



University of Saskatchewan - Graduate Students' Association

Executive Meeting Minutes

December 02, 2019

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

**Regrets/absent:** none

**Guests:** Aimee Schryer, Arash Mollahosseini, Shahab, Brittanie, Joshua, Nathan

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

The President called the meeting to order at 5:02 PM.

The President thanked the executives for their dedication and continued hard work throughout the year and hopes to continue working together in the coming 2020.

**2. Approval of the Agenda**

The President asked if there were any additions or amendments to the agenda as circulated. The VP Finance and Operations added Funding request from SPHSA as item for action.

Motion: To approve the agenda as amended.

Moved: VP Student Affairs

Seconded: VP Finance and Operations.

*Vote All in Favour, Motion carried.*

**3. Approval of the October 21, 2019 Executive Meeting Minutes**

The President asked whether there were any further amendments to the October 21st Executive Meeting Minutes.

Motion: to approve the August 21<sup>st</sup>, 2019 Executive Minutes

Moved: VP External

Seconded: VP Student Affairs.

*Vote all in Favour, Motion carried.*

#### **4. Approval of the November 04, 2019 Executive Meeting Minutes**

The President asked whether there were any further amendments to the November 4<sup>th</sup> Executive Meeting Minutes.

Motion: to approve the November 04<sup>th</sup>, 2019 executive minutes

Moved: VP Student Affairs

Seconded: VP External.

*Vote All in Favour, Motion carried.*

#### **5. Approval of the November 18<sup>th</sup>, 2019 Executive Meeting Minutes**

The President asked whether there were any further amendments to the November 18<sup>th</sup> Executive Meeting Minutes.

Motion: to approve the November 18<sup>th</sup>, 2019 executive minutes

Moved: VP External

Seconded: VP Student Affairs.

*Vote All in Favour, Motion carried.*

#### **6. Items for Action**

##### **6.1 Funding request from Iranian Student Council (ISC)**

The VP Finance and Operations received a funding request from ISC and invited one of the ISC executives to join the GSA Executive Meeting. Arash and Shahab attended on behalf of ISC. The

President welcomed them to the meeting and asked for a brief description of the event. They explained that Yalda is a traditional Eve in Iranian culture. It is the longest night during the year and Iranians get together to celebrate and make it memorable. Within this tradition, people usually read poems, play Persian classic music, eat fruits and nuts, and dance. They are organizing this event that will serve around 50 graduate and 20 undergraduate students and some other people from the Iranian community outside of the university. The president thanked them for giving details of the event and opened the floor for questions.

The VP Finance and Operations asked how would graduate students be benefitted from this event, how do they plan to reach graduate students, and if they have plans to invite students who are not from Iran and/or faculty members. Arash replied that graduate students will have the opportunity to network with other students and new students will have a chance to meet current students that can help somehow in their transition period. Posters will be created and distributed via various media but they do not have a clear idea if faculty members will be invited. The VP Finance and Operations further asked what kind of food will be provided and if the event will be free. Arash explained that they have not decided about the type of food which will be served and depending on the number of participants, pizza or other food will be served and the cost would be between 5 to 10 dollars per person. The VP Student Affairs asked how much are they requesting from GSA to which Arash replied they are requesting 800 CAD. The President asked if they have looked at other sources of funding. Shahab mentioned that since ISC is a new organization, they have not contacted other possible sources of funding yet.

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 President indicated that the decision is based on the budget and not on the event and thanked both Arash and Shahab for providing the proposal and further information. She informed that a decision will be made and communicated through email within a week.

Motion: To ask for more details of the event and re-evaluate this request after they become ratified with GSA.

