



**University of Saskatchewan - Graduate Students' Association
Executive Meeting Minutes
September 10, 2020, 5:30 PM – 7:30 PM**

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

Regrets/Absent: None.

1. Call to Order / Opening Remarks

The President called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM. The President thanked all the executives for the effort that they have been putting into their roles up until now and for their help in the successful organization and execution of GSA's fall 2020 orientation. She mentioned that she received good comments from students. She also mentioned that 47 students have already picked up their swag bags after the orientation day by arranging an appointment with the GSA Office Manager or herself, and there is a plan to prepare more swag bags to distribute among students.

2. Approval of the Agenda

The President asked if there were any additions or amendments to the agenda as circulated. Seeing none, the President asked for a:

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

**4 in Favour
Motion Passed.**

3. Approval of the August 13, 2020, Executive Meeting Minutes

The President asked to delay the approval of the August 13, 2020 meeting minutes to add an item regarding the fall 2020 orientation.

Motion to delay the approval of the August 13, 2020, executive meeting minutes until the next executive meeting on September 24, 2020 was moved by the President and seconded by the VP Academic. Vote: Passed.

4 in Favour

Motion Carried.

4. Items for action

4.1 Social Clubs Ratification

The President mentioned that the ratification of academic councils and social clubs were currently taking place. The Bangladeshi Students' Association has already sent their ratification package to be ratified and we are waiting to receive more packages from student groups. The VP Academic also mentioned that as per the bylaws we would need to have a void cheque from the social clubs and academic councils, but with the current situation it is not easy for them to obtain one and she proposed if they can use the previous year's void cheque. Several solutions were discussed, and it was decided to advise the student groups to first contact their bank to acquire the void cheque; meanwhile the GSA could check whether last year's void cheque would be acceptable to use considering the circumstances of the pandemic.

Motion to ratify the Bangladeshi Students' Association moved by the President and seconded by VP External. Vote: Passed.

4 in Favour

Motion Passed.

4.2 Cheque Remittance

The GSA bylaw 5.4.4 restricts expenditure amounts above \$500, of any budget line, except for salaries and Executive honorariums, without a majority vote of the Executive. The VP Finance asked the executive team to authorize the following expenditure from August expenses:

1. Payment to Dipchand LLP in the sum of \$1,000 for the legal expenses for the copyright issues on August 11, 2020.

Motion to approve the above expenditure was moved by the VP Academic and seconded by the VP External. Vote: Passed.

***4 in Favour
Motion Carried.***

5. Items for Information / Discussion

5.1 Health Chat Events

The President mentioned that the VP External shared the proposal for Health Chat events, and she hoped that everyone read the proposal. She asked the VP External to talk about the proposed events. The VP external went over the document to further discuss the initiatives.

5.1.1 GSA Live Q&A

This event was proposed by the VP External as a way for graduate students to ask the executives any questions they may have. The President mentioned that this would be more of the VP Academic's portfolio, and the VP Academic could combine this initiative with virtual coffee sessions. The VP Academic said that the GSA could have bi-weekly events to engage graduate students that the GSA executives could also attend. She mentioned that having two similar events might be challenging, so it would be better to combine this event with the coffee sessions. The President also mentioned that the VP External and VP Academic could collaborate on this event and each take turns leading the event every month.

5.1.2. Yoga or Zumba Online

The President asked the VP External to contact the previous VP External regarding the Zumba instructor, as the classes were held at the GSA free of cost. She also mentioned that we might need to recruit someone for the Yoga class. The VP Academic mentioned that we could advertise on Facebook and PAWS to recruit someone. The President stated that the VP External could contact the Student Wellness Centre to see if there is a possibility for collaboration or they might know someone that could lead the Yoga class.

5.1.3. Cultural Event

The VP External mentioned that the President believed that the organization of a cultural event may fit under the VP Academic's portfolio. The President stated that both the VP Academic and VP External could collaborate on organizing this event. The VP Academic also mentioned that this event could be extended to social clubs and they could be invited to present club activities. The President responded by saying that making short videos of cultural dances was a good idea and we can give out prizes based on the most votes for the best dance. The VP External proposed that through the cultural event we could have a food recipe video contest. The videos could be streamed on our social media platforms and the most liked

video will be selected as the winner. The President also mentioned that these events need to be planned and advertised as soon as possible so we can have more students involved. She asked the VP Academic and VP External to think more on this event and to come up with solid plan that can be shared at the next meeting as it is unclear as to how this event will be organized.

