showed interest to sit on this committee.
- ✓ *Equity and international*: This committee meets once per month. Chiamaka will sit on this committee.
- ✓ *CGPS Executive Committee*: Mery will sit on this committee.
- ✓ *Awards Committee*: Wajih will sit on this committee. This committee discusses things related to scholarships and awards.
- ✓ *Earned D.Litt/D.Sc*: This committee sits once a year and Chiamaka will sit on this committee.
- ✓ *Graduate academic awards*: Alejandra will sit on this committee. Once per month or more than once depending on need.
- ✓ *Graduate programs committee*: Mery will sit on this committee.
- ✓ *Library*: Alejandra will sit on this committee.
- ✓ *Alumni*: Mery will sit on this committee.
- ✓ *Breakfast meeting with President*: All four executives are encouraged to attend. Once per month.
- ✓ *Fee review committee*: Wajih or Mery will attend this committee.
- ✓ *Sexual Diversity*: Chiamaka will sit on this committee.

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- ✓ *Student forum executive*: This happens 5 times a year. Chiamaka or Alejandra will attend this meeting.

It was brought to attention by Mery that next University Council meeting is on May 23<sup>rd</sup> and everyone is encouraged to attend. The other meeting is on June 20<sup>th</sup>. It was also noted that Alejandra must attend this meeting.

### 5. 2019 Convocation Attendance

Mery has received an invitation for the GSA Executives to participate as members of the Chancellor's Platform Party at the 2019 spring convocations. This is a standing tradition for student leaders, and as members of the Platform Party, we sit on stage during convocations. The dates for the ceremonies are as follows. Mery noted that there are fall convocation ceremonies as well, so in the end, the number of times each of us participates will balance out. Sometimes it is easier that individuals participate in the ceremonies of one day. Mery mentioned that she will be away during the week, so she requested the remaining executive to fill for her. All ceremonies are held at TCU place.

June 3 @ 9 AM: No event

June 3 @ 2 PM: Chiamaka

June 4 @ 9 AM: Alejandra

June 4 @ 2 PM: Wajih

June 5 @ 9 AM: Alejandra

June 5 @ 2 PM: Alejandra

June 6 @ 9 AM: Wajih

June 6 @ 2 PM: Wajih

June 7 @ 9AM: Chiamaka

June 7 @ 2 PM: No event

Mery will forward the email invitation to the Executives so that they can RSVP.

### 6. Approval of the Agenda

Mery asked whether there were any amendments to the agenda.

***Motion: To approve the agenda. Moved by Alejandra. Seconded by Wajih. Motion carried.***

## 7. Team Building

Mery indicates that it is important to outline the roles and responsibilities of Executives at this retreat so that each individual can plan for the year ahead.

### *7.1. Executive Duties and Responsibilities*

Each Executive has two types of duties; those governed by our Bylaws and those we chose to pursue during our tenure.

Mery explains that if any individual is not able to attend Council meetings, due to conference travel, they should let the President know. We are accountable to council. Each executive should prepare a written report and should take no more than 3-minute verbal report. They should also inform the Chair of their absence.

As per our Bylaws, Executives must;

- ✓ Be familiar with the governing documents, the Non-Profit Corporations Act, the U of S Act, Roberts Rules of Orders and other documents;
- ✓ Determine which individual will go to CFS and ThinkGrad conferences;
- ✓ Act as ambassadors of the Association within the University and in the community;
- ✓ Assist each other to ensure that the well-being of the Association is maintained.
- ✓ Be professional, respectful, courteous and responsible in everything that you do and when presenting yourself.
- ✓ Ensure continuity of roles and seek assistance from other Executives when feeling overburdened.

It is crucial to foster a culture of teamwork. It is also important to acknowledge mistakes as soon as they happen so that the Executive team can learn and mitigate through these mistakes appropriately. Mery indicates the importance for each of us to accept positive and constructive feedback from each other as this allows us to learn and grow as individuals. Wajih adds that it is important to help each other during tough times we can contribute positively towards the betterment of the Association.

