



University of Saskatchewan - Graduate Students' Association

Executive Meeting Minutes

October 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: Ian Moy and Biswa Patra

1. Call to Order / Opening Remarks

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

2. Approval of the Agenda

The President asked if there were any additions or amendments to the agenda as circulated. The President added two items for information/discussion:

Co-curricular record; Student engagement, Christmas Hangout

And the VP Finance and Operations moved the below items to the next executive meeting:

GSA Common Supplies and GSA Common hours for Reading and Christmas Break

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 September 23, 2019 Executive Meeting Minutes

The President asked whether there were any further amendments to the September 23rd, 2019 Executive Meeting Minutes. There were none.

Motion: To approve the September 23rd, 2019 Executive Minutes

Moved: VP Student Affairs

Seconded: VP Finance and Operations

Vote all in Favour, Motion carried.

4. Approval of the October 7, 2019 Executive Meeting Minutes

The President asked whether there were any further amendments to the October 7th, 2019 Executive Meeting Minutes. There were none.

Motion: To approve the October 7th, 2019 Executive Minutes

Moved: President

Seconded: VP Finance and Operations

Vote all in Favour, Motion carried.

5. Items for Action

5.1 English Course Council funding request

The President received a funding request from the English Course Council (ECC) and invited one of the ECC executives to join the GSA Executive Meeting. Ian Moy attended on behalf of ECC. The President welcomed Ian to the GSA Executive meeting and asked for a brief description of the event. Ian explained that ECC is going to host a conference “Literary Eclectic XIV”, which is the fourteenth annual Department of English graduate students’ conference, organized by the English Course Council (ECC) of the University of Saskatchewan, to be held on campus on October 25th-26th, 2019. They are anticipating research presentations by 30-40 students from University of Saskatchewan, University of Regina, University of Toronto, Trent University, Carleton University, Queen’s University, and McMaster University. The relevance of this conference is to provide

graduate students a professional experience and an opportunity to disseminate their current thesis and dissertation research. The President opened the floor for questions.

The VP Finance and operations thanked Ian for the explanation and asked to clarify about who would be presenting and how would graduate students benefit from such a conference. Ian explained that this is an opportunity for students to present their work and improve their academic performance and boost confidence while creating an opportunity to network. The VP Student Affairs asked about more clarification on the budget. Ian went into some more detail in describing the budget. President asked how many graduate students from University of Saskatchewan will present their work and if there is any fee to participate in this event. Ian mentioned that they are expecting about 20 graduate student from which 9 will be presenting their work. They will also have postdoctoral fellows and faculty members. Ian explained that there would be \$ 20 fee per person. 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 Ian for providing the proposal and further information. She communicated that the decision will be made and will be communicated via email.

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

Moved: VP Student Affairs

Seconded: VP Finance and Operations.

Vote all in Favour, Motion carried

5.2 India Students' Association funding request

The President received a funding request from Indian Student Association (ISA) and had therefore invited one of the executives to join the GSA Executive Meeting. Biswa Patra, VP Operations and Finance, attended this meeting on behalf of ISA.

The President welcomed Biswa to the Executive meeting and asked for a brief description of the event. Biswa explained that they are celebrating their annual event Parichay on November 9th,

2019 at the Park Town Hotel, Saskatoon. "PARICHAY" (meaning: Introduction) is a welcoming event for new students and this is an opportunity to introduce those students to the campus community as well as the community of Saskatoon. This is also one of the biggest international student event in Saskatoon organized every year that usually hold over 400 participants. The event is followed by an Indian cuisine dinner for all in attendance. They offer a Launchpad for students to showcase their talent in ethnic Indian performing arts. The event also serves as an opportunity to show the rich cultural heritage of India to the City of Saskatoon.

The President opened the floor for questions. The VP Finance and Operations requested more details on the food arrangements for the event to which Biswa explained that they are ordering food from a restaurant at a subsidized cost. The VP Student Affairs asked if they considered an option of distributing tickets online instead of printing them to reduce cost. Biswa explained that they had tried that before, but it did not go very well. She further asked about the cost per participant to attend the event as it was not very clear from the funding request. Biswa explained that it would cost \$10 per person but there would be many dignitaries/sponsors who would receive free tickets to attend the event. The VP External was happy with the explanations of the event.

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 Biswa for providing further information. She communicated that the decision will be made and will be communicated via email.

Motion: to approve funding in the amount of \$400 for this event

Moved: VP Student Affairs

Seconded: VP External.

