



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

**Annual General Meeting**

**Tuesday, April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2024**

**Zoom Meeting**

**AGENDA**

**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**

**1. Call to Order**

**2. Approval of Agenda**

**3. Approval of Minutes**

**3.1 GSA Emergency Annual General Meeting March 13th, 2024**

**4. Motion**

**4.1 Motion to receive GSA Standing Committee Reports and Executive Minutes  
(Pending)**

**4.2 Motion: GSA Office manager and coordinator recruit policy (new policy)**

**Proposed Motion/Decision Item:** This policy provides the recruitment policy of the GSA Office manager and coordinator policy.

The recruit committee members:

- GSA current executives
- Two Councilors
- Two regular graduate students

**Moved:** Sristy Sumana Nath

**4.3 Motion: Group Academic council policy (Bylaws 1.5 Amendment)**

**Proposed Motion/Decision Item:** This policy provides the voting allocation for group academic council, e.g., College of Medicine Graduate Student Society (CMGSS) and Engineering Graduate Community Council (EGCC).

Voting Councilor Allocation for each Sub-academic Council will be:

- One (1) Council member for a Sub-academic Council containing less than one hundred (100) Regular Members.
- Two (2) Council members for a Sub-academic Council containing one hundred (100) or more Regular Members.

**Moved:** Sristy Sumana Nath

#### **4.4 Motion: Selection of GSA Council Chair (Bylaws 1.9 Amendment)**

**Proposed Motion/Decision Item:** If the current GSA Council Chair become a nominee for the upcoming GSA council chair election, they will not lead the council meeting. In such a scenario, either the GSA President or one of the Vice-Presidents will exclusively assume the role of chair for that council meeting.

**Moved:** Sristy Sumana Nath

#### **4.5 Motion: Signing Officers (Bylaws 5.2 Amendment)**

**Proposed Motion/Decision Item:** According to GSA bylaws, the President, Vice-President Finance and Operations, and the Office Manager are designated as signing officers. However, no signing officers are permitted to sign their own cheques, including executive fee cheques and reimbursement cheques.

**Moved:** Sristy Sumana Nath

#### **4.6 Motion: Motion to show council members the evidence of false charges brought against Mr. Mostofa Kamal by the three GSA Executives (Kayla Benoit, Ramin Mohammadi, and Abbas Fazel Anvari Yazdi) to remove him as GSA president.**

**Moved:** Mostofa Kamal

**BACKGROUND/RATIONALE:** On December 13, 2023 (at the council meeting), the four allegations brought by Ms. Kyla Benoit, Mr. Ramin, and Mr. Abbas were false and did not support evidence. I just want to give one example of their false charges against me. The 2nd charges against me were the following:

“There has been a critical lapse in communication with regard to formal documents, most recently the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed between the GSA and the CGPS. The miscommunication surrounding this document nearly resulted in a substantial financial loss of near \$45,000 for the GSA. Such errors in communication pose a significant threat to the financial stability of our association and undermine the trust of our members.”

I want to inform the council members that neither the GSA president nor any other GSA executives have ever signed any Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the CGPS on behalf of the GSA, which has a monetary value of \$45k. There is no such MOU. The only MOU signed between GSA and CGPS is a contact agreement for PAWS communication. The agreement needs to be renewed every two years. Without this contact, GSA cannot send any mass email announcements such as the monthly GSA newsletter, GSA election announcement, etc. I am sharing the MOU for the GSA Council Chair’s reference (not for circulation among council members). If GSA council members want to see the MOU to justify my claim of innocence, the GSA Council Chair will present the document to the selected council members or Code of Ethics Committee members.

#### **4.7 Motion: Motion to discuss the unsuccessful attempt to remove Mr. Mostofa Kamal as GSA president position by the three GSA executives at the GSA Council Meeting on December 13, 2023.**

**Moved:** Mostofa Kamal

**BACKGROUND/RATIONALE:** On December 13, 2023 (at the council meeting), the motion brought by Ms. Kyla Benoit, Mr. Ramin, and Mr. Abbas failed to receive the necessary vote (2/3) to remove Mr. Mostofa Kamal from the GSA president position (please see Approved February 13, 2024 council meeting minutes). The approved meeting minutes show that the motion received only 18 votes. It is to be noted that, on December 13, 2023 council meeting, including the GSA council chair, had 34 voting members present. Excluding the GSA council vote, at least 22 yes votes were required to pass the motion. I was removed as GSA president forcefully despite the motion failing to get the necessary vote.