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Any communication with the members will be facilitated by Mery through Office Manager (Candace). Mery and the executives will look after Facebook posts while office manager will look after Twitter. For facebook / twitter, content should be related to the services / events offered by the GSA or Academic Councils / Social Clubs or opportunities that would benefit graduate students, such as scholarships or workshop opportunities. Any Executive is welcome to email Mery with content to post on Facebook.

It was agreed that the emails will be sent to GSA members once per month during summer and twice per month in winter terms. Except for bursaries announcement, which can be sent as deemed necessary. The usual procedure would be to send the information that needs to be circulated to Graduate students to Mery and she will send it to Office Manager who can forward it to the members. Office Manager has access to list serve and the President and the office manager will go through the training on how to efficiently manage it.

Mery also encouraged all executives to be at the GSA office at some parts of the day so that the GSA student members can ask questions or give comments when necessary.

### ***7.2. Executive / Council Meetings***

As per our Bylaws, Executives must meet at least once / month in May – August and twice / month in September – April and once a month in December. Executives agreed that Wednesdays from 6 PM to 8 PM are suitable to have the meetings. Dates for Executive Meetings for May – August are;

- ✓ May 15
- ✓ June 12
- ✓ July 17
- ✓ August 21

Fall Executive meetings can be decided in the August Executive meeting. Executives were in agreement with the scheduled meeting times.

As per our Bylaws, Council must meet at least once from May-June, once from July-August. Mery proposes that Council meetings continue occurring on Tuesday from 5 – 7 PM. Proposed dates for Council meetings are;



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- June 18
- August 13

Mery will communicate with the Chair with regards to the June and August Council meetings and Executives agreed that the fall/winter meetings can be confirmed at the August Executive meeting. It was also mentioned that the Annual general meeting will be held in April 2020.

### ***7.3. Executive Communication***

Mery indicates that emails to the GSA executives should be responded within 48 hours.

Mery proposes two methods of communication between Executives;

- Formal: through emails
  - ✓ Emails should generally be replied within 48 hours
  - ✓ If an opinion or decision needs to be made, if no response is received within 48 hours then that implies consensus with the decision
  - ✓ If an urgent decision needs to be made, then the subject of the email should indicate the timeline and URGENT.
- Informal: through the Facebook group chat
  - ✓ Just as important for bonding between Executives
  - ✓ For informal questions or discussions that do not require decisions to be made
  - ✓ Mery Proposed to use WhatsApp as well for informal communications, to which all executives agreed.

Mery indicates that it is important for Executives to visit the Commons to;

- ✓ Socialize with Members
- ✓ Get to know the Executive and Office Staff

Executives were in favour of the email communication and understood the need to visit the Commons.

#### *7.4. Executive Decision Making*

Mery indicates that the Executives will follow Roberts Rules of Orders for all meetings. The decision-making process is a vital component of financial decisions, Executive decisions and unique instances that come to the Executives attention. Executives need to make a decision on the following items:

- ✓ There are 4 Executive members; quorum is majority, so 3 members at least. ***All agreed.***
- ✓ Majority vote (3 yes, 1 no / abstentions) will be required to carry a decision. ***All agreed.***
- ✓ 2 yes's and 2 abstentions – this decision should carry as there will be circumstances when individuals must abstain due to conflict of interest. ***Agreed unless abstention is not due to conflict of interest and that further information is required by the Executives for a decision to be made***
- ✓ Majority abstention (1 yes, 3 abstentions) indicates a failed vote. ***All agreed.***
- ✓ 2 yes, 2 no, indicates **further discussion**. Mery asked if after discussion, what would happen if we can't reach conclusion. It was agreed that **President** would step forward in making the decision on behalf of the executives.

Urgent matters requiring an Executive decision may need to be made prior to an Executive meeting, at which case it will be made via email. The 48-hour rule shall apply. Email voting will take place and the VP Finance and Operations will include these motions and votes to the upcoming minutes to ensure transparency for members. Mery indicates that any emails requiring a decision via the Executive should include a 'Reply All' in the subject so that all decisions are apparent to everyone.

