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 April 1, 2026

Time: 1:30PM to 3:13PM

Attendance: Laila Valila, Lindsay Carlson, Sunny Bui & Palash Roy

Guests: Brenna Maxwell

Not Present: Mandela Alema

Majority of executives approved all of these actions.

1. Purpose of the Special Meeting

This Special Executive Meeting was convened to review the response received from the Council Chair and Chief Electoral Officer regarding procedural concerns raised to the Executive about the conduct of the current GSA election process. The Executive had previously communicated with the GSA Chair reagrding detailed concerns grounded in specific provisions of the GSA Constitution, Bylaws, and the Saskatchewan Non-Profit Corporations Act, 1995 some of which were raised by the Executives themselves, others which were brought to the Executive team by students. The Council Chair provided a written response and supporting document, which formed the basis of this meeting's discussion.

NOTE: At the outset of the meeting, the Vice-President External Affairs declared a conflict of interest and, for the duration of the discussions, refrained from commenting except when asked to provide factual verification related to candidate eligibility and volunteer experience.

The Operations Manager attended to provide clarity and context given she was involved in communications in question, but did not offer opinions on Chair performance or participate in any voting.

2. Context

The Executive, in its capacity as the Board of Directors under Constitution Section 6.4, had raised concerns with the Elections and Referenda Committee regarding compliance with mandatory Bylaw provisions governing the election process. The Executive also received correspondence from nominees expressing concerns about procedural inconsistencies in the election process, further confirming that the issues identified were not limited to the Executive's observations but were also experienced by participants in the process. These concerns were communicated in writing to the Council Chair over the preceding days and included questions about nomination extensions, background check methodology, eligibility verification for Presidential nominees, registration confirmation, and the sequencing of the election process.

The Council Chair was invited to attend the bi-weekly Executive Meeting on March 30, 2026, as a guest to discuss these concerns. During that meeting, the Chair declined to respond to specific questions regarding election procedures. A motion was passed requiring the Chair to provide a written response to all concerns within 48 hours. The Chair's initial written response did not substantively address the specific questions raised. Instead, the response questioned the authority of the Board to seek clarification on election procedures and did not demonstrate a willingness to cooperate with the transparency the Executive was seeking regarding Bylaw compliance. Based on this, the Executive determined that a Special Executive Meeting was necessary to assess the situation and consider appropriate governance remedies. A subsequent, more detailed written response with a supporting document was received from the Chair and was reviewed as part of this meeting's proceedings.

The Executive noted that the Council Chair's willingness to engage with the concerns evolved over the course of the exchange. The initial response from the Chair asserted that the Executive had no role in election matters and characterized the concerns as directives. Subsequent engagement became more constructive, culminating in the Chair's commitment to re-evaluate all nominations and forward nomination files to the GSA Administrator for independent verification. However, the Executive identified several procedural issues in the Chair's detailed response that required further discussion.

3. Communication and Election Administration Concerns

3.1 Committee Communication and Bylaw Adherence

Following concerns received from multiple nominees and observations from within the Executive regarding the conduct of the election process, the Executive reviewed the communications and documentation associated with the election administration. Upon review, further inconsistencies were identified, including decisions that appeared to have been made without full communication with all Elections and Referenda Committee members or without following explicit Bylaw requirements. Specific areas of concern included conflict-of-interest verification under Bylaw 4.3.2.6, the application and interpretation of Bylaw provisions governing the nomination period and eligibility verification, and the overall transparency of the process. These concerns were raised with the Council Chair to provide an opportunity to clarify and address the issues identified.

Further discussion of the specific procedural issues identified is documented in Section 5.

3.2 Remote Administration

The Executive discussed that the Council Chair has been operating remotely since approximately February 21, 2026. While the Bylaws do not prohibit remote work for the Council Chair, the Executive noted that this has contributed to communication gaps and coordination challenges during a critical period of election administration. The Executive expressed concern about the practical impact on the Chair's ability to fulfill the duties outlined in Bylaws 1.7.3 and 4.4.2, including organizing the All-Candidates Forum (Bylaw 4.8.7.3), chairing mandatory meetings (Bylaws 4.8.4.1 and 4.8.5.1), and addressing issues in a timely manner (Bylaw 4.4.2.3). For example, VP Finance pointed out that a calendar invite and meeting reminder email with the updated agenda had not been sent prior to the March Council meeting, and the President pointed out that this had resulted in low turnout and mismanagements at the meeting.

