



University of Saskatchewan - Graduate Students' Association
Executive Meeting Minutes
February 25, 2021 – Microsoft Teams

The GSA operates on Treaty 6 Territory and the Homeland of the Métis Nation. We pay our respect to the First Nations and Métis ancestors of our gathering place and reaffirm our relationship with one another.

Present: Humaira Inam (President), Mery Mendoza (VP Finance and Operations), Carmen Marquez (VP Academic and Student Affairs), Qasim Gill (VP External Affairs), and Tina Alexis (VP Indigenous Engagement).

Regrets/Absent: None

Guest: None

1. Call to Order/Opening Remarks

The President called the meeting to order at 5:32 PM.

2. Approval of the Agenda

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

The following item for information/action were added:

- Letter to the federal government (information)
- Amendment of Minutes January 28, 2021. Fee motions were approved by the GSA Board of Directors (action)
- Student academic and accommodation policy group (action)

Motion: to approve the agenda as amended.

Moved: VP External Affairs.

Seconded: VP Academic and Student Affairs.

Vote: All in Favour,

Motion carried.

3. Approval of the February 11, 2021 Executive Meeting Minutes

The President asked whether there were any further amendments to the Feb 11th, 2021 Executive Meeting Minutes.

Motion: to approve the February 11, 2021 Executive Meeting Minutes

Moved: VP Academic and Student Affairs.

Seconded: VP External Affairs.

Vote: All in Favour,

Motion carried.

4. Amendment of Minutes for January 28, 2021.

Fee motions were approved by the GSA Board of Directors. It has been amended accordingly.

Motion: To approve the January 28, 2021 minutes as amended.

Moved: VP External Affairs.

Seconded: VP Academic and Student Affairs.

Vote: All in Favour,

Motion carried.

5. Items for Action

5.1 Graduate Student Representative for the Associate Dean Research Review Committee, College of Dentistry.

A graduate student, Fernanda Andre, from the College of Medicine has been contacted to sit on this committee as the graduate student representative.

Motion to approve Fernanda Andre to sit on Associate Dean Research review committee for the College of Medicine.

Moved: VP Academic and Student Affairs

Seconded: VP Indigenous Engagement

***Vote All in Favour,
Motion Carried (Approved via email)***

5.2 Student Academic and Accommodation Policy Working Group

In 2017, Disability Services for Students underwent a name change to Access and Equity Services. This change was driven to assist students from all protected ground categories in addition to the area of disability. The protected grounds that are now most commonly accommodated by the office are disability, family status, and religious accommodation. The current policy does not reflect the duty to accommodate all protected grounds and because of this, the policy is being revised to reflect the protected grounds for accommodation that are being requested by students of the University. A revision of this policy will be done to make it more inclusive of all protected ground categories and update procedures for the administration of accommodation requests based on these grounds. Therefore, a GSA representative was called to sit on this review.

Motion to approve the GSA President to sit on this policy review working group.

Moved: VP Academic and Student Affairs.

Seconded: VP External Affairs.

*Vote: All in Favour,
Motion carried.*

5.3 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:

1. *Payment of \$24 000 to successful bursary applicants for the winter 2021 bursaries, which amounts to 24 bursaries (\$1000 for each successful applicant).*

Motion: to approve the expenditures outlined in this section above

Move: VP Academic and Student Affairs.

Seconded: VP Finance and Operations.

*Vote All in Favour,
Motion Carried.*

6. Items for Information / Discussion

6.1 3MT Updates

Registration for this year's 3MT Competition is now open to all graduate students. The VP Academic and Student Affairs is currently working on the slides which will be sent to each registered student who will participate in this competition. Further details will be provided soon.

6.2 Indigenous Students' Initiatives

The VP Indigenous Engagement did some consultation with our senior leaders on campus to discuss possible supports for our Indigenous graduate students. The VP Indigenous Engagement explained that some students struggle with the course load in foundation courses within Indigenous studies, and she is working on addressing this issue. Additionally, the VP Indigenous Engagement is communicating with senior leaders to bring awareness to Indigenous student concerns. The VP Indigenous Engagement also mentioned that we could possibly offer a “scholarly publishing and open access” workshop, and she will provide more information on this when it is available.

6.3 GSA Annual Awards

The VP External Affairs will continue promoting the call for nominations for the GSA Awards Gala. The number of applications is low therefore, the GSA has decided to formally extend the deadline. The new deadline for the Awards Gala is on March 22, 2021 at 5:00 PM.

6.4 Canadian Federation of Students Lobby Week

The VP External Affairs as well as a GSA academic councilor attended the Canadian Federation of Students (CFS) lobby week where they were able to communicate with MPs from their district and bring up student issues/concerns. A presentation on the five goals of CFS was also the main topic of discussion during the lobby week. A feedback form was sent by CFS to attendees to provide input on how to improve lobby week.

