



University of Saskatchewan - Graduate Students' Association

Executive Meeting Minutes

September 09, 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

**Guest:** Fahar Ibtisham

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

The President called the meeting to order at 6:05 pm.

**2. Approval of the Agenda**

The President asked if there were any additions or amendments to the agenda as circulated.

The President added three items for action/discussion:

4.5 *GSA Office Manager Vacation*

4.6 *Teaching, Learning and Academic Resources Committee (TLARC)*

5.6 *Random Acts of Green*

*Motion: To approve the agenda as amended.*

*Moved: VP Student Affairs*

*Seconded: by VP Finance and Operations.*

*Vote All in Favour, Motion carried.*

### 3. Approval of the August 21, 2019 Executive Meeting Minutes

Motion: Postpone to next GSA executive meeting.

*Moved: VP Student Affairs*

*Seconded: VP Finance and Operations.*

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

### 4. Items for Action

#### 4.1 Social Clubs Ratification

The VP Student Affairs has received a number of applications for the ratification of social clubs and she would like to bring this forward for ratification at the next council meeting.

*Motion: To bring the Social clubs ratification to the council.*

*Moved: VP Student Affairs*

*Seconded: VP Finance and Operations.*

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

#### 4.2 Purchasing Mats for GSA Commons

The VP Student Affairs mentioned that the executives had received an email from the Office Manager regarding the purchase of mats with GSA logo for GSA Commons. As the proposed mats were expensive and the current mats were serving the intended purpose, the executives decided not to go ahead with this. The VP Finance and Operations mentioned that he would work closely with the Office manager for other alternatives.

*Motion: To forgo the purchase the mats with GSA logo and look for an alternative.*

*Moved: VP External*

*Seconded: VP Finance and Operations.*

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

#### 4.3 Pakistani Student Association (PKSA) *funding request*

The President had previously received a funding request from the PKSA and had therefore invited one of the PKSA executives to join the Executive Meeting. The PKSA General Secretary, Fahar Ibtisham, attended and represented PKSA. The President welcomed Fahar to the Executive meeting and asked for a brief description of the event. Fahar first thanked the executives for being active and for the hard work the GSA does to improve the academic experience of graduate students on Campus; he then followed by explaining that, once a year, PKSA arranges a get-together welcome party for all Pakistani students, usually as close to Eid (Muslim event) as possible in order to also provide a sense of celebration for those away from home during Islamic holidays. According to Fahar, such gatherings offer unique opportunities for new and current Pakistani students with similar cultural backgrounds to get to know each other, additionally allowing for a sense of “home away from home”, to build friendships, and to have similar religious/cultural holidays celebrated together. This welcome event will also be an opportunity for other clubs/associations to introduce themselves and recruit in a more intimate setting. Their goals include providing new students with Pakistani heritage chances to make friends with established students and a place to feel comfortable while they learn and adapt to a new setting, whether they are first time university students or foreign graduate students coming to Canada for the first time. PKSA is taking input from current graduate students who struggled to settle down during their first few months here in Saskatoon due to a lack of an adequate support system being in place. They are expecting 20-30 students to attend and will charge 5 dollars for non-student members to cover the cost of food. Additionally, they plan to invite executive members from different social groups. The VP External thanked Fahar for explaining the event and the President opened the floor for questions. The VP External asked Farah to clarify the goal of the event; Fahar stated that the event will bring students together (Social gathering, family get-together). The VP Finance and Operations asked where the event will take place; Fahar answered that the event will take place on-campus but they have not selected any venue, date, or time, all of which are contingent upon financial support from GSA. The VP Student Affairs asked what type of food will be served; Fahar mentioned that traditional food will be served and they will need to order it from a restaurant which is providing them food at a subsidized cost. The VP Student Affairs asked if

PKSA had submitted an application for renewing the ratification of the social group for the new academic year; Fahar mentioned that PKSA had just submitted the ratification application before the meeting. The President asked if they had asked for funding from other organizations; Fahar mentioned that most organizations do not provide monetary support but they will provide food at a reduced cost.

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 she thanked Fahar for providing the proposal and further information. She communicated that the decision will be made and will be communicated via email.

Since the date and venue of this event were not provided, the GSA executives decided to put a hold on the decision of financial support until further information is provided. Regardless of the funds that GSA can provide, it was unclear if the event will happen. The VP Finance and Operations will contact PKSA again requesting resubmission of the proposal to include a date, a location, and a clear budget.

*Motion: To approve the reschedule of a meeting with PKSA representative where further information will be provided.*

*Moved: VP Student Affairs*

*Seconded: VP External*

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

#### *4.4 Cheque Remittance*

Whereas GSA bylaws 5.4.4 restricts expenditure amounts above \$500, on 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 to Chip Bookkeeping Services Inc. in the sum of \$852.19 issued on July 8, 2019 for bookkeeping services.

