



University of Saskatchewan - Graduate Students' Association

Executive Meeting Minutes

August 21, 2019

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

**Regrets:** None

**Absent:** None

**Guests:** Jose Alvim Berkenbrock and Moises Ferreira

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

The President called the meeting to order at 6:04 PM.

**2. Approval of the Agenda**

The President asked if there were any additions or amendments to the agenda as circulated. Motion to approve the Agenda, moved by the VP External and seconded by the VP Student Affairs.

**Vote All in Favour, Motion carried.**

**3. Approval of the July 17, 2019 Executive Meeting Minutes**

The President asked whether there were any further amendments to the July 17, 2019 Executive Meeting Minutes. Motion to approve the July 17, 2019 Executive Minutes moved by the VP Student Affairs and seconded by the VP External.

**Vote All in Favour, Motion carried**

**4. Items for Action**

*4.1 Information Systems Steering Committee (ISSC) for student representation*

The President received an invitation, via email to sit on the Information Systems Steering Committee (ISSC) for student representation. The ISSC will focus on prioritizing commitments and

investments in technology to support both the colleges' and the University's plans as a whole. This committee will make strategic decisions based on recommendations from the other governing committees (Academic and Student Life Technology Committee-previously ESSC, Research Success Systems Technology Committee-previously RSSC and a newly formed committee focused on supporting institutional excellence-name). This committee will be necessary for input to the Vice-President, Finance and Resources Support Centre Plan as well as the rollout of the Technology Plan. The ISSC will meet 3-4 times per year.

*Motion to approve the GSA President to serve on the ISSC committee. Moved by VP External and seconded by VP Student Affairs.*

**Vote All in Favour, Motion carried**

#### *4.2 PKSA funding request*

The president received a funding request from Pakistani Student Association (PKSA) to organize an EID party. The GSA president invited the PKSA representatives to this GSA executive meeting to briefly explain this funding request. Although the PKSA president confirmed their participation on this meeting, no PKSA representatives attended this meeting.

*Motion to move this item to the next executive meeting. Moved by VP Student Affairs and seconded by VP Finance and Operations.*

**Vote All in Favour, Motion carried**

#### *4.3 BRASA funding request*

The President mentioned that we received a funding request from Brazilian Students' Assoc. (BRASA) for a fundraising event for the National Museum of Brazil. The document, presented by BRASA, had a clear budget description of the event. The President welcomed Jose and Moises as representatives from BRASA and asked them to briefly describe the proposed event. They mentioned that the Brazilian Students' Association is organizing this event to raise funds to support the recovery of Brazil's oldest museum that was consumed by fire last year, The National

Museum of Brazil “Museu Nacional” in Rio de Janeiro was almost destroyed last September. Since then, few actions have been taken by external parties. In this event, the funds raised will help the reconstruction of the National Museum. The money raised will be transferred to the non-profit association Amigos d’O Museu Nacional (“Friends of the National Museum”).

The President opened the floor for questions. VP External thanked the BRASA executives for coming to the meeting and asked how they planned to advertise this event, to which, they explained that it will start as soon as the support from GSA is confirmed. They are waiting for the venue to be confirmed and would like to host it in GSA commons which is dependent on the approval of funding support from GSA. They are looking to host it on Saturday 28<sup>th</sup>. The VP Student Affairs asked if there will be liquor served. Jose replied that they have planned to serve liquor and one of the executives from BRASA have prior experience in obtaining the liquor licence. The VP Finance and Operations asked if the event was going to be held on Friday or Saturday. To which Jose replied that they prefer to host the event on Saturday so that most people can attend. The President mentioned that when the GSA sponsors an event, the GSA logo is expected to be on the posters and an announcement should be made at the event. The BRASA executives agree to mention support of GSA whenever possible. The President indicated that the decision is based on the budget and not on the event. The President thanked Jose and Moises for providing the proposal and further information. The decision will be made and Wajih will communicate the decision via email.

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

**3 in favour, 1 abstention (President due to Conflict of Interest)**

#### *4.4 Academic and Student Life Technology Committee (ASLTC) for student representation*

The VP Student Affairs mentioned that she received an invitation via email to sit on the Academic and Student Life Technology Committee (ASLTC) for student representation. The ASLTC will focus

on initiatives that support the technology plan commitments of enhancing the student experience and providing flexible academic programming. This committee is a subcommittee of the Information Systems Steering Committee and will meet 3-4 times per year.

*Motion to approve the GSA VP Student Affairs to serve on the ASLTC committee. Moved by the president and seconded by the VP finance and operations.*

**Vote All in Favour, Motion carried**

#### *4.5 Unavailability to attend the Teaching, Learning and Academic Resources Committee (TLARC) of Council meetings during the fall term.*

The VP Student Affairs mentioned that the TLARC meetings occurs twice a month from 3 to 5PM on Tuesdays; and she is unable to attend the meetings due to her classes which occur at the same time as the meetings. She asked the GSA representatives to find someone else to serve on this committee. The President mentioned that members of the board of directors are eligible to sit on this committee. As such, the President will contact members of the Board of Directors and inquire about their availability to participate on this committee on behalf of GSA.

*Motion to accept the request of the VP of Student Affairs and contact other members of the Board of Directors to sit on this committee. Moved by VP External and seconded by VP Finance and Operations.*

**Vote All in Favour, Motion carried**

#### *4.6 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 (be it resolved that) the following expenditures be authorized:

- Payment to Chip Bookkeeping Services Inc. in the sum of \$734.02 issued on July 31, 2019 for bookkeeping services.