6.5 GSA Budget Update

A financial statement has been sent to each executive with an updated expenses YTD January 31, 2021. This information has to be taken into consideration when future purchases or financial expenses are done.

6.6 Tax Clinic

The VP Finance and Operations is organizing tax information sessions in collaboration

with Canada Revenue Agency Outreach, the GSA will be providing two sessions to graduate students on March 30, 2021 and April 7, 2021. Further information will be released soon.

6.7 Studentcare Agreement

A meeting with a Studentcare Representative, Robyn Pachas, has been held on February 16, 2021 to discuss the renewal of our contract. Studentcare respectfully proposed a renewal of our mandate for another 5-year term from 2021 to 2026 and a modest, inflationary increase to our service fees. This would provide a mandate and strong service infrastructure during the RFQ process and any operational or benefit changes that may come out of that in-depth analysis. Also, this would allow them the stability to meet their best business practices and guarantees their service fees for the duration of the agreement, providing continued cost-stability for the GSA. The inflationary increase of \$0.54 per plan to \$13.50, from our current level of \$12.96 was proposed. This has been approved by the GSA Executives internally and this increase will not affect any changes on the health and dental fees that are collected from our graduate students. We also reviewed some specific commitments from Student Care, fast forward to the year 2021 **(the proposal is attached in these minutes)**.

6.8 ThinkGrad Update

The President attended the ThinkGrad meeting on February 16, 2021. Discussions on dissolving the association was brought forward by the members, as well as other options were presented if members chose not to dissolve due to the legal implications. A recommendation to eliminate the fee option without the dissolution of the organization was also brought forward. There were issues in the past with the transition of executives and this impacted financial access, which is why the recommendation to remove fees was proposed. The President recommended that the VP Finance advise the Budget and Finance Committee to not include ThinkGrad fees for the next fiscal year.

6.9 Letter to the Federal Government

Incoming and returning international students arriving in Canada have to isolate for three days until they get a result for the COVID-19 test. Those students have to pay up to \$2000 in hotel fees for the mandatory three-day quarantine. We are supporting students and advocating for this fee removal through a letter that has been compiled by the Graduate Student Societies of U15 and will be addressed to the federal government. Conversations with senior leaders at the UofS are also being held on this issue.

7. Other Business

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

8. Confidential Session

9. In-Camera Session

10. Adjournment of Meeting

The President asked for the adjournment of this meeting.

Motion: to adjourn the meeting at 7:55 PM.

Moved: VP External Affairs.

Seconded: VP Academic and Student Affairs.

Vote: All in Favour,

Motion carried.