Moved: VP Student Affairs

Seconded: VP External

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

## 6.2 Funding request from Soil Science Graduate Student Association (SSGSA)

The VP Finance and Operations received a funding request from the SSGSA and invited one of the SSGSA executives to join the GSA Executive Meeting. Aimee Schryer attended on behalf of SSGSA. The President welcomed Aimee to the GSA Executive meeting and asked her for a brief description of the event. She explained that the SSGSA aims to bring together graduates students from both, Soil Science department and College of Agriculture and Bioresources to foster a friendly working atmosphere. In order to meet this aim, they hold numerous social activities and the largest of these activities during the academic year is the Soil Science Christmas party. The Soil Science Christmas party is an annual event held by the SSGSA as an opportunity for both staff and graduate students to interact in an informal setting. The SSGSA believes that the Christmas party helps overall academic success in the long run as well as providing an enjoyable social engagement occasion for everyone who attends. Every year, they become more efficient at lowering costs to run the event; using the GSA commons for the past few years has allowed for a significant opportunity to reduce the Christmas Party's expenses. As such, they decided once more to use the GSA commons for this event. The president thanked Aimee for giving details of the event and opened the floor for questions.

The VP Finance and Operations asked how many students are they expecting to attend the event to which Aimee replied about 50 graduate students. The VP Student Affairs asked what kind of gifts they are thinking of providing. Aimee explained that there will be various contests and gift cards. The President asked if their department is sponsoring the event and if they have alcohol permit. Aimee said that the department will be sponsoring the event and they already have alcohol permit for the event. The President thanked Aimee for the explanation and clear description of the written document that was presented.

The President also 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 President indicated that the decision is based on the budget and not on the event. She informed that a decision will be made and communicated through email within a week.

Motion: to approve funding in the amount of \$300 for this event

Moved: VP Student Affairs;

Seconded: VP External

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

### 6.3 Funding request from SPHSA (School of Public Health Student Association)

The VP Finance and Operations received a funding request from the SPHSA and invited one of the SPHSA executives to join the GSA Executive Meeting. Joshua, Nathan and Brittanie attended on behalf of SPHSA. The President welcomed them to the GSA Executive meeting and asked for a brief description of the event. They explained that the SPHSA have elected the Graduate Students' Association (GSA) commons as the prime venue of their annual Gala event this year which will be celebrated on February 28<sup>th</sup>, 2020. However, in order to move forward they are requesting funds to book the GSA commons. The School of Public Health has 124 students from which they expect at least 40 graduate students. The event is going to be centrally themed to bring together the students of public health and special guests to share and celebrate student's success for another year of dedicated work and accomplishments. The SPHSA wishes to provide an evening filled with positive experiences, entertainment, hospitality, and networking. The SPHSA is comprised of dedicated members and special associated volunteers that will be dedicating their work to make this year's Gala event memorable and successful.

The VP Finance and Operations asked if the speakers were already selected for the event as well as if they have looked for other sources of funding. They have not yet decided on the speakers and they have not reached out to other organization for funds. The VP Finance and Operations also asked if the event is open to other graduate students. The event will only be open

for the SPHA students. The VP Student Affairs asked to clarify certain elements with regards to breakdown of budget.

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 President indicated that the decision is based on the budget and not on the event. She informed that a decision will be made and communicated through email within a week.

Motion: to approve funding in the amount of \$250 for this event

Moved: VP Finance and Operations;

Seconded: President

***Vote all in favour (2 abstentions due to conflict of interest), Motion Carried***

#### 6.4 Co-Curricular Record (CCR)

After meeting with a CCR specialist of the University of Saskatchewan, the president mentioned that we agreed that it is important for GSA to give CCR to students that participate in activities that aligns with the University policies which means activities that have a learning component. Therefore, none of the new initiatives (Zumba instructor, guppies, etc) meet the requirements to get CCR.

Motion: not adding CCR to the new activities developed in 2019/2020

Moved: VP Student Affairs

Seconded: VP External

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

#### 6.5 ThinkGrad

ThinkGrad is an event that brings together GSA executives from other universities to discuss graduate student issues. Members of this group are graduate student representatives who are

focused on spearheading research to strategically address pressing problems affecting higher education in Canada. The VP Finance and Operations mentioned that ThinkGrad 2020 will be held at GSA commons, University of Saskatchewan from Jan 24<sup>th</sup> to Jan 26<sup>th</sup>, 2020.

Motion: Executives will work together on the organization of the ThinkGrad conference.

