



**University of Saskatchewan - Graduate Students' Association**

**Executive Meeting Minutes - Zoom**

**February 14, 2022**

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:** Rifat Zahan (President), Ehsan Moradi (Vice-President Finance and Operations), Mostofa Kamal (Vice-President Academic and Student Affairs), Devin Cherneski (Vice-President External Affairs).

**Regrets/Absent:** None

**Guests:** N/A

## **1. Call to Order / Opening Remarks**

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM by GSA *President Zahan*.

## **2. Approval of the Agenda**

President Zahan asked whether there were any amendments to the agenda as circulated. There was no amendment.

*Motion: To approve the agenda as circulated*

*Moved: VP Academic and Student Affairs*

*Seconded: VP Finance and Operations*

***Vote: All in Favour,  
Motion Carried.***

## **3. Approval of the last Executive Meeting Minutes from January 25, 2022.**

President Zahan asked whether there were any amendments to the last meeting minutes as circulated.

*Motion: To approve executive meeting minutes from January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2022.*

*Moved: VP Academic and Student Affairs*

*Seconded: VP External Affairs*

***Vote: All in Favour,  
Motion Carried.***

## **4. Items for action**

**4.1 Approve the Canadian Federation of Students (CFS) fees increase by \$0.34 (from \$12.88 to \$13.22) according to Consumer Price Index (CPI).** According to the bylaws of CFS, every year, they change the student fees based on CPI for the previous year.

*Motion: To approve the CFS increase by \$0.34*

*Moved: VP Academic and Student Affairs*

*Seconded: VP Finance & Operations*

*Vote: All in Favour,  
Motion Carried.*

***4.2 Approve U-Pass fees increase between \$1.68 - \$3.37 (from \$115.38 to between \$118.06 - \$119.31) according to Saskatchewan January 2022 Consumer Price Index (CPI).***

According to the contract that GSA has with Saskatoon Transit, the U-Pass fees change annually based on the CPI of Saskatchewan based on January of the current year. This year, the CPI of January 2022 has not been released yet. Based on the percentage increase, the exact amount will be calculated. The Executives proposed a suggestion to increase between a range instead. Following an approval from the council members, the exact amount will be submitted to the Fee Review Committee.

*Motion: To approve the U-Pass fee increase between \$1.68 - \$3.37 (from \$115.38 to between \$118.06 - \$119.31).*

*Moved: VP Academic and Student Affairs*

*Seconded: VP External Affairs*

*Vote: All in Favour,  
Motion Carried.*

***4.3 Approve auto-enrolment of graduate students in Winter term GSA Health and Dental Plan.***

In the Winter term, many graduate students are not automatically enrolled in the GSA Health and Dental Plan. As a result, many students miss to self-enroll themselves for this extended health coverage by the deadline set by Studentcare. To better serve our graduate students, GSA is bringing a motion to approve the auto-enrolment of all full-time graduate students in Studentcare in the Winter term.

*Motion: To approve auto-enrolment of grad students in the Winter term for GSA health and dental plans.*

*Moved: VP Finance & Operations*

*Seconded: VP External Affairs*

***Vote: All in Favour,  
Motion Carried.***

***4.4 Appoint VP Academic and Student Affairs to be signing officer at GSA without the existing signing officers.***

The President may not work in person at GSA commons due to urgent health reasons during March and April 2022. Therefore, Executives discussed VP Academic and Student Affairs, Mostofa Kamal, to serve as a signing officer in the absence of the President.

*Motion: To authorize signing authority/officer to VP Academic and Student Affairs.*

*Moved: VP External Affairs*

*Seconded: VP Finance and Operations*

***Vote: All in Favour,  
Motion Carried.***

## **5. Items for Discussion**

***5.1 GSA seat in the Board of Governors*** – GSA has been requesting a seat in the Board of Governors for many years. Usask is the only U15 university that does not have a seat the Board of Governors. To advance GSA’s goals, the current Executives will keep advocating for a seat in the Board of Governors. The GSA President will bring this forward in the meetings with senior leaders to advocate for a seat of GSA in the Board of Governors. If this is something that is not feasible soon, the GSA President will ask university senior leaders for possible avenues to deliver messages of graduate students’ needs to the Board of Governors.