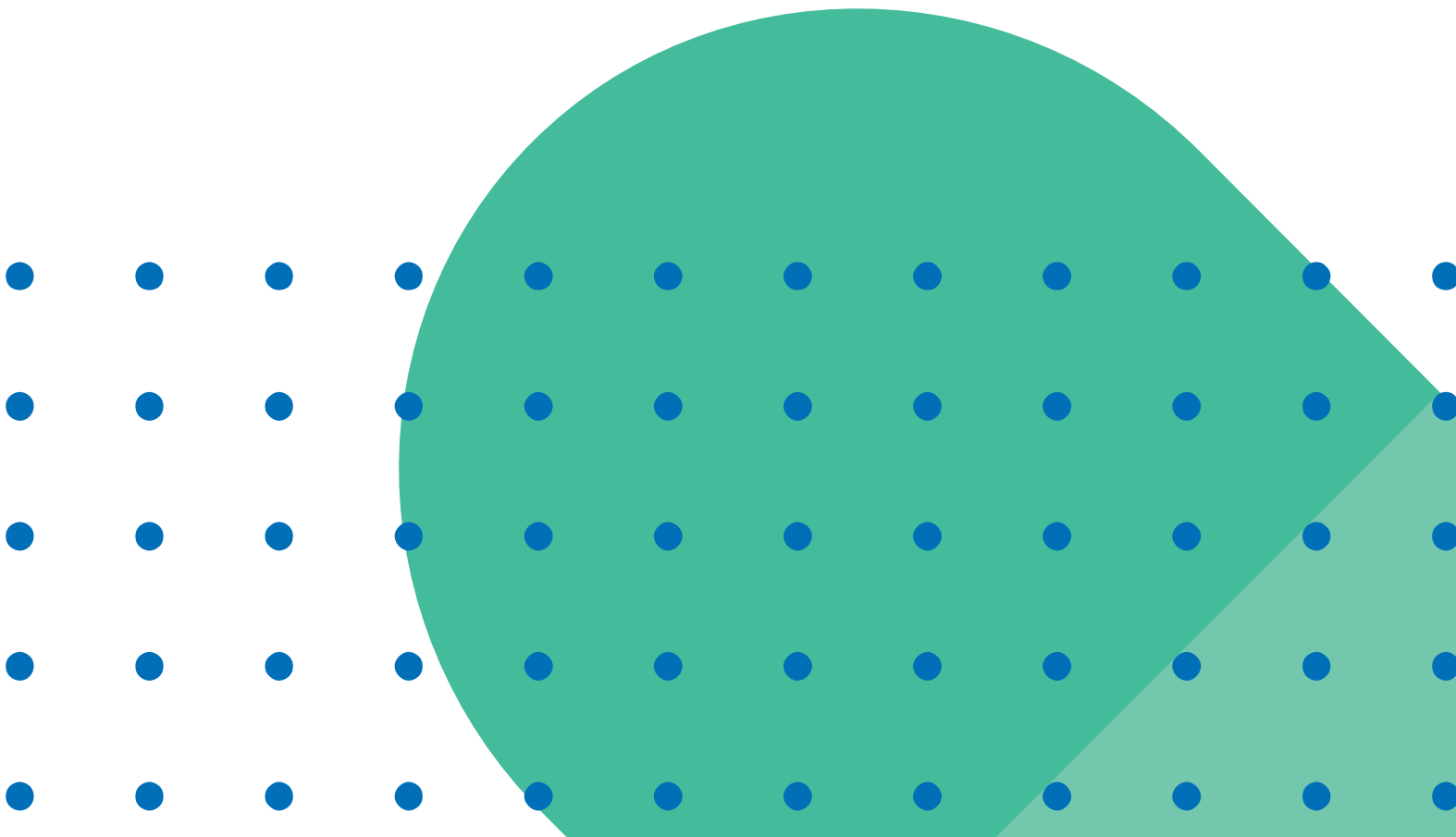


STUDENTCARE

University of Saskatchewan Graduate Students' Association Health & Dental Plan

Proposal for Renewed Mandate

February 2021



GSA & STUDENTCARE: OUR ROOTS AND RELATIONSHIP

The University of Saskatchewan Graduate Students' Association (GSA) and Studentcare has had a strong and successful relationship since 2003. During this time we have shepherded the Plan through periods of volatility, benefit adjustments, and changing usage patterns. At every stage, our partnership has produced tangible results for GSA members. We hope to continue collaborating as the GSA Health & Dental Plan evolves to meet the needs of current and future students.

Studentcare is an organization founded by students, with students, and for students. Today, we are the leading provider of student health care in Canada, serving over 1,000,000 students from 100 partner student associations and post-secondary institutions. Our partners include those at the University of British Columbia, the University of Victoria, the University of Alberta, the University of Toronto, McGill University, and of course—the University of Saskatchewan.

Some highlights of our services and contributions are:

- After identifying the overwhelming need for a graduate student extended health & dental plan, the GSA put out a request for proposals (RFP) in 2003 for a health plan provider. Studentcare responded to this RFP and was selected as the successful partner.
- The GSA unanimously renewed Studentcare's mandate after competitive review processes involving other health plan providers in 2006.
- In the 2006/2007 policy year, Studentcare was able to find significant savings in unnecessary administrative costs due to the strong financial planning of the GSA. These savings were approximately \$70 per member, which allowed the GSA to implement long-requested vision coverage for its members.
- In 2012 Studentcare took the GSA's Plan to market through a process known as a request for quotes (RFQ). Multiple insurance companies provided bids on the Plan, and this competition resulted in a reduction in Plan Premiums.
- Once again, the GSA chose to re-evaluate our mandate in 2014/15. After a review process, Studentcare's mandate was once again unanimously renewed.
- Studentcare introduced our first Pharmacy network in 2015, saving GSA members thousands over the following years.
- Due to the long-standing prudent financial management of the Plan, the GSA was able to, once again, increase benefits for its members while keeping its Plan Fee steady in 2020. Eyeglasses, psychology, and basic dental coverage were all increased in response to student feedback.
- In a nimble response to mental health concerns brought forward from isolation during the COVID-19 pandemic, the GSA implemented Empower Me, a 24/7 365 mental health service that students can access via phone, chat, or video anywhere.

NEW INNOVATIONS

Legal Protection Program

A dispute with a landlord, employer, academic institution, or between individuals can be intimidating and difficult for a student, especially since finding and engaging a lawyer is often a lengthy and costly process. For this reason, in addition to facilitating access to health care, Studentcare now offers its partner associations access to a legal counseling service that allows students to consult a lawyer for any legal question. The Legal Protection Program gives students access to legal representation in housing, employment, or academic issues, with services tailored to their needs. For a low annual rate, students' can access unlimited legal counseling via the program's helpline and unlimited representation in covered disciplines.