Mery indicates that your Executive portfolio, as per the Bylaws and Policies, will dictate what communication is forwarded to you. For example, any financial issues will be forwarded to the VP Finance and Operations, any academic issues to the VP Student Affairs, etc. If the Executive seeks input from another Executive, they can choose to forward the communication as they see appropriate.

SESSION TWO: 1:30 PM – 2:30 PM

**8. GSA Services**

Executives will be responsible to ensuring the following services are continuously offered and maintained.

***8.1. GSA Commons***

The VP Finance and Operations and the Office Manager are responsible to ensuring the proper maintenance of the Commons. The Commons is now equipped with a projector system. Coffee / Tea / Hot Chocolate are available for graduate students during office hours, and not during events. Wajih asked if the coffee is available during the events that happen after office hours. Mery clarified that Coffee is available at an extra cost for events. The GSA do not offer tea or coffee unless it is GSA's event. Also, as per the recommendations of the Sustainability Committee, the Commons is now equipped with reusable cups and plates that will be used for GSA events and meetings. The Commons also has a single stream-lined recycling bin. The students are also welcome to put posters on the notice-board but they have to adhere to the University policies. Moreover, the students can request to have their artwork displayed on the walls of the commons. For this, Wajih or Candace needs to be contacted.

Mery indicates that rental of the GSA Commons is a source of revenue that the Association relies on and allocates budgeting for every year. Mery encourages Executives to look at the website so that they are aware of the rules and regulations to bookings.

- ✓ Free for GSA ratified groups during office hours
- ✓ \$50 / hour for GSA ratified groups after office hours, during weekends and holidays
- ✓ \$75 / hour for GSA non-ratified groups
- ✓ Other costs include coffee, BBQ's and tables (once they are purchased). They can't take these outside of GSA premises.

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Mery describes personal use of the GSA Commons. Based on previous years, Executives could use the space twice (2) year for no charge, for their department or social group or for a personal event ONLY if usage does not require a coordinator. This promotes appreciation for the Executives work and as long as no Coordinators are required, would not add an extra cost to the Association.

***Executives approve that Executives are able to use the Commons for 2 events at no cost, only if no Coordinator is required.***

Mery indicates the importance of a balance between having events in the Commons and leaving the space event-free. The space is intended for graduate students and therefore it is important that events are not constantly hindering students from using the space as space for studying, using the computers or socializing.

### **8.2. ISIC Cards**

As part of our affiliation with the Canadian Federation of Students, our members are eligible to obtain an ISIC card for free. These can be obtained online and members will receive occasional reminders about this through Emails and social media. Wajih mentions that it is still free to order e-copy of the card but need to pay shipping fee if the students want to have hard-copy.

### **8.3. UPASS**

The UPASS offers huge savings for our members as it is a discounted price for the use of Saskatoon Transit. The pass is currently only offered in the fall and winter terms. Our agreement with Saskatoon transit dictates the opt-out eligibilities. USSU currently administers the UPASS for our members at a cost of \$1.50 / sticker, as per an agreement. This is ideal for the GSA as we do not have the staff / resources to administer the UPASS to our members.

In 2014, a referendum did not pass and this eliminated the spring / summer UPASS. Surveys and discussions have indicated a split vote regarding the want for the spring / summer UPASS. The executives decided that they would look for other alternatives by discussing with Saskatoon Transit that better describes the opt-out options.

#### ***8.4. Health and Dental Plan***

Students pay about \$459 for health and dental, through Studentcare. Mery indicates that the VP External, also as the chair of the Health and Dental Committee, acts as the Liaison between the Association and Studentcare. Colten Yamagishi and Kristen Foster are the Studentcare representatives and have been very engaged and communicative with the GSA. The Executives will generally participate in an orientation session with them and Studentcare generally attends one of the earlier Council meetings to present on the services provided under the plan. Studentcare has also been a strong supporter of many of our events and their generosity is appreciated.

One of the important change is the participation of Postdocs in the Health and Dental Plan. They negotiated with the University and has comprehensive coverage of health and dental plan. Postdocs can opt-in to the Plan, if they want.