4. Presidential Nominee Eligibility Requirements

The Vice-President External Affairs abstained from all discussion under this item due to a conflict of interest, as the VP External is a nominee in the current election. This abstention was noted and respected by the Executive.

The Executive discussed the general eligibility requirements for Presidential nominees under Bylaw 4.8.3.4.5, which requires specific qualifying experience beyond the general requirements applicable to other executive positions. The Executive confirmed the interpretation that where a nominee's qualifying criterion is volunteer experience with GSA, this must be confirmed by the Vice-President External Affairs as the Bylaw explicitly requires.

During the March 30 Executive meeting, the Executive asked the Council Chair directly whether the Elections and Referenda Committee had reviewed and verified the eligibility of Presidential nominees in accordance with Bylaw 4.8.3.4.5. The Chair did not provide a direct answer to this question and declined to address the specifics of the Committee's verification process.

The Chair's subsequent written response revealed that members of the Elections and Referenda Committee were not aware that Presidential nominees are subject to additional eligibility requirements under Bylaw 4.8.3.4.5 beyond those applicable to other executive positions. Rather than returning to the Committee to ensure proper understanding and collective application of the Bylaw, the Chair proceeded to interpret the eligibility provisions and ratify nominees at his sole discretion.

To further verify the extent of the procedural gap, the Executive asked the GSA Operations Manager whether anyone from the Elections and Referenda Committee had contacted her regarding verification of nominee eligibility or qualifications. The Operations Manager confirmed that no such contact had been made.

The Executive determined that the combination of the Committee's lack of awareness of the distinct Presidential requirements, the Chair's unilateral interpretation and ratification without collective Committee review, and the absence of any consultation with the Operations Manager for independent verification represents a significant departure from the standard procedural requirements outlined in the Bylaws. This approach is inconsistent with the Committee's collective mandate under Bylaw 4.3.2.5 and does not reflect the ethical and procedural standards expected in the administration of a GSA election.

The Executive was made aware that the Elections and Referenda Committee had raised a question regarding the eligibility of a Presidential nominee in a communication to that nominee. The Executive discussed the general requirements without evaluating any specific individual's eligibility, as this determination falls within the mandate of the Elections and Referenda Committee under Bylaw 4.3.2.5.

The Executive discussed whether involvement with a non-ratified organization constitutes qualifying experience under Bylaw 4.8.3.4.5 and agreed that further clarity on this interpretation should be sought from the Elections and Referenda Committee as part of the re-evaluation process.

5. Review of Election Process Procedural Issues

5.1 Removal of GSA Operations Manager from Nomination Forms

The Executive noted that the GSA Operations Manager’s email was removed from the official nomination forms without explanation or consultation with the Executive. The Operations Manager has historically been included on nomination forms as part of the administrative oversight of the election process. The removal of the Operations Manager from the forms reduced a layer of independent administrative verification and was not communicated to or approved by the Executive.

The Executive viewed this as inconsistent with the principles of transparency and administrative oversight, particularly given that the Operations Manager serves as a neutral administrative resource for the Association.

5.2 Registration Confirmation

The Executive noted the Chair's acknowledgement that registration confirmation letters received from nominees only confirm enrollment through August 2026 and do not cover the full fiscal year ending April 30, 2027, as required by Bylaw 4.8.3.3.3. The Chair acknowledged this as a gap and requested guidance from the Executive.

The Executive further noted that the public declaration forms signed by all nominees contained dates from the previous fiscal year rather than the current year. This error was not identified or corrected by the Elections and Referenda Committee before the forms were distributed and signed. The Executive expressed concern that this reflects a lack of attention to detail in the preparation and review of official election documents, and that publicly circulated declaration forms containing incorrect dates negatively impacts the credibility of the GSA's election process.

