



University of Saskatchewan - Graduate Students' Association

Executive Meeting Minutes

July 9, 2020, 1:00 PM – 3:00 PM

Present: Humaira Inam (President), Hadi Ramin (VP Finance and Operations), Qasim Gill (VP External Affairs), Carmen Marquez (VP Academic and Student Affairs).

Regrets/Absent: None

1. Call to Order / Opening Remarks

President called the meeting to order at 1:00 PM.

The President thanked all the executives for the effort that they have been putting into their roles up until now. She expressed that we should continue doing the best that we can under the current circumstances.

2. Approval of the Agenda

The President added an item to the agenda after item 3, to discuss the virtual event, and asked if there were any additions or amendments to the agenda as circulated. Seeing none the President asked for a:

Motion to approve the amended agenda as circulated was moved by the VP Academic Affairs and seconded by VP External. Vote: Passed.

4 in Favour
Motion Carried.

3. Approval of the June 11, 2020 Executive Meeting Minutes

The President asked whether there were any further amendments to the meeting minutes for June 11, 2020, there were none.

Motion to approve the June 11, 2020 Executive Meeting Minutes was moved by the President and seconded by the VP Academic Affairs. Vote: Passed.

4 in Favour
Motion Carried.

4. Items for Action

4.1 Fall/Winter 2020/2021 Event Dates

The President wanted to confirm the event dates for the 2020/2021 fiscal year. She mentioned that some events require preparation and reaching out for sponsorships and emphasised the importance of careful planning.

The following tentative dates were proposed:

- GSA Fall Orientation: **September 3, 2020**
- Fall Wine & Cheese: **September 25, 2020**
- Halloween Social: **October 16, 23, 30 of 2020**
- Friendsgiving: **November 27, 2020**
- Holiday Party: **December 25, 2020**
- GSA Winter Orientation: **January 04, 2021**
- Winter Wine & Cheese: **January 29, 2021**
- Graduate Research Conference: **February 10 & 11, 2021**
- 3MT Competition: **March 26, 2021**
- GSA Awards Gala: **April 10, 2021**

Motion to approve the tentative Fall/Winter 2020/2021 event dates was moved by the VP Academic Affairs and seconded by the President. Vote: Passed.

4 in Favour

Motion Carried.

5. Items for Information / Discussion

5.1 Fall orientation 2020

The President discussed the cost of buying bags and swag, and the tight deadline we were under to order them so that they would be delivered in time for fall orientation. The President explained what the VP Academic and Student Affairs and she were considering ordering for the GSA orientation's swag. The President also explained the rationale behind ordering specific swag items, which was due to their reusable factor. However, the total cost was a bit more than what they initially anticipated, but it still fell within the budget that was allocated for fall orientation. The President asked the other executives for their input. The VP External asked the question, is it possible to have sponsorships from outside the university? In response, the President mentioned that it is hard to promote external companies due to additional costs of having their logos imprinted on products. Additionally, the President emphasised that the GSA should remain neutral and avoid advertising a company in our events. The VP Academic & Student Affairs said that we can have sponsors who do not want to have their logos on our merchandise, instead they could offer to give talks and presentations. The President stated that this was an agreeable solution, but it is essential to be aware of credibility of speakers and how the GSA is represented when inviting external speakers.

After some discussion, it was concluded that further information is required to move on with the decision to order swag and bags for fall orientation.

The President also asked about options for food and stated that due to COVID-19 it would not be possible to hold a barbeque this year as the GSA traditionally does for fall orientation. There was discussion among the executives about pizza, snacks, and drinks. The VP External and VP Finance were asked to compile price quotes for food items.

The President asked everyone if they have any ideas regarding orientation. The VP External suggested creating a Facebook group for fall orientation. Through this platform, student organizations could also provide short welcome videos for new incoming graduate students. The President said this idea sounded great, however inviting new graduate student might be difficult. The VP Academic mentioned that the GSA could advertise the Facebook group via CGPS or other point of contact. The President asked the VP Academic to reach out to student organizations associated with the GSA and invite them to participate in the fall orientation. The President also asked every executive to prepare a short video introducing themselves, closer to the orientation date, so students can familiarize themselves with their executives. The President asked which date would be best to form the Facebook group for welcoming graduate students, and all executives agreed on creating this as soon as possible.