#### ***8.5. Social Groups***

Any group of graduate students who wish to be ratified under the GSA may do so under the guidelines provided in our Policies. The VP Student Affairs is responsible for processing Social Club ratification forms. These can be academic, cultural or social clubs that follow specific guidelines, as outlined in our Policies. Ratification is required every September and is approved by Council. Groups must fill out the forms found on the website and once ratified are able to use the Commons as ratified groups and apply for funding. Social club funding is budgeted for and groups can apply for a maximum of \$500 / academic year. Once the application regarding the interest in being ratified from a social group is received, a member from the social group is invited to one of the executive meetings. The agenda is circulated among the executives prior to the meetings. The executives would ask questions to know more about the group and if deemed eligible, they would take it forward to the council.

#### ***8.6. GSA Council***

The Council is a compilation of representatives from each Academic Unit, a single department or a College. Each Unit reapplies to be part of the Council before the September Council meeting.

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Ratification forms are directed towards the President. Depending on the number of graduate students within the Unit, one or two representatives may be present on the Council. The forms are available online and a call for Academic Councillors will be sent out early September through the Chair and through Email notifications to all graduate students. It is important to try and reach departments / colleges that have not been involved.

### ***8.7. Human Resources and Commons Operations***

The Vice-President Finance and Operations and the Office Manager are responsible for this. Certain policies have been developed last year to ensure transparency and accountability. We might need to hire 3 Coordinator in the near-future and the positions will be advertised through SECC and recruiting will likely take place in late August or September.

### ***8.8. GSA Social Media, App and Website***

The GSA has Facebook and Twitter. These are used as a means of communicating with our members. This generally falls under the VP External portfolio. It was agreed that while it is important to post on social media, we must not over-post and we must post only content relevant to the GSA and its initiatives as well as initiatives that will benefit graduate students.

It was mentioned that the GSA used to have an app but it is now discontinued.

### ***8.9. GSA Bursaries***

These are needs-based bursaries whereby applications are offered 3 times a year; June / October / February. This falls under the VP Finance and Operation's portfolio with the VP Student Affairs assisting in the Selections Committee. It was indicated that hard-copy applications have been effective prior years, in ensuring that documents are complete and there is no missing information. In summer 2019, \$10,000 will be distributed (so 10 bursary applications). Calls for applications will be made through social media/PAWS/emails. A call should be made on June 1<sup>st</sup>. \$26,000 in fall and \$26,000 for winter will be distributed in 2019/2020.

Call for applications will be done through social media, paws and email announcements. The general timeline: 3 weeks for applications. 2 weeks for decision-making.

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Mery will email funding request to CGPS for events. From October, Chiamaka will email to schools for funding related to gala events.

### ***8.10. GSA Guppies***

This service is under the VP External's portfolio and allows for graduate students to participate in campus rec programs during the year. This is budgeted for and it is an opportunity for the GSA to promote health and wellbeing for graduate students. The budget allows for a maximum of two teams each term.

It was indicated that the majority should be graduate students but that others can join. The GSA pays for the cost of the team but not any other costs.

## **SESSION THREE: 2:53 PM – 4:51 PM**

### **9. GSA Initiatives for the 2019 / 2020 Academic Year**

While these initiatives fall under the portfolio of VP Student Affairs / VP External, they will require all Executives to pitch in and offer their assistance.

#### ***9.1. Fall / Winter Orientation***

Orientations are key events and are organized by the VP Student Affairs. Alejandra will reach out to Edgar to learn from his prior experience and to learn more about borrowing tent and hosting event in bowl.

The date that has been set aside for the Fall Orientation is September 5, 2019. There will be swag at the Orientation as well as handbooks. Alejandra will work with Candace for the swag. The handbook is usually done by the Canadian Federation of Students. Advertisements will be handled by Candace.

Mery reminds the Executives that the Orientation will require everyone to be there in attendance. The Winter Orientation will be scheduled in the first executive meeting. This Orientation targets students who start in the winter term.