The Executive agreed that nomination forms and declaration forms should be updated to reflect the correct fiscal year and that nominees should be asked to provide a written undertaking to maintain registration for the full term of office.

5.3 Nomination Period Extensions

The Executive reviewed the Council Chair’s account of the nomination extensions. The Chair’s response confirmed the following timeline:

The initial nomination period ran from March 19 to March 24. By the close of this period, two nominations had been received for the President position. No nominations had been received for any Vice-President position. A first extension was made from March 24 to March 26. A second extension, stated by the Chair to be specifically limited to the Vice-President Academic and Student Affairs position, was made from March 26 to March 28. However, the Executive reviewed the communications issued during both extension periods and determined that, in both instances, the email correspondences suggested that the nomination period was extended for all positions, not solely for those with zero nominees.

The Executive noted a procedural concern with both extensions. Bylaw 4.8.3.8 states that the Committee may extend the nomination period only when there are no nominees for a position after the regular nomination period has ended, and only for that specific position. At the time of the first extension, the President position already had two nominees. The Bylaw does not authorize extending the nomination period for positions that already have nominees. The Chair’s own handling of the second extension, which was stated to be correctly limited to the VP Academic and Student Affairs position only, demonstrated an understanding of this principle that was not applied to the first extension. The Executive noted a discrepancy between the Chair’s stated limitation of the second extension to the VP Academic and Student Affairs position and the communications actually distributed, which extended the nomination period for all positions.

The Executive agreed that this raises a fairness concern: candidates who submitted nominations during the regular period did so under the assumption that the window was closing. Extending the window for positions that already had nominees changes the competitive landscape after the fact.

The Executive further noted that the nomination forms distributed during the extension periods contained unclear instructions regarding which positions were open for nomination.

5.4 Background Check Methodology

The Executive reviewed the Chair’s description of the background check process. The Chair confirmed that background checks consisted of reviewing nominees’ LinkedIn profiles and cross-checking information provided in CVs and supporting documents.

The Executive expressed concern that this methodology relies on self-reported information being verified against other self-reported information, which does not constitute a meaningful independent check. Bylaw 4.8.3.10 requires a general background check, and Bylaw 4.8.6.1.3 requires that the background check not exhibit any concerning matters before ratification can proceed. The Executive noted that the Chair’s own response proposed stronger measures for the re-evaluation, including contacting referees and requesting organizational confirmation letters. The Executive agreed that the adoption of these stronger measures for the re-evaluation implicitly acknowledges that the original process was not sufficient.

The Vice-President Finance and Operations raised that consideration should be given to including criminal background checks as part of due diligence for candidate verification, given that incoming Executives will serve as directors of a non-profit corporation with fiduciary responsibilities under the Saskatchewan Non-Profit Corporations Act, 1995.

5.5 Election Process Sequencing

The Executive discussed the timeline between the close of nominations and the scheduling of the Procedures Meeting. The Chair's response stated that the Committee adopted a rolling review approach, assessing nomination files as they were received. The Executive noted that even with a rolling review, the background checks (consisting of LinkedIn reviews), eligibility verifications, and the mandatory Orientation Meeting under Bylaw 4.8.4.1 must all be completed before the process advances to ratification under Bylaw 4.8.6.1.

6. Review of Chair's Response: Credibility and Integrity Concerns

Upon reviewing the Council Chair's written response and supporting document, the Executive identified several instances where the information provided appeared to be inconsistent with the documentary record or with the direct knowledge of Executive members present. These findings were discussed in detail and are documented below.

6.1 Inconsistency in Nomination Extension Communication

The Council Chair's response included a screenshot of a communication sent to the GSA Administrator regarding nominations received. Upon review, the Executive identified the following concerns with this evidence and the Chair's account of the nomination extensions:

First, in the screenshot provided, the Chair indicated that nominations had not been received for the positions. However, the Chair's own written response to the Executive confirms that two nominations for the President position had already been received by the close of the initial nomination period on March 24. The first extension was therefore applied to all executive positions, including the President position, despite that position already having received nominations. This is inconsistent with Bylaw 4.8.3.8, which authorizes extensions only for specific positions with zero nominees.