Vote all in Favour, Motion carried

5.3 Approval for GSA executive to sit on the Governance committee

The President mentioned that two executives sits on the Governance committee. The Governance committee is required to ensure the Graduate Student Association (GSA) retains the correct documentation (Policies, Bylaws, and Constitution) to fulfill the mandate of the GSA. The primary activities of this committee include: (i) revising existing documents; (ii) creating required policies and/or bylaws absent in the existing documents; (iii) authoring recommendations and bringing forth motions to Council for policy documents; and (iv) authoring recommendations and bringing forth motions to General Meetings for bylaw documents and constitutional matters. This committee generally sits 2-3 times per year or as needed. Currently, the president is serving on this committee and one more executive is required to sit on this committee. The VP Student Affairs volunteered herself to sit on this committee.

Motion: to approve VP Student Affairs to serve on the Governance Committee.

Moved: VP Finance and Operations

Seconded: President.

Vote all in Favour, Motion carried

5.4 Convocation Ceremony

The President received an invitation for the GSA Executives to participate in the Chancellor's Platform Party at the 2019 Fall convocation. This is a standing tradition for student leaders, to be members of the Platform Party and sit on stage during convocations. The ceremony will be held on November 14th, 2019 at Merlis-Belsher. The President mentioned that the VP Finance and Operations agreed to participate on Convocation from 9am to 12pm and President will attend the afternoon ceremony.

Motion: to approve VP Finance and Operations to attend the morning and President to attend the afternoon ceremony.

Moved: VP External

Seconded: VP Student Affairs.

Vote All in Favour, Motion carried

5.5 GSA executive's participation in First Aid Mental Health

According to the GSA polices, the Executive should attend Mental Health First Aid Training in the first six months of their term in office, provided the training is available.

Motion: for the executives to attend Mental Health First Aid when the training s available.

Moved: VP External

Seconded: VP Student Affairs.

Vote All in Favour, Motion carried

6. Items for Information / Discussion

6.1 Senate meeting

The President mentioned that all executives are invited to attend senate meeting to be held in October 26 from 9 AM to 4PM. The President is a voting member of Senate therefore she has to give a report on graduate student activities as well as to participate in discussion. The President is giving a welcome message to the new Chancellor Grit McCreath. The president encourages all executives to participate in this meeting.

6.2 Renewal of the Insurance

The President mentioned that the GSA insurance package needs to be annually renewed. As such, the VP Finance and Operations and the President will be carefully going through the document to review the renewal of the insurance and make sure we do have this signed ahead of time.

6.3 Co-curricular Record

The VP External mentioned that Co-curricular records (CCR) are granted to students who participate in activities that help them develop skills, and learning outcomes. The executives discussed various activities performed by different members with the GSA that may have all requirement to receive CCR. The President thanked the VP External for bringing this item and she acknowledged that more discussion is needed on this topic. The president mentioned that further steps will be taken to make sure that we have all the information before moving forward with this item.

6.4 Student engagement: Christmas Potluck

A discussion with the Director of Student Affairs and Services, and the student community has brought the need of graduate students to have a place to stop by during the holidays in December. As such, the GSA commons will open its doors in specific days on December to gather events for Christmas. This is a great initiative as this creates a welcoming and friendly environment on campus for the university community. Unfortunately most of the GSA executives will be away on December and are not able to open the Commons therefore there is a need to have a coordinator available on those dates. The VP External volunteered to be cover the shift on Dec 25th and the Executive will make sure to find coordinators to cover following days as required.

6.5 Dates for the Retreat

The President mentioned last-year the Executive together with office-manager and coordinators went for a three-day retreat aiming to discuss about short and long-term goals of GSA as well as to brainstorm on how to continue improving our services for the betterment of graduate students at University of Saskatchewan. Last year, the location of the retreat was Waskesiu. The President has asked the office manager to gather more details of the venue and requested the Executive to check their calendars for available dates.

6.6 Halloween Movies

The VP Student Affairs mentioned that Halloween is approaching and as such GSA will be hosting a movie night at GSA Commons. This year two movies will be played. The first movie is family friendly: Coco and the second movie is a horror movie. The first movie will be screened at 5pm and the second movie will be screened at 7pm. We will provide pops and free popcorn during the event. She asked the Executive for help with the arrangements on the day of the event.

6.7 Student Saskatchewan Coalition committees: Governance, Communications, and Advocacy

The President mentioned that the Saskatchewan Student Coalition (SSC) encompasses all major student Unions in Saskatchewan and are currently in the process of developing goals for this year and working on the Terms of reference. The committee has decided to increase the number of meetings per year. 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 is on November 22nd, 2019 from 5:30pm to 6:30 pm and all executives agreed to attend the meeting.

7. Other Business

8. Confidential Session

9. In Camera Session

10. Adjournment of Meeting

The President asked whether there was any other business arising. There were none.

Motion: To adjourn the meeting

Moved: President

Seconded: VP Student Affairs

Vote All in Favour, Motion carried

The meeting was adjourned at 8:05 PM