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### ***9.2. Social Events***

As part of ensuring that we build a cohesive graduate student community, a series of social events will be organized throughout the year. There are budgetary constraints and it is important to ensure that these events are inclusive to all members. All Executives should be present at the socials and help the VP Student Affairs. The events to follow this year are:

- ✓ Fall Wine and Cheese Social: Will be determined in the first executive meeting
- ✓ Halloween Party: Will be determined in the first executive meeting
- ✓ Holiday Party: Will be determined in the first executive meeting
- ✓ Winter Wine and Cheese Social: Will be determined in the first executive meeting
- ✓ Popcorn and movie night: Will be determined later in the year, closer to September.

All Executives agreed that such initiatives would be inclusive for graduate students across campus and would promote the Commons.

### ***9.3. Workshops / Health Chats***

The VP Student Affairs will coordinate a series of workshops for graduate students on topics that are of importance to graduate students.

Health Chats was an initiative that was started three years ago by Executives as a means of promoting personal wellness for graduate students. The VP External is responsible for coordinating a series of Health Chats. Last few years, those that were organized were well attended. These events are open to the general University community. This has been budgeted for as the intention is to continue these initiatives to provide an avenue for graduate students' alternative means of personal wellness.

### ***9.4. Graduate Student Research Conference***

Alejandra hopes to host the conference this year in February (Exact date to be decided in the first executive meeting). The executives agree that with planning graduate students would participate in the conference as it is an excellent opportunity for them to participate in communicating their research.



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### ***9.5 Three-Minute Thesis Competition***

The 3MT Competition is a popular event that the GSA hosts in collaboration with CGPS. This year, the competition has been scheduled for late March (The exact date will be determined in the first executive meeting). Alejandra is responsible for the organization of this competition.

### ***9.6 Annual Awards Gala***

This event honours students and faculty for their commitment and dedication to research, scholarly and artistic pursuits, leadership and community engagement. This year, the Gala has been scheduled for first week of April (exact date will be determined in first executive meeting). Call for application will be sent in first week of February. Chiamaka is responsible for organizing the Gala in its entirety. The date should not coincide with the University Council Meeting.

### ***9.7. Tax Filing***

Being part of CFS, our members are entitled to use the free tax filing system called UFILE. This is a popular service that allows our members to save money. Three years ago, the Executives first offered to assist our members with using this service and it has since then been popular. The VP Finance and Operations is responsible for hosting the “Tax Filing Clinic” during the April month for our members.

### ***9.8. Conferences***

As part of our affiliations with CFS and ThinkGrad, we attend conferences. For the 2019/2020 academic year, these include the following;

- ✓ Canadian Federation of Students, Semi-General Meeting
- ✓ Studentcare Meeting
- ✓ ThinkGRAD August Meeting
- ✓ National-General Meeting, CFS
- ✓ National Graduate Caucus, CFS
- ✓ ThinkGRAD April Meeting

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The VP External usually attends these meetings, as per their role and unless otherwise indicated, and because of budgetary constraints Mery recommends that only one individual be sent to these meetings so that we can ensure maximum participation. If the VP External is unavailable, then another Executive can choose to go to the meeting instead. There may be other conferences that are advertised through CFS; however, these will be contingent on fundraising efforts. Mery indicated that Executives will discuss at Executive meetings each of the conferences as they arise and delegate an individual to attend.

### **10. Understanding of the Budget**

Mery went over the approved Budget in brief but asks Executives to direct any questions to the VP Finance and Operations. Mery also went briefly over the policies.

*Executives agreed that discretionary funds are to be used for circumstances that are for the betterment of graduate students and the GSA and NOT be used for personal expenditures.*

### **11. Closing Remarks**

Mery is pleased to hear the discussions that took place today and acknowledges the diplomatic nature and respect that was prevalent. She looks forward to the year ahead and encourages Executives to seek input from each other. Ultimately, our goal is to enhance the experience of graduate students at the University of Saskatchewan. The executives thanked Naheda for attending the retreat and for her guidance.

### **12. Adjournment of Meeting**

Meeting adjourned at 4:51 PM.