*Motion to approve to approve the above expenditures. Moved by VP finance and operations and seconded by the president.*

**Vote all in favour, Motion carried**

## **5. Items for Information / Discussion**

### *5.1 Saskatchewan Student Coalition*

The President mentioned that Saskatchewan Student Coalition encompasses all major student union in Saskatchewan and are currently developing goals for this year and working on the Terms of reference. In the last meeting, this association selected a chair and co-chair and was decided to increase the number of meetings per year. The VP Student Affairs added that the coalition were also planning to charge a membership fee which is still in discussion. The VP Finance and Operations mentioned that since we are the only graduate student body in the committee, the GSA should look at the possibility of inviting the Graduate Student Association from the University of Regina. All executives agreed to mention this in the next committee meeting. The President emphasized that it is important for us to be present at the meeting as, so far, we are the only graduate student body in the committee, which represents the graduate students from Saskatchewan. The next meeting will be held on October 9<sup>th</sup>, 2019 at the GSA commons and all GSA executives agreed to attend this meeting.

### *5.2 International students on implied status*

The President mentioned that late last year there was discussion regarding international students engaging in on-campus employment while on implied status. At that time, the University's interpretation of the federal immigration law was that international students were required to hold a valid study permit to be eligible to work for the University of Saskatchewan. Previous GSA executives and PSAC worked together to clarify this issue with the University. The University

leadership then reached out to Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) to ask for a formal clarification of the applicable provisions of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations. Last month, the University received a formal response to the inquiry, which clarified the IRCC's policy:

*"Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) understands that a technical reading of the relevant provisions could lead one to conclude that a person on implied student status no longer holds a valid study permit and therefore may no longer be authorized to work under R186(f) or R186 (v) of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations. However, IRCC's policy is to allow students on implied status to continue to enjoy the benefits associated with their previous permit as though they still hold it."*

As such, international students on implied status will be eligible to engage in on-campus employment. It continues to be very important that international students monitor the expiry date of study permits and apply for a study permit extension well in advance of the expiry date.

### *5.3 ThinkGrad meeting*

The VP Finance and Operations participated on ThinkGrad meeting held in August. It was a two-day meeting where the graduate student representative from many Universities across Canada met to learn about different initiatives that the associations have across their campus. It was a good learning experience and he wishes to work on some ideas to improve the graduate students' experience at University of Saskatchewan. Broadly, these were the topics discussed.

- Student-Supervisor relationship
- Global study plan
- Research funding
- Valorization of grad studies and personal development
- Inclusion of international students as eligible applicants for the federal grant competitions, besides the Vanier CGS.
- Ontario's Student Choice Initiative
- Dimensions: Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Canada
- Food insecurity on campus
- Grad student engagement

- Composting program

The next ThinkGrad will be organized here in Saskatoon by the GSA executives.

#### *5.4 Coordinator position*

The president mentioned that, since one of our coordinators submitted his letter of resignation, the GSA is hiring a coordinator for the 2019/2020 academic year. The hiring committee has interviewed potential candidates and hopes to finalize the hiring of a new coordinator by next week. The executives will have a meeting with the new coordinator after hiring is done during the first week of September.

#### *5.5 Science ambassador event*

The President participated in the Science ambassador event along with the VP Student Affairs. The USask Science Ambassador Program, offered through the Science Outreach Office, College of Arts & Science, pairs senior university STEM students with Northern Indigenous community schools to support creative and culturally relevant science education opportunities for K-12 students each spring. Science Ambassadors are hosted in partner with communities for 4 to 6 weeks, working with teachers to develop and facilitate engaging, hands-on science learning opportunities. Their enthusiasm for inquiry-based learning improves Indigenous student experiences and perceptions of science at a young age and encourages successful transitions to secondary school to ignite interest in postsecondary opportunities. It is important for the GSA executives to participate in these events to network and recognize the efforts of our graduate students in the community.

#### *5.6 Sponsors for orientation*

The president mentioned that GSA has received sponsorship from StudentCare for orientation events. She asked the VP Student Affairs to thank, during the orientation event, the volunteers and StudentCare for their support. She further added that the VP Student Affairs had requested financial support from CFS as well, but they did not agree to sponsor. Instead, they were willing to come to Orientation and give out swag.

## **6. Other Business**

### **6.1 Student leadership retreat**

The President mentioned that the VP Student Affairs attended a meeting with USSU and ISSAC to discuss details of the Student Leadership retreat event, scheduled to be held on Saturday, October 5<sup>th</sup>. This was decided due to conflicting campus events September 21 and 28. There was also some discussion about the event charter and the necessary tasks to make the event happen in this 5-week period. ISSAC holds this event annually in collaboration with USSU, GSA, and other campus partners. Student leaders from the University campus community, such as academic councillor representatives as well as social club representatives, will be learning and engaging in leadership activities. The GSA plays an important role in this event due to the interest, participation and engagement of our graduate student leaders on campus.

### **7. Confidential Session**

### **8. In Camera Session**

### **9. Adjournment of Meeting**

The President asked whether there was any other business requiring attention.

Since there were none, a motion was made “to adjourn the meeting”.

Moved: VP Student Affairs      Seconded: VP External

**Vote all in favour, Motion carried**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:48 PM.