Second, regarding the second extension, the Chair stated in his written response to the Executive that this extension was specifically limited to the Vice-President Academic and Student Affairs position only. However, the communications issued during that period did not specify that the extension applied to only certain positions, thus effectively extending the nomination period for all positions, contradicting the Chair's own stated approach.

Third, the Operations Manager confirmed that the screenshot included in the Chair's response was a trimmed version of the original communication, not the full exchange. The Executive determined that presenting a partial communication as supporting evidence, without disclosing that it had been edited of important context, raises serious concerns about the completeness and integrity of the information provided by the Chair to the Executive.

The Executive determined that these inconsistencies, taken together, raise significant questions about the accuracy and transparency of the information presented by the Chair in support of the Committee's decisions regarding nomination extensions.

6.2 Public Declaration Form Deficiencies

The Executive reviewed the public declaration forms, and identified multiple problems with the declarations. These deficiencies were not identified or addressed by the Elections and Referenda Committee during its review process. The Executive noted that the Committee's failure to identify these issues during its stated rolling review raises further questions about the thoroughness of the verification process.

6.3 Misrepresentations During Council Chair Election

The Executive discussed concerns regarding statements made by the current Council Chair during his chair election regarding fall orientation volunteering. Multiple Executive members who were present at the fall orientation confirmed that the Chair made public statements regarding his contributions to the GSA, including claims of involvement with the organization that were not accurate based on the direct knowledge of the Executives present.

The Executive noted that these inaccuracies, taken together with the inconsistencies identified in the Chair's written response regarding the election process, suggest a pattern of providing inaccurate information. This pattern was a factor in the Executive's assessment of the Chair's suitability to continue administering the election process.

The Vice-President External Affairs abstained from all discussion under this item due to a conflict of interest, as the VP External is a nominee in the current election. This abstention was noted and respected by the Executive.

The Executive discussed the general eligibility requirements for Presidential nominees under Bylaw 4.8.3.4.5, which requires specific qualifying experience. The Executive confirmed the interpretation that where a nominee's qualifying criterion is volunteer experience with GSA, this must be confirmed by the Vice-President External Affairs as the Bylaw explicitly requires.

The Executive was made aware that the Elections and Referenda Committee had raised a question regarding the eligibility of a Presidential nominee in a communication to that nominee. The Executive discussed the general requirements without evaluating any specific individual's eligibility, as this determination falls within the mandate of the Elections and Referenda Committee under Bylaw 4.3.2.5.

The Executive discussed whether involvement with a non-ratified organization constitutes qualifying experience under Bylaw 4.8.3.4.5 and agreed that further clarity on this interpretation should be sought from the Elections and Referenda Committee as part of the re-evaluation process.

6.4 Committee Communication and Bylaw Adherence

The President raised concerns that certain decisions related to the election process appeared to have been made without full communication with all Elections and Referenda Committee members and without following explicit Bylaw requirements, particularly regarding conflict of interest verification under Bylaw 4.3.2.6. Further discussion of procedural issues raised described in section 4, 5 and 7.

6.5 Promotional Materials

The Vice-President Indigenous Engagement raised a concern regarding AI-generated promotional materials used for the election that contained a stereotypical and inappropriate portrayal of Indigenous peoples. The Vice-President External Affairs confirmed that the material was neither created nor approved by the VP External, and that distribution had been requested by the Chair. A follow-up communication was sent approximately 18 hours later. The Executive agreed that all election promotional materials must be reviewed and approved in consultation with the Executive before distribution, and that materials must be respectful and culturally appropriate.

7. Council Chair and Vice-Chair Performance Concerns

The Executive discussed concerns regarding the organization and conduct of recent Council meetings. Specific concerns included:

Poor organization at the March Council meeting, including issues with meeting management and process.

