Graduate Students' Association

We acknowledge that we live and work on Treaty 6 Territory and the homeland of the Métis. We pay our respect to the First Nations and Métis ancestors of this place and reaffirm our relationship with one another.

GSA Executives Meeting(s) on Friday January 23rd, 2026
Time: 5PM to 6PM

Attendance: Lindsay Carlson, Laila Valila, Palash Roy, Mandela Alema, Sunny Bui
Guests: None

All executives approved all of these actions.

Prior to the meeting, it had been requested that each executive prepare ideas and select dates for events within their portfolio that they are planning, so that GSA can proceed with a complete event programming schedule.

President

1. **Workload Balance and Team Support**

The President reminded executives to remain courteous and mindful of competing priorities, and to offer support where needed.

2. **PEC Agenda Items and Follow-Ups**

The Executive noted upcoming university initiatives, including International Mother Language Day (Diversity and Inclusion). Palash Roy requested Mandela Alema engage the D&I committee regarding Black History Month. The Executive also discussed CGPS approval for additional time-in-program for GSA executives, and noted Debbie requested a brief report on U15 GSAs and their practices.

   a. **Action:** VP External Affairs to prepare the U15 GSA comparison/report for follow-up.

3. **Awards Gala Planning (Sponsorship Package)**

The Executive discussed continued planning for the Awards Gala.

   a. **Action:** Palash Roy and Sunny Bui to meet to discuss the sponsorship package.

4. **Childcare Business Plan Development (CGPS Funding)**

The Executive discussed use of CGPS funds to develop a childcare business plan and considered two approaches: hiring a contractor or partnering with the Edwards School of Business through a course-based model. Laila Valila raised concerns about student access to sensitive information and related ethics considerations. The Executive agreed the initiative remains worth exploring and discussed next steps for assessing feasibility with Edwards.

5. **Recreational Athletics Committee (RAC) Fee Review**

Palash Roy provided an update on the RAC fee review, noting a forthcoming meeting date (January 26 or 27, 2026) and committee membership.

6. **GSA Spring–Summer Transit Pass (Preliminary Update)**

Palash Roy noted he spoke with Saskatoon Transit and was advised the “summer” component could not be added at this time.

   a. **Action:** Office Manager, VP External Affairs, and President to meet with Saskatoon Transit at a future date to explore options.

7. **GSA Intramural Teams (Status Update)**

Mandela Alema reported two teams were filled rather than the anticipated three and expressed regrets due to limited availability during comprehensive exam preparations. Palash Roy requested the game schedule to attend and support participants.

8. **Holiday Hangout Budget Reconciliation**

The Executive discussed outstanding Holiday Hangout expense reconciliation and sponsor/funding outcomes. Mandela Alema indicated personal funds were used for some event costs and committed to compiling a consolidated list of expenses from across the organizing team. It was noted SIGA did not approve the event funding application.

   a. **Action:** Mandela Alema to compile and submit a complete list of expenses for review and reconciliation.

9. **Department of Biology Graduate Student Policy and Student–Supervisor Agreements**

Palash Roy noted concerns regarding student–supervisor agreements not being consistently filed or followed within the department, and that changes to Biology policy documents are anticipated.

a. **Action:** Palash Roy and Lindsay Carlson to continue work on policy revisions and follow-up.

Vice-President Finance and Operations

1. **Health and Dental Plan Fee Decision (2026/2027)**

The Executive reviewed the health and dental plan report and discussed claims-based cost drivers, prior rate impacts, and the limits of executive authority. Lindsay Carlson recommended an executive-approved increase within the 5% cap for 2026/2027.

a. **Decision/Outcome:** Unanimous approval to increase the Health & Dental plan fee by **5%** for the 2026/2027 academic year.

2. **GSA Fee Increase Process (Council Approval Required)**

The Executive discussed GSA fee parameters and noted any increase beyond the executive authority requires Council approval. Lindsay Carlson summarized the fee's role in supporting core operations (e.g., staffing, bursaries) and emphasized longer-term revenue diversification.

a. **Action:** Lindsay Carlson to prepare a motion and supporting information for Council regarding a 5% GSA fee increase.

3. **Event Funding Applications**

The Executive reviewed and approved event funding requests for Toxicology, Geography and Planning, and Engineering (CGC).

a. **Decision/Outcome:** Approved.

4. **Investment Planning (Update)**

Lindsay Carlson provided an update on investment planning and strategy.

5. **Studentcare Fraud Case (Consultation Requested)**

The Executive was informed that Studentcare confirmed a fraud case involving approximately $9,500, with funds recovered and restrictions placed on claims.

Studentcare requested GSA consultation regarding removing the student from the plan. Lindsay Carlson expressed discomfort in making a decision without further information. Palash Roy requested an investigation and noted potential misconduct processes may be relevant if warranted.

   a. **Decision/Outcome:** No vote; investigation/fact-finding to proceed before any decision.

6. **Academic Event Funding: Research Conference / Elevator Pitch Competition**

The Executive noted CGPS funding for an academic event and discussed prior low attendance at the Elevator Pitch Competition. Lindsay Carlson indicated limited capacity to lead and the Executive discussed alternative delivery options, including assigning coordination support.

   a. **Action:** Sunny Bui to consider taking on coordination and report back at the next executive meeting.
   b. **Follow-up:** Executives to consider assigning coordination to staff/coordinators.

Vice-President Academic and Student Affairs

1. **Portfolio Update**

Items were listed on the agenda; details were not recorded in the submission.

Vice-President External Affairs

1. **Awards and Gala (Operations Meeting Update)**

The Vice-President External Affairs reported meeting with the GSA Operations Manager (Brenna) regarding Awards and Gala planning.

2. **Social Media Access**

The item was listed on the agenda; it was noted as not discussed.

Vice-President Indigenous Engagement

1. **Indigenous Resource Fair and Intercultural Exchange (Post-Event Update)**

The Executive received an update on attendance and participation, noting Career Services did not attend, while CFS and CGPS were present. The event was reported as under budget, with approximately two Indigenous attendees and five to seven international student attendees. Laila Valila raised concerns regarding attendance and support from the broader executive team. Mandela Alema expressed apologies and regrets. The President thanked Laila Valila for her work and noted the event as a learning experience for future planning. The Executive also acknowledged VP External Affairs' social media efforts.

2. **Faith Leader Council Appointment (Policy Concern)**

Laila Valila raised concerns about the appropriateness of an "Indigenous faith" appointment, noting ethical and professional considerations and citing prior concerns regarding cultural sensitivity. The Executive noted the Council's composition and the purpose of student representation as part of the discussion.

   a. **Decision/Outcome:** Discussed; no formal decision recorded.

Approved by: VP Finance & Operations, President, VP External Affairs & VP Indigenous Engagement, VP Student & Academic Affairs