Virtual Healthcare

In partnership with Dialogue, Studentcare has launched a virtual healthcare service, which provides students with unlimited 24/7 access to licensed health experts, including doctors, nurse practitioners, and care coordinators who will direct them and their families to the correct specialists and facilities.

Our virtual health solution provides virtual healthcare services to our members through Dialogue's virtual platform, available via the web or through a mobile application. Unlimited access to the following is available:

- 24/7 bilingual care available across all provinces
- Fast access to medical professionals via chat, video, or phone
- Video consultations with licensed doctors and nurses
- Referrals and requisitions with specialists and labs
- Free delivery of prescriptions to a nearby Rexall, another local pharmacy, or a student's door (where available)
- Care navigation and concierge accompanying patients to the right resources
- Proactive follow-up with a member of Dialogue's care team

Students are guaranteed to be able to speak with a medical professional within 10 minutes of completing the questionnaire on the application.

UPCOMING PROJECTS & COMMITMENTS

Fast forward to the year 2021, and the time has come to review our mandate. Studentcare would be humbled to once again receive a renewed mandate from the GSA as their Health & Dental Plan provider. In this section, we will review some specific commitments we will make, if renewed, to improve the Plan.

Winter Term & Part-Time Student Auto Enrollment

Studentcare is constantly looking for ways to better serve your members. As of writing, new Winter term graduate students are not automatically enrolled in the Health & Dental Plan. Similarly, part-time students are also not automatically accessed the Health & Dental Fee. This means that these students must manually enroll for their coverage. Over the past few years, we have seen an

increasing number of cases where students were unaware of this need, they believed they had automatic coverage like their Fall-intake or full-time peers. As such, they did not enroll in the Plan. Additionally, we have seen many instances of full-time students dropping to part-time and not realizing they are no longer automatically enrolled. Therefore, they will also unknowingly lose benefits. With the advent of an increased number of distanced learning students moving to part-time during COVID-19, we have seen a sharp increase in this specific case in 2020. As part of our new mandate, we commit to working with the GSA and the University of Saskatchewan to implement automatic enrollment for January-intake and part-time graduate students. This change would positively result in these students not being left without critical health & dental coverage.

Competitive Marketing: Insurer RFQ Process in 2022

When conditions are optimum, Studentcare supports students' societies by taking their Health & Dental Plan to market through a managed Request For Quotation (RFQ) process. This involves taking the Plan to tender by inviting multiple insurers to provide competitive quotes for premiums, which we analyze thoroughly and transparently with GSA stakeholders. It both stimulates competition and provides a unique opportunity to take a “deep dive” into Plan financials. The GSA last conducted an RFQ in 2012. As it has been 9 years since we feel the time is right to take the Plan to market again.

Conducting an RFQ process requires a significant investment of time and resources, and it is important to time this process to provide an optimum advantage to the GSA. There are several factors to consider, but we tentatively suggest undertaking this process in Spring 2022.

RENEWAL OF MANDATE & SERVICE FEE GUARANTEE

Studentcare is committed to providing our clients with financial transparency and flat, fixed provider fees to ensure your peace of mind and to avoid any potential conflict of interest. Unlike with traditional percentage-based broker fees, we do not benefit if the GSA Health & Dental Plan premium increases, either through benefit increases or increases in the cost of services. We feel this is important to provide you with comprehensive professional advice and to encourage a high level of awareness and usage on the part of your members while maintaining the strictest standards of impartiality. This structure has served the GSA well: allowing successive improvements to Plan coverage, with no impact on our fee.

However, just as important as our commitment to a fixed fee is our commitment to continually improving and expanding the services we offer, and with that our investment in human resources and information technology. These innovations and efficiencies helped keep costs low and stable over a long period. Our investment in innovation also revolutionized the way your members experience their Health & Dental Plan—from opting out and making claims to our ability to advocate for complicated Drug Exceptions: we are truly proud of where we started and how far we have come.

Given the critical focus and investment in resources that are required at this juncture, Studentcare respectfully proposes a renewal of our mandate for another **5-year term from 2021 to 2026 and a modest, inflationary increase to our service fees**. This would provide a mandate and strong service infrastructure during the RFQ process and any operational or benefit changes that may come out of that in-depth analysis. Also, this would allow us the stability to meet our best business practices,

and **guarantees our service fees** for the duration of the agreement, providing continued cost-stability for the GSA. We propose an inflationary increase of \$0.54 per plan to \$13.50, from our current level of \$12.96.

Studentcare Provider Fees	Health	Dental
Current: Annual Per Enrolled Member	\$12.96	\$12.96
Proposed: Annual Per Enrolled Member 2021 - duration of next agreement	\$13.50	\$13.50