For the February Special Council meeting, which included senior University leadership, the President contacted the Chair in advance and specifically requested that the Vice-Chair arrive at least one and a half hours early, given that it would be the Vice-Chair's first time presiding over a Council meeting. The Chair confirmed that this communication had been made and that the Vice-Chair would be there early. However, the Vice-Chair arrived approximately five minutes before the meeting, with the expectation that all preparations would have been handled on his behalf. This resulted in limited briefing time, a delayed start, and confusion regarding order and process in the presence of senior University leadership. The Executive agreed that this had a significant negative impact on the GSA's professional image.

During that meeting, the Vice-Chair demonstrated limited familiarity with standard parliamentary procedures, including the proper process for stepping down a motion, accepting a motion, and managing the order of proceedings. The Executive noted that under Bylaw 1.7.3.4, the Council Chair is responsible for conducting a structured orientation and comprehensive training for the Vice-Chair, ensuring they have the opportunity to chair at least one meeting during the term. The Executive determined that this training had not been adequately provided, and that the

Vice-Chair's lack of preparedness was a direct consequence of the Chair's failure to fulfill this responsibility.

Given these observations, the Executive discussed whether the Vice-Chair would be in a position to preside over a Special Council Meeting of this significance, which involves complex procedural motions and requires confident management of parliamentary process. The Executive determined that, while the Vice-Chair's role under Bylaw 1.8.4.2 is acknowledged, further training would be required before the Vice-Chair could be expected to manage proceedings of this nature effectively. This was a factor in the Executive's decision to recommend an alternate Chair for the Special Council Meeting and to task the Operations Manager with logistical coordination in the interim.

The Executive expressed concern that the cumulative effect of the procedural issues identified in the election process, combined with meeting organization deficiencies, the lack of adequate Vice-Chair training, and the absence of succession planning for the Chair's remote absence, impacts the GSA's credibility and its ability to demonstrate Bylaw adherence to the graduate student body and the University community.

8. Governance Remedies Discussion

The Executive noted that its obligation to act arises from Section 109 of the Saskatchewan Non-Profit Corporations Act, 1995, which requires every director to act honestly and in good faith with a view to the best interests of the corporation, and to exercise the care, diligence, and skill that a reasonably prudent person would exercise in comparable circumstances. The Executive further noted that correspondence received from nominees raised concerns about the procedural integrity of the election process and expressly sought accountability from the Executive regarding its oversight responsibilities. The Executive determined that the procedural issues, credibility concerns, cumulative performance deficiencies, and the concerns raised by participants in the election process collectively create a situation where the Board would not be fulfilling its statutory duty of care if it did not pursue formal governance remedies.

The Executive discussed the available governance remedies under the Bylaws, including:

- Meeting with the Chair to address concerns directly (which had already been attempted on March 30, 2026, with limited success).
- Suspension of the Chair for a period not exceeding one (1) month, as permitted under Bylaw 1.14.2, subject to a two-thirds majority vote of Council.
- Removal of the Chair by a two-thirds majority vote of Council or by a supermajority vote of Regular Members at a General Meeting, as provided under Bylaw 1.14.1.

The President raised the question of whether the Chair should be given an additional opportunity to address concerns prior to formal action. Following discussion, The Executive noted for the record that the Chair had been given multiple opportunities to address the concerns raised: the initial written communication from the President, the invitation to the March 30 Executive meeting, the 48-hour written response requirement, and the subsequent detailed exchange in which the President provided specific Bylaw-grounded questions. The Executive determined that the pattern of initial resistance followed by partial concessions, combined with the credibility concerns identified in the Chair's response, did not provide sufficient confidence that the election process would be administered in full compliance with the Bylaws without formal Council oversight.

The Executive also discussed the possibility of appointing a separate Chief Electoral Officer to carry out election procedures, noting that this would require Bylaw amendments and is therefore not available as an immediate remedy.

The Executive discussed file integrity and access management associated with the Chair role as an administrative precaution pending the outcome of the Council process.

9. Motions

Motion 1: Loss of Confidence and Referral to Council

Motion: That the Executive Committee formally expresses a loss of confidence in the GSA Council Chair in their capacity as Council Chair and Chief Electoral Officer, citing concerns related to transparency, procedural fairness, and governance practices in the conduct of the current election process.

