



University of Saskatchewan - Graduate Students' Association

Executive Meeting Minutes

March 24, 2020

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: None

1. Call to Order / Opening Remarks

The President called the meeting to order at 5:17 PM. The President thanked the executives for being engaged during these uncertain COVID-19 times and she was glad that the executives were having the much-needed conversation.

2. Approval of the Agenda

The President asked if there were any additions or amendments to the agenda as circulated; there were none.

Motion: To approve the agenda as circulated.

Moved: VP Student Affairs;

Seconded: VP Finance and Operations.

Vote All in Favour, Motion Carried.

3. Approval of the February 18, 2020 Executive Meeting Minutes

The President asked whether there were any further amendments to the February 18th, 2020 Executive Meeting Minutes.

Motion: to approve the February 18, 2020 Executive Minutes

Moved: VP Finance and Operations

Seconded: President

Vote All in Favour, Motion Carried.

4. Items for Action

4.1 Provost search committee

In accordance with the university's search and review procedures, there is one GSA representative, appointed by the GSA, on the Provost Search committee. The proceedings of the committee will go beyond the end of the academic year. The GSA has nominated Candice Klein to sit on this committee to which she agreed to participate.

Motion: to approve the graduate student, Candice Klein, to sit on the above-mentioned committee.

Moved: VP Student Affairs

Seconded: VP External

Vote All in Favour, Motion Carried.

4.2 Cheque Remittance

Whereas GSA bylaws 5.4.4 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:

- a. Payment to bursary recipients with a total sum of \$23,000 (distributed equally to 23 students, \$1000 each) issued on March 10, 2020.
- b. Payment in the amount of \$600 to Saskatoon Audio and Visual for Awards Gala Deposit on March 10, 2020.
- c. Payment to WCVM in the amount of \$3000 as the reimbursement of sponsorship of gala on March 17, 2020.
- d. Payment to Canadian Federation of Students in the amount of \$19,115.86 on March 20, 2020, for winter remittance.
- e. Payment to City of Saskatoon in the amount of \$297,106.23 on March 20, 2020 for the UPASS service.
- f. Payment to NorthStar Trophies for trophies of Awards Gala in the amount of \$599.40 on March 24, 2020

Motion: to approve the expenditures outlined in this section above

Moved: VP Student Affairs

Seconded: VP External

Vote All in Favour, Motion Carried

5. Items for Information / Discussion

5. 1 Cancellation of events

The President mentioned that due to the current COVID-19 situation, the following was done;

1. All the events at the GSA Commons have been cancelled and/or moved to an online-platform.
2. The GSA Commons will be closed until further notice.
3. The approved funding for various pending events from social clubs/Academic councils were cancelled as those events are not happening anymore. The organizers have been informed accordingly.

5.2 Reports for the Annual General Meeting (AGM)

The President mentioned that the AGM will take place on April 14th. Executives should submit a report to the GSA chair. The deadline to submit the AGM report is April 1st, 2020.

5.3 Three Minute Thesis (3MT) competition

The VP Student Affairs mentioned that the 3MT competition will be held on March 27th, 2020. A video of each's participant's presentation will be recorded and will be circulated online to the judges. A video conference will be conducted to select the winners.

5.4 2020 GSA Retreat cancellation

The President mentioned that, unfortunately, the GSA 2020 retreat has been cancelled due to the COVID-19 current situation.

5.5 Co-Curricular Record (CCR)

The President requested all the executives to send the names of the committee members who were actively engaged in the discussions of various committees at the GSA so that they can receive the CCR.

5.6 ThinkGrad event

The President mentioned that the in-person ThinkGrad event has been cancelled this year and we are looking to host it via teleconference. But we are waiting to receive a confirmation from the board.

5.7 Update on the awards gala

The VP External mentioned that the GSA Gala has been cancelled. The booking at Remai has been cancelled as well. However, upon discussion with Remai, the GSA has been presented with an

opportunity to hold the booking place for the next Annual Gala. The GSA will not have to pay again if the same venue is selected for next year's GSA Gala.

5.8 New COVID19 initiatives

The President mentioned that since the GSA Annual Gala got cancelled, StudentCare was contacted to return the sponsorship amount. The program manager at StudentCare, Robyn Paches, mentioned that they would not seek return of the funds. They acknowledged that this is a tough time for the GSA and were happy to provide some support during this uncertainty. These funds will be made available to next year's executives and can be used for graduate students' support during or after the COVID-19 crisis.

5.9 Tuition- Package for Board of Governors

The President mentioned that the GSA has been working on the tuition-package for the Board of Governors for months now. Trevor, Dean of CGPS, sent GSA an email response that still had gaps that were not addressing some concerns in a clear manner. Thus, the GSA has sent a tuition package to the Board of Governors. The GSA hopes that the Board of Governors will consider the concerns raised by the graduate students.

5.10 Cabinet door of executives

The President mentioned that at the end of the current executive's term is coming near. As such, it is important to make the GSA office ready for the incoming executives. She recommended the executives to clean/empty the cabinets/office or destroy unimportant documents before the end of April.

5.11 Tax Clinic

The VP Finance and Operations mentioned that this year the GSA tax clinic was supposed to be hosted in-person at the GSA commons. Unfortunately, due to COVID-19 pandemic, the in-person tax clinic has been cancelled. Alternatively, a YouTube video has been made and circulated among

the students who registered for the event. He also indicated that he has been actively responding to the emails/phone calls who have problems filing their taxes. The video can be found at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JYz8u-CG-Y0>. The Engineering Graduate Community Council (EGCC) has also forwarded the link to the engineering students who may have needed help in filing taxes.

5.12 Bursary Update

The VP Finance and Operations mentioned that 23 bursary recipients were selected for the winter term. Like previous terms, both successful and unsuccessful recipients were contacted on March 9th, 2020. He further thanked the GSA Bursary Committee members for being very active throughout the year which helped in timely selection of bursary recipients in spring/summer, fall and winter terms.

5. Other Business

6. Confidential Session

7. In Camera Session

8. Adjournment of Meeting

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

Motion: To adjourn the meeting.

Moved: VP External

Seconded: VP Finance and Operations

Vote All in Favour, Motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:29PM.