5.2 Monthly Financial Expenditure Report per bylaw 5.3.1.

The President asked the VP Finance to present his financial expenditure report for the month.

The VP Finance's report was as follows:

The GSA's June 2020 ledger has been reviewed and approved.

During the month of May 2020, there were three items of revenue from the Gwenna Moss, GSA Commons booking, and the GSA spring/summer term memberships. Other expenses included banking, debit, credit fees and charges, staff salaries, executive honoraria, GSA operating costs, and financial auditing and bookkeeping costs.

5.3 Virtual Event

The President said that we had a “Coffee Break” virtual event with faith leaders on Wednesday, July 8, 2020. She was concerned about students not participating in this event, as there was zero student turnout. The President asked the executives to join her in the next event on July 15, 2020, and if they have had any ideas on how to increase student participation in this event. The executives discussed that perhaps students are oversaturated with so many online components taking place right now due to COVID-19, which may explain the low turnout for this virtual event. The President explained that, nonetheless, the GSA will continue this event until the end of July and then we will revisit and discuss how we can change up future events as needed to improve participation. The VP External stated that a Facebook group would be a great idea to advertise this event and engage students. The President responded that she has already posted the event on the GSA Facebook page, but will share it with new incoming students as well in the Facebook group that will be created.

5.4 Executive Roles and Responsibilities

The President stated that the executives need to go over the bylaws in order to ensure that they were carrying out their roles and responsibilities. The President reminded the executives that they need to reply to emails within 48 hours based on priority to ensure that urgent matters are not missed or delayed. The President also stressed that if the executives are feeling overwhelmed or require assistance, then to please reach out to her so she can be of help.

5.5 Canadian Federation of Student (CFS)

The CFS meeting is coming up and the President asked the VP External to provide information about what are their items for discussion and how they will be helping/advocating for students, especially international students. The VP External said that the next CFS meeting would be on July 17, 2020, but he has not received the agenda yet to discuss the items up for discussion. He will share the agenda among

executives once he receives the agenda. The VP External also asked the executives to let him know if they have items which they would like him to bring to the CFS meeting for discussion. The VP External stated that he will ask about the concerns regarding international students and student disability initiatives at the upcoming CFS meeting. The President said that we are paying CFS a membership fee and we want to make sure that they are advocating for students, and it is our responsibility as GSA representative to update our members about CFS activities.

5.6 Student Energy Chapters

The President discussed the email the GSA received regarding the Student Energy Chapter. The Student Energy Chapter seems to be an organization that is looking to create a student group through the GSA to promote and support initiatives related to energy. The executives agreed that it is not the GSA's responsibility to create this Chapter and that a student organization can only be ratified by the GSA if it is formulated by current USask graduate students, and as such the GSA would not be able to support this Chapter under the current circumstances.

5.7 Student Engagement and Workshops

The President asked the VP Academic and Student Affairs to provide information about student engagement. The VP Academic stated that she sent out emails to all ratified student organizations but has yet to receive a response. The President asked the VP Academic to contact other members of the GSA to confirm email addresses to ensure that these members are still active within the Council. The President also discussed workshops that the GSA could organize. The VP Academic said our main goal is to provide workshops on improving graduate students' skills for future job prospects. The President stated that currently our main focus should be on graduate student skills workshops and orientation for the fall term.

6. Other Business

The VP External discussed the “Health Chat” events which fall under his portfolio. He shared last year’s events and mentioned that this year’s may mostly be online and wanted to confirm event topics for the fall term. The VP External brought up the idea of hosting public health, financial, and human resources speakers. The President responded that we have access to the Career and Employment Centre to provide access to information on CV, job searching, interviews, etc. for students. The President also stated that inviting external speakers, although a good idea, would require checking into their credentials and credibility. The President said it might be a better idea to first reach out to resources we have available within the University. The President asked the VP External to provide more information on the “Health Chat” events and tentative dates that they would be taking place, as well as, who will be the invited speakers, and how would the VP External want to have students participate in these events. The other executives will provide information and comments on the proposed events to the VP External. The President stated that the VP External should also look into which events would require financial support.

7. Confidential Session

8. Adjournment of Meeting

The President asked if there was anything else that needed to be discussed. There was none.

Motion to adjourn the meeting was moved by the VP Academic and seconded by the VP External.

Motion Carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:30 PM.