- Payment to Bursary recipients with a total sum of \$10,000 (distributed equally to 10 students, \$1000 each) issued on July 8, 2019.
- Payment to Engineering Graduate Community Council (EGCC) in the sum of \$800 for Engineering Graduate Research Conference and orientation for new engineering graduate students issued on July 22, 2019.
- Payment to One Brand Partner in the sum of \$3403.94 issued on July 22, 2019 for orientation swag.
- Payment to Academic council groups in a total amount of 4092.31 which was issued in two checks, for \$1542.54 and \$ 2549.77 on August 31.
- Payment for upgraded sound system in GSA Commons in the sum of \$3987.42 issued on August 30, 2019.
- Payment for upgrading 4 computers in the GSA Commons in the sum of \$3995.76 issued on May 10, 2019.
- Payment for upgrading 2 monitors in the GSA Commons in the sum of \$521.08 issued on May 24, 2019.
- Payment to Wholesale Club in the sum of \$1,328.18 for the purchase of GSA Orientation food items issued on September 2, 2019.

*Motion: To approve the expenditures outlined in this section above.*

*Moved: VP Finance and Operations*

*Seconded: President.*

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

#### *4.5 GSA Office Manager Vacation*

The GSA Office Manager has requested days-off on Sept. 13th and 16th, 2019. The President asked if any of the executives are available to cover the shift. The VP External agreed to cover the shifts on both days. The President mentioned that she would also join the VP External when needed during those days.

*Motion to approve the Office Manager's two day vacation to which shifts will be covered by VP External.*

*Moved: President*

*Seconded: VP External.*

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

#### *4.6 Teaching, Learning and Academic Resources Committee (TLARC)*

As mentioned in the last meeting, the VP Student Affairs has a scheduling conflict between the Teaching, Learning, and Academic Resources Committee and one of her classes, therefore she is not able to attend these meetings during the fall term. The President asked the GSA Chair to serve on this committee, to which she agreed.

*Motion: To approve the current GSA Chair to sit on TLARC committee.*

*Moved: VP Student Affairs*

*Seconded: VP External.*

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

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

### *5.1 Annual Gala*

The Remai Modern museum has been successfully booked for the Annual Gala event on April 4<sup>th</sup>, 2020. The VP external mentioned that free entrance to museum for attendants will be provided one hour prior to the event, from 4 PM to 5 PM. The GSA will pay a booking fee of 2000 CAD in advance and the remaining amount will be paid next year.

### *5.2 Coordinator recruitment*

The President mentioned that five coordinators work in the GSA and one of them graduated and submitted his resignation letter, consequently, the GSA Coordinator together with the VP Finance and Operations and President, interviewed candidates and recruited a new coordinator. The VP Finance and Operations added that he has also contacted all the applicants who were unsuccessful for this position to inform them that a candidate was already chosen.

### *5.3 Fall Bursary Dates*

The VP Finance and Operations mentioned that the time for fall bursaries is approaching. As such he proposed the call for bursary dates to open on October 15 and the application date will be closed on November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019. The GSA Bursary Selection Committee will sit and select the possible recipients of the bursaries after the application is closed. He also mentioned that he will ask for the graduate councillors to participate in the GSA Bursary Selection Committee during the next council meeting.

### *5.4 Social Media*

The VP External mentioned that the executives have been posting separately on Instagram and on Facebook and that it would be easier if the Instagram account is linked with the Facebook account. This way, the posts can be synced and the workload reduced. The executives have seen increase in the number of followers on both platforms for which the President thanked the executives.

### *5.5 Health Chats*

The VP External mentioned that Zumba classes are going to start on October 4th. As such, she would like to add this information in the GSA newsletter seeking a volunteer Zumba instructor.

### *5.6 Random Acts of Green*

The President mentioned that she has been approached by Random Acts of Green to promote green living amongst students in their day-to-day lives. The GSA will provide the GSA Commons

for this event and will help to promote it through social media and the newsletter. The VP External will serve as MC and this event will be open to all graduate and undergraduate students.

## **6. Other Business**

### *6.1 Holiday Party*

The VP External added that volunteer appreciation party can be combined with Holiday Party, to which all executives agreed. Further discussion and planning will be done in the future.

## **7. Confidential Session**

## **8. In Camera Session**

## **9. Adjournment of Meeting**

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

Motion: To adjourn the meeting

Moved: VP Student Affairs

Seconded: VP External seconded

*Vote All in Favour, Motion carried.*

The meeting was adjourned at 8:13 PM.