5.1.4. Graduate Student Mental Health

The VP External talked about possible mental health workshops or seminars that could be conducted with the help of the Student Wellness Centre. The workshops would focus on understanding the CFS mental health toolkit, understanding the mental health stress response, as well as the mental health support on and off campus. The President mentioned that it would be a good idea to invite the primary individual who assisted in preparing the CFS toolkit as suggested by the VP External, but it is important that all executives read and understand the mental health toolkit first. The VP Academic mentioned that the CFS toolkit could be presented to GSA Council members as it is targeted towards student organizations. The President agreed that it would be valuable to present this to GSA Council, so students can better understand the mental health toolkit. The VP External proposed publishing the CFS mental health toolkit on the GSA website. After some discussion, it was decided that all executives would read and understand the CFS mental health toolkit, and the final decision on how we should proceed with the CFS mental health toolkit will be left for the next meeting. The President asked the VP External to contact the Student Wellness Centre to set up possible speakers or seminars. The VP Academic mentioned that we could also conduct a monthly talk around the services provided by the Student Wellness Centre.

5.1.5. Virtual Talent Show

The VP External shared his idea for a virtual talent show that all graduate students could participate in. The President said that this was a good initiative, but because it seemed to be a bigger project, we may need to organize it for the second term. The President also mentioned that the VP External and the VP Academic need to come up with clear rules and criteria for this event.

5.1.6. Virtual Trivia Night

The VP Academic presented the idea of holding two virtual trivia nights. Both of the trivia nights were proposed to be held on a Friday in October, one would be on horror movies, and the second would be on classic Halloween movies. Additionally, students would be able to win prizes by participating in these events. The executives agreed that this sounded like a wonderful idea, and we should organize the events as such that there would be at least one event per week to engage graduate students. The President asked the VP Finance to look at the budget for the prize amounts that could be awarded. The VP External mentioned that we should update the online GSA calendar with our events as well.

5.1.7. Financial Planning Seminar

The VP External proposed holding a financial management seminar to assist graduate students with financial planning. The President suggested that the VP External contact a

student organization from the Edwards School of Business regarding this particular seminar, or perhaps the Graduate Chair who can point the executive in the right direction. The President asked the VP External to update the executives on his communication with the Edward School of Business at the next meeting.

5.1.8. Resume/CV, Job Preparation Workshop for Graduate Students

The VP External proposed conducting a workshop or seminar that focused on providing students helpful information on resumes/CVs, interviews, and other job relevant skills. The President asked VP External to contact the Career Center for further information on holding workshops related to this. The VP External also talked about a great CV writing workshop presented by Janet Hill, and the President responded by asking the VP External to contact Janet Hill and update the executive at the next meeting.

5.1.9. How to write your first paper/Awareness about plagiarism policies at U of S

All executives agreed that this holding a workshop on the topic of plagiarism, and how to write a paper would be great idea. In this way we could also inform graduates students of the available resources on the campus. The VP External mentioned that there is an individual at CGPS who could be invited to conduct a workshop or seminar on copyright and plagiarism for the GSA. The President informed the VP External that this initiative falls under the VP Academic's portfolio and asked VP Academic to take the lead on this event and contact the proposed individual for the workshop.

The President concluded discussion on the topic of events by asking the VP External and the VP Academic to confirm their all information regarding their events, and report back to the executives at the next meeting.

5.2 Social Events for Fall 2020

The President mentioned that we would be cancelling the fall wine and cheese and the winter wine and cheese event this year due to the pandemic. She also asked the VP Academic to discuss the plans for the holiday party at the next meeting with ISSAC. The VP Academic said that she would like to start the virtual coffee event soon and discussed strategies to engage more students. The VP Academic mentioned that the event would be held biweekly and suggested that prepaid VISA cards be given out as prizes to encourage student participation. The President stated that although that is a good idea, we have a small budget for social events for the year, and we would need to save money for other events that we wish to conduct as well.

The VP Academic then talked about the Halloween social. She mentioned that we could have a trivia night for our Halloween events, as discussed earlier. The VP External mentioned that we could have a contest on face painting, best costumes, etc. The VP Academic also brought up the idea of curbside pick for trick-or-treat as a possible Halloween event for October.

5.3 Fall 2020 Bursary

The VP Finance proposed to send out the call for fall 2020 bursary applications on October 1, 2020, at 9:00 AM. The applications would remain open until October 31, 2020, at 5:00 PM. With the current budget availability, he asked to raise the bursaries' money to 1000 CDN.

5.4 Random Acts of Green

The President informed the executives that similar to last year the GSA will be promoting Random Acts of Green for their Halloween event that will be happening in October.

5.6 Annual GSA Gala

The President informed the executives that we were unable to obtain a refund for deposit money that was given for the April 2020 gala event. She stated that we could see what transpires with COVID-19 in the next few months in order to determine if we will still be conducting a gala in April 2021. She thought it was unlikely, and if we do not end up holding an in-person gala in April 2021 then we need to inform the next executive team that the deposit has been deferred to April 2022.

6. Other Business

The President asked if there was other business to discuss and there was none.

7. Confidential Session

8. Adjournment of Meeting

The President asked if there was other business to discuss and there was none.

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:00 pm was moved by the VP Finance and seconded by the VP Academic. Vote: Passed.

4 in Favour

Motion Carried.