



University of Saskatchewan - Graduate Students' Association

Executive Meeting Minutes

September 24, 2020, 5:30 PM – 7:30 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

The President called the meeting to order at 5:40 pm and thanked all the executives for the continued effort that they are putting into their roles until now.

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 amended agenda as circulated was moved by the VP finance and seconded by the VP External. Vote: Passed.

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

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

The President asked whether there were any further amendments to the meeting minutes for August 13, 2020, there were none.

Motion to approve the August 13, 2020, Executive Meeting Minutes was moved by the President and seconded by the VP Academic. Vote: Passed.

4 in Favour
Motion Carried.

4. Approval of the September 10, 2020, Executive Meeting Minutes

The President asked to delay the approval of the September 10, 2020 meeting minutes so everyone can take a final look.

Motion to delay the approval of the September 10, 2020, Executive Meeting Minutes until the next meeting was moved by VP Academic and seconded by the VP External. Vote: Passed.

4 in Favour
Motion Carried.

5. Items for action

5.1 Void Cheques for Academic Councils and Social Clubs

The President brought up the issue of void cheques for social clubs and academic councils that was discussed in the last executive meeting and asked the executives to vote on the following motion:

Motion to approve the use of a void cheque from last year (2019) for returning social clubs and academic councils. The motion was moved by the VP Finance and seconded by VP Academic. Vote: Passed.

4 in Favour
Motion Carried.

5.2 Funding Requests from Academic Councils and Social Clubs

The President stated that we may receive requests for funding from social clubs and academic councils throughout the year and as such, she requested the executives to vote on the following motion:

Motion to require a proposal for prospective events from academic councils, social clubs, and proof of payment for reimbursement. The motion was moved by VP External and seconded by the President. Vote: Passed.

4 in Favour
Motion Carried

5.3 New Social Club Ratification

The President asked the VP Academic if there were any new social clubs that needed to be ratified. The VP Academic stated that at this time, there is no social club to be ratified. Then, she mentioned that at the next GAS Council meeting, she would remind everyone to send in their ratification packages for approval.

No motion was proposed or carried.

5.4 Fall 2020 Bursary Amount

The VP Finance reported that it would be better to raise the amount for each bursary given out to successful applicants back to \$1,000 starting from the fall term due to the current budget availability. The President agreed.

Motion to approve the amount of \$1000 for each successful bursary applicant for the fall 2020 term bursaries moved by the VP Academic and seconded by the VP external. Vote passed.

4 in Favour

Motion Carried.

5.5 Fall 2020 Term Bursary Dates

The President asked the VP Finance to inform the executive what timeline will be for the fall 2020 bursaries. The VP Finance stated that the fall 2020 bursary applications will open on October 1 at 9:00 AM and will remain open until 5:00 PM on October 31, 2020. The President stated that this was ample time for all graduate students to apply for bursaries and asked for the following motion to be voted on:

Motion to approve the fall term 2020 bursary application timeline: October 1, 2020, the start of collecting applications, October 31, 2020 closing the application, and November 16 for student notification of successful bursary applicants, moved by the President and seconded by the VP Academic. Vote Passed.

4 in Favour

Motion Carried.

5.6 GSA Fall 2020 Orientation Food Cost

The VP Finance asked the executives to approve expending \$662.82 for the cost of food that was purchased for the swag bags that were given out for GSA fall 2020 orientation this year.

Motion to approve the expenditure of \$662.82 for food that was purchased for GSA's fall 2020 orientation was moved by the VP Finance and seconded by the VP External. Vote: Passed.

3 in Favour

1 abstain

Motion Carried.

6. Items for Information / Discussion

6.1 Fall 2020 Events

The President asked the VP Academic to provide an update on the fall 2020 events. The VP Academic mentioned that the coffee hang out session will be for all graduate students and peers, executive will not be required to join due to their busy and sometimes conflicting schedules, and the coffee session will be held bi-weekly on Thursday from 3:00 pm to 4:00 pm. The VP Academic also mentioned that WebEx is not ideal for student experience, and she may use other online hosting platforms such as Microsoft Teams/Google Meet to host the coffee hangout sessions. The President also mentioned that we should look at the other platforms to hold our social events, such as Zoom. She asked the VP Finance to provide more information regarding Zoom and if we had money in the budget to purchase this service. The VP Finance said he would look into this and provide an update to the executives. The President also stated that ISSAC has teatime events, and possible collaboration would be great to engage more students. She asked the VP Academic to update the executives in the next meeting regarding her communication with ISSAC.

The VP Academic then continued that there will be one trivia session on Friday, October 23 with a horror movie theme. She also said that she would like to give out a \$25-30 VISA card to the winner of the trivia. The VP Finance raised his concern around postage fee for international mailing in the case that we have a student winter who may be residing outside the country at the moment, and asked to avoid international postage if possible due to the limited budget we have for postage and the increased cost of postage from the COVID-19 situation. The President recognized that there was limit due to budget issues, as proposed that we could look for alternative solutions once the winner for the trivia has been selected.

Another event for October proposed by the VP Academic and the VP External was the Halloween costume and face painting contest, which would take place from Monday, October 19 - 25, 2020 where students can upload their pictures, and it will be followed

by a voting period from October 26 - 30, 2020. Some options of how pictures would be published and on what platforms was discussed by the executives. The President proposed using Instagram with a hashtag was specific to our event, and with this we would not have to upload any pictures to our social media platforms in the case that we have too many entries. The VP Academic also mentioned that the winner of this face painting/costume contest would on the day of Halloween, October 31, 2020. There will be prizes for the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd winner during this event, tentative for a total of \$100. The President informed the VP Academic that her total budget for social events for the 2020-2021 academic year is \$500 and asked the VP Finance to take a look at the budget and advise the VP Academic on what amount should be given out for each prize.