***5.2 Monthly budget update*** – VP Finance and Operations shared updated budget and expenditures on an excel spreadsheet with all Executives.

**5.3 Black History Month** - Registration is still open for event of Black History Month where Robyn Maynard will speak Thursday, February 17, starting at 7:00 p.m. She is a well-known author and book writer.

[Uju Asiodu - University Library | University of Saskatchewan \(usask.ca\)](#) profile added to the library website. VP External Affairs completed two videos and received two write-ups from graduate students. The videos were recorded on Friday, February 11, at the GSA Commons.

**5.4 GSA Winter Orientation: Curbside Pickup** – Executives will attend both sessions on February 17<sup>th</sup> (swag bag preparation) and 18<sup>th</sup> (the swag bag distribution). The GSA Executives and volunteers will meet and pre-fill swag bags to prepare for February 18<sup>th</sup>. The goal is to have 500 bags ready.

**5.5 Graduate Student Research Conference** – The VP of Finance and Operations discussed the event and upcoming deadline. VP Moradi also indicated that the poster had been updated for the February 28<sup>th</sup> deadline. Applications are slowly coming in. At this time, five participants have submitted—more information to follow next executive meeting.

**5.6 GSA Winter Bursary** – The VP of Finance and Operations indicated forty-five applications have come in so far, with 11 being approved for the subsequent evaluation. The Bursary Committee will continue to work through the procedures.

**5.7 GSA Tax Event** – The VP of Finance and Operations indicated that he has communicated with the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) for possible event to be organized by GSA. Two tax information sessions will be set up for March 1<sup>st</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> via online Zoom meetings. More details to come along with communication through GSA social media and newsletter.

**5.8 GSA Annual Awards Gala** – The VP of External Affairs indicated that there had been no applications thus far, only questions about the nomination process, letterhead style, and references. VP Chreneski stated that another advertisement would be going out to all graduate students on Monday, February 14, 2022 (by email). The next Awards Committee meeting is slated for February 18<sup>th</sup>. Committee members received confidentiality agreements and rubric grading templates for review.

**5.9 CFS Lobbying week (February 22 to 25<sup>th</sup>)** – The VP of External Affairs, in collaboration with President Zahan and Erin Calvary, who is the Public Affairs Officer for the Canadian Federation of Students (CFS), will be setting up a meeting with a Member of Parliament (MP) Corey Tochor

from the Conservative Party of Canada (Saskatoon - University riding). President Zahan will also have meetings with MPs from British Columbia, Manitoba, and Ontario with conjunction with Canadian Federation of Students. Plans are in place to discuss improving affordability of education (tuition, cost of living, debt) and eliminate financial barriers, housing accessibility and affordability, increased mental health support, fairness for international graduate students, Indigenous learner's rights to education.

**5.10 3MT Thesis Competition** – The VP of Academic and Student Affairs indicated that an event is already planned for March 25<sup>th</sup>, 2022, as per the Executive Retreat 2021. VP Kamal also mentioned that GSA is looking at having an in-person event at the GSA commons. President Zahan indicated that this would be a challenge with students not going to school and working remotely throughout Saskatchewan and all around the world. The VP of Academic and Student Affairs said GSA might request students to come to GSA Commons if available and see how many responses he gets. Based on the responses GSA Executives can decide for the event venue. VP Kamal also indicated that plans would be in place soon with advertising, including posters that will go out around February 28<sup>th</sup>, 2022.

## **6. Closed Session**

**7 Adjournment of Meeting** – President Zahan made a motion to adjourn February 14 executive meeting.

*Motion: To adjourn the meeting at 7:44 PM*

*Moved: VP Academic and Student Affairs*

*Seconded: VP External Affairs*

***Vote: All in Favour,  
Motion Carried.***

The meeting was adjourned at 7:44 PM.