Moved: VP External

Seconded: VP Finance and Operations

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

## 6.6 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 that the following expenditures be authorized:

- Payment in the amount of \$303,311.82 to Saskatoon Transit for Fall remittance on November 18, 2019.
- Payment in the amount of \$369,776.65 to StudentCare for Fall remittance on November 18, 2019.
- Payment to Chip Bookkeeping services in the amount of \$618.69 on November 18, 2019 for bookkeeping services.
- Payment in the amount of \$23,000 to fall bursary recipients on November 25, 2019.
- Payment in the amount of \$1,000 for conflict resolution workshop to College of Law on November 25, 2019.
- Payment in the amount of \$5344.00 to Hub Int'l for insurance renewal on November 27, 2019.

Motion: to approve the expenditures outlined in this section above

Moved: VP Student Affairs

Seconded: President

*Vote All in Favour, Motion carried.*

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

### 7.1 University Sustainability plan

The President mentioned that she had been contacted by the Community Engagement Coordinator from the Office of Sustainability at the University of Saskatchewan, Matt Wolsfeld. University of Saskatchewan will be undertaking a renewal of its campus sustainability plan, which will consider the participation of students ensuring that students' concerns, wishes, and visions for the future are effectively captured and integrated into the plan. For this, they were hoping to set in motion to achieve this is the creation of a new entity on campus: The Sustainability Student Coalition. This group will be comprised of representatives from campus clubs that are interested in contributing or taking part in sustainability planning and progress, in addition to individual student leaders who wish the same. The goals of the Coalition will be:

- a. To provide coordinated student input to the President's Advisory Circle on Sustainability (PACS) on issues related to sustainability.
- b. To coordinate and organize student efforts for action on issues related to sustainability.
- c. To serve as a mechanism for the student body to amplify concerns related to sustainability towards institutional leadership.

As one of the primary student representative bodies on campus, they were hoping that the GSA can be represented on the coalition and, hopefully, act as a co-chair with a representative from the USSU. The Executive is happy to be part of this coalition however we all agreed that councillor from the School of Environment and Sustainability (SESS) would be better fit to co-chair this initiative.



## 7.2 Printer from GSA

The VP Finance and Operations mentioned that one of the printers is broken and the office manager had contacted IT support to look for options. The IT support team checked with the administrators of the CPAS student printing system and they would not be able to replace the printer as this printer only printed about 700 pages last year and the threshold for having a CPAS printer is 250 pages per month. Since GSA does not offer printing services and there is no budget to buy new printer. Executives decided not to buy a new printer.

## 7.3 Executives Away Dates

Executives are travelling in December/January at different dates but they will still be communicating regularly with each other via social media and email whenever needed.

## 7.4 Meetings with the candidates for Dean of CGPS

The President thanked the executives for attending the meetings with the candidates for Dean of CGPS. She explained that it was important to meet the candidates and evaluate their perspectives with regards to students and the University. We hope to have a fruitful relationship between the future Dean of CGPS and the GSA.

## 7.5 Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Nutana Stakeholder Committee

The VP Finance and Operations mentioned that he is serving on a stakeholder committee on behalf of the GSA. This committee is made up of representatives from various organizations as well as citizen representatives. The purpose of this committee is to foster connections between the Nutana community and the BRT project team with the ultimate goal of the successful implantation of the BRT system in Saskatoon. The first meeting of this committee was held on Saturday November 23rd from 1:00pm - 4:00pm.

## 7.6 Funding request from English Course Council (ECC)

The VP Finance and Operations mentioned that Ian Moy from the English Course Council has informed the GSA that they had secured enough funding from other sources for the event GSA sponsored. Therefore, they won't be needing the GSA's financial support for the ECC's Literacy Eclectic Conference.

**8. Other Business**

**9. Confidential Session**

**10. In Camera Session**

**11. Adjournment of Meeting**

President asked if there were any other business arising. Since there were none, motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:06 PM.

Moved: VP External

Seconded by: VP Finance and Operations

*Vote All in Favour, Motion carried.*