There VP Academic and President also proposed a curbside Halloween pick up at the GSA Commons on October 31, 2020. The President asked the VP Academic about the contents that would be included in the trick-or-treat bags given out for this curbside pickup even, and options were discussed for the items among the executives. The President asked the VP Academic to look on Amazon for trick-or-treat bags that might be available for a lower cost.

The VP Academic continued, that with the help of the VP external, they are going to organize a cultural event virtually, and they suggested holding this event close to Christmas. The VP Academic also added that they will collaborate with the various cultural clubs on campus. All the participants who take part in this culture event will be required to submit a video introducing their respective country, and the foods associated with their special traditions for Christmas. There could be a second video submitted of about 3 minutes with the recoding of a cultural dance. The President provided feedback for this event by stating that it would be better for the cultural event to take place in November and to exclude something specific for Christmas as not everyone celebrates Christmas or has traditions around Christmas. She also said that there is a need for clarification of targeted people for the cultural event. She continued that it is better to

have this event open for all students, and not just the cultural social clubs on campus, and have the prizes for the best voted video. There was further discussion on this matter, and the executives agreed that group submission would not be accepted, and only individual submissions would be accepted. There was a discussion on the timeline for this event, and the executive agreed to finalize the timeline by the next executive meeting. The President asked the VP Academic to update the executives on the holiday hang out event at the next meeting as well.

6.2 Health Chat Events

The President asked the VP External to update the executives on the health chat events for the fall 2020 term. The VP External stated that he has a meeting with an individual from the Recreation Centre and there is a bright chance of collaboration with them for yoga. Additionally, there is a tentative mutual plan to conduct the yoga event, in collaboration with the Recreation Centre, every Wednesday from 7:30 pm to 8:30 pm from October 7, 2020 to December 2, 2020. The VP External also contacted Chiamaka, the previous VP External, and was provided with two contact information for Zumba, he contacted these individuals but did not receive any response yet. The VP External asked for input from the executives regarding this initiative. The President said it would be great to collaborate with the Recreation Centre if there would be no cost associated with it, and the VP external asked if everyone was fine with the time and date of the yoga event. All executives agreed and had no issues with the timing or date for the yoga event. The VP External also stated that the Recreation Centre would like to use the GSA logo for the event advertisement/poster. The President stated that she can provide the VP External with the logo. She also asked VP External to take the lead when these sessions are being conducted as it falls under his portfolio.

The VP External continued talking about health events he had planned for this term, which includes inviting a speaker from CFS to present on the mental health toolkit in the form of a seminar. The President asked for input from other executives regarding the CFS

mental health toolkit. The VP Finance stated that he did not find the images within the toolkit to be clear enough in explaining what the mental health toolkit was trying to accomplish. The VP Academic said that the mental health toolkit was not clear to her as well, and the President stated that she did not understand how this toolkit could be implemented at our university when most of the universities mentioned in the toolkit are Ontario based. The executives agreed that there was much confusion around the CFS mental health toolkit. The President proposed having a CFS representative present the mental health toolkit at the next GSA Council meeting so councillors and graduate students would have an opportunity to discuss and provide input. The President said she would talk to the GSA Chair about the possibility of inviting a speaker from the CFS to present at the next GSA Council meeting.

The VP External then continued with his updates and mentioned that he contacted the Student Wellness Centre manager for mental health seminars, and she was willing to organize speakers for biweekly seminars on mental health topics. The President asked VP External to finalize the dates, content of each seminar, and speakers with the Student Wellness Centre. She also mentioned that it would be better to start the mental health seminars after Thanksgiving, so the Student Wellness Centre has ample time to arrange for speakers. She then suggested that Monday would be a good day for this event, and to promote it has "Mental Health Mondays". The VP External is to update the team on finalized information on health events with the Student Wellness Centre at the next executive meeting.

The VP external updated the executives on the resume and cover letter workshops that he proposed last meeting. He said that the Career Center asked him to submit an online request if we wanted to conduct workshops or seminars, and topics we would like to be discussed at these workshops/seminars. The VP External confirmed that Dr. Janet Hill has agreed to conduct a seminar on professional skills, which would be beneficial to students. He mentioned that we would need to give Dr. Hill a few dates for the event as

she has a busy schedule as well. He also mentioned that there would be a financial management workshop that he would like to conduct this month, and he has been in discussion with a professor from the Edwards School of Business regarding this. The President said that it is better to have only 1 or 2 workshops, not a series of workshops, to see how successful these two workshops will be and then decide on moving forward. The President asked the VP External to confirm a date with the two professors so one of them will be conducting their event in October and the second in November. She also emphasized that there should be enough buffer time to promote the event. The President asked the VP External to set up a meeting with herself if further discussion regarding this matter is required.

6.3 GSA commons

The President stated the GSA Commons would remain closed until further notice. She said that if any executive or staff is visiting the Commons, then they should be filling out the COVID-19 symptom form for contact tracing purposes, and ensure that all doors at the GSA are locked before leaving.

7. Other Business

The President asked if there was other business to be discussed. There was none.

8. Confidential Session

9. Adjournment of Meeting

The President asked for the adjournment of the meeting.

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:30 pm was moved by the VP Finance and seconded by the VP Academic. Vote: Passed.

4 in Favour

Motion Carried.