Be it further resolved that this matter be formally referred to GSA Council for consideration of appropriate action, including a potential vote on the suspension or removal of the Chair, in accordance with Bylaw 1.14.1 of the GSA Constitution and Bylaws.

Be it further resolved that, pending the outcome of the Council process, the Executive recommends that appropriate interim administrative measures be considered to safeguard the integrity of GSA records and communications.

Vote: 4 in favour, 0 opposed, 0 abstentions.

Status: PASSED.

Note: The Vice-President External Affairs participated in this vote on the basis that the motion pertains to the Chair's governance performance and not to the eligibility or standing of any candidate in the election.

Motion 2: Special Council Meeting Communication

Motion: That the Executive call a Special Council Meeting in accordance with Bylaw 3.7.2 to consider the referral from Motion 1. The GSA Operations Manager will be tasked with organizing and communicating the Special Council Meeting details, including the meeting notice, reminder communications, virtual meeting setup, and other logistical requirements. Notice of the meeting shall be provided at least 48 hours in advance, in accordance with Bylaw 3.7.1.

Vote: 3 in favour, 1 opposed, 0 abstentions.

Status: PASSED.

Motion 3: Chairing of the Special Council Meeting

Motion: That for the Special Council Meeting convened under Motion 2, the Executive recommends that an alternate Chair preside over the proceedings, given that the current Council Chair is the subject of the deliberations and that, as documented in this meeting's discussion under Section 7, the Vice-Chair has not received adequate training under Bylaw 1.7.3.4 and demonstrated limited familiarity with parliamentary procedures during the February Special Council meeting. The Executive therefore recommends that Council nominate and elect a temporary alternate Chair from the floor, in accordance with the spirit of Bylaw 1.9.9, who has sufficient experience in parliamentary process to manage the proceedings effectively.

The current Council Chair is invited to attend and participate as an observer with the right to speak in their own defence. This recommendation is made in the interest of procedural fairness and will be subject to Council's determination at the opening of the Special Meeting.

Vote: 3 in favour, 1 opposed, 0 abstentions.

Status: PASSED.

Note: The Executive acknowledged that under Bylaw 1.7.3.2, the Council Chair presides over all Council meetings, and that under Bylaw 1.8.4.2, the Vice-Chair would normally assume this role in the Chair's absence or conflict. However, given the documented training deficiency and the complexity of the proceedings, the Executive determined that recommending an experienced alternate Chair elected from the floor would best serve the integrity of the meeting. The final determination on chairing arrangements rests with Council.

Discussion Notes

The Vice-President Indigenous Engagement expressed concerns regarding the process of addressing the Chair's role prior to a formal Council vote, emphasizing the importance of due process. The Vice-President External Affairs and Vice-President Finance and Operations emphasized the need for thorough due diligence and adherence to timelines. These perspectives were noted and considered in the framing of the motions.

10. Action Items

VP External Affairs: Complete meeting minutes and circulate to all Executives, including VP Academic and Student Affairs.

President: Formally notify the Council Chair of the Executive's recommendation and the convening of a Special Council Meeting, including the Chair's right to attend and speak in their own defence. A separate private communication may also be extended as a professional courtesy

Operations Manager: Request meeting transcripts and minutes from the Council Chair regarding Elections and Referenda Committee meetings.

Operations Manager: Issue the call for a Special Council Meeting to all Councillors in accordance with Bylaw 3.7, providing at least 48 hours notice, including meeting time, date, venue, and agenda.

Operations Manager: Obtain the current list of Councillors for communication purposes.

Executives: Determine which Executive member(s) will present the motion at the Special Council Meeting and prepare the supporting documentation package for Council.

Executives: Determine who will be recommended to chair the Special Council Meeting, subject to Council's approval at the opening of the meeting.

11. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 3:13 PM by the President.

Next meeting: To be determined.

Minutes prepared by: Sunny Bui, Vice-President External Affairs

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