On the council day, I was not allowed to say a single word against any of the four allegations brought against me. During the meeting, Ms. Kayla and the two executives did not share any written documents of their motion or supporting evidence between the GSA council chair and council members. Ms. Kayla sent a written copy of their allegations against me to the GSA council chair one day after the meeting. More shockingly and surprisingly, the VP of external affairs added his context (included in the approved March council meeting) about removing me three months after removing me as GSA president.

**4.8. Motion: No current or former GSA executives are entitled to any financial expenses resulting from personal or collective actions or unlawful activities. The GSA will not be liable for any illegal activities by any GSA executives.**

**Moved:** Mostofa Kamal

**4.9. Motion: No GSA executive can hold any two executive positions at a given time. A current GSA executive must step down within 24 hours after getting elected to a new GSA executive position**

**Moved:** Mostofa Kamal



#### **4.11. Motion: Spring and Summer Transit Pass for Graduate Students**

**Moved:** Ebuka Ekeanyanwu

**BACKGROUND/RATIONALE:** I would like to bring it to your attention that unlike the GSA, the USSU offers optional transit pass for undergraduates who opt for spring/summer classes. However, while these terms (spring/summer) are optional for undergraduate students, spring/summer terms are mandatory for thesis-based graduate students.

I do not understand why we are not afforded the same opportunity to opt in for the transit pass during this period, like our undergraduate counterparts. The only option available to us is to get the pass directly from saskatoon transit, which unfortunately comes at an extra cost, and frankly is one cost too many to bear, especially when it is avoidable.

#### **5. Proposed GSA Budget for 2024-2025 (Pending)**

#### **6. GSA Executives' Annual Report**

- 6.1** President's Report (Pending)
- 6.2** Vice President Finance & Operations Report (Pending)
- 6.3** Vice President Student Affairs Report
- 6.4** Vice President External Report (Pending)
- 6.5** Vice President Indigenous Engagement Report (Pending)
- 6.6** Questions & Answers

#### **7. Election Results**

#### **8. Introduction of New Executive**

#### **9. Notice of Motions**

#### **10. Other Business**

#### **11. Adjournment**



University of Saskatchewan  
Graduate Students' Association  
Emergency Annual General Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday, March 13, 2024. **Online Meeting**

**As Council gathers, we acknowledge that we are on Treaty 6 Territory and the Homeland of the Métis. We pay our respect to the First Nations and Métis ancestors of our gathering place and reaffirm our relationship with one another.**

*Attendance: See appendix A*

**Chair: Devopriya Tirtho**

**Recording Secretary: Sara Nath**

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

The Chair of the council officially welcomed members of the council to the meeting and called the meeting to order at 5:04 P. M after the quorum for the meeting had been met. Sara Nath, the Recording Secretary of the Council, compiled the meeting minutes.

**Before Approval**

- The GSA chair explained to council members that GSA uses the Robert's Rules of Order for its meeting, so for a decision to be passed or approved, a mover and a seconder are needed, and the vote cast is either in favor, opposed or abstain. He further said that only voting members would be allowed to vote and the majority will get a decision to be passed.

**2. Approval of Agenda**

The chair said that all council members were emailed the agenda package. He asked about any amendments to the agenda as circulated via email.

There was one question from Mark. He said that they have not received any agenda as they are not council members. The chair replied that the agenda was already posted on the website, accessible to all general members of the GSA.

Also, Elyse inquired about additional items added to the agenda, as the emergency meeting was initially presented with only two specific items for discussion. She questioned the need to approve minutes and a food budget when members were not prepared for these topics. The chair responded by stating the necessity to approve past Council meeting minutes and assuring that the process wouldn't take much time as the minutes had already been circulated to all members. Kayla suggested postponing the discussion to the next council meeting to respect time constraints.

Later, Abbas proposed an amendment to the agenda to include a discussion and decision regarding the GSA annual award. He mentioned receiving inquiries from potential applicants and expressed the need to discuss revising the policy with both the council and general members. The chair agreed to address this discussion after today's scheduled motions, if time allows. The chair then proceeded for the voting process.

*Motion to approve the agenda of the council meeting and strike up the food budget approval for this meeting. (Elyse/Catherine)*

**Carried**

***Yes: 21***

***No: 0***

***Abstention: 0***

The agenda for the council meeting were approved by the majority of the council members.

### **3. Approval of Minutes**

#### **3.1 Approval of February 13, 2024, Meeting Minutes**

*Motion to approve the minutes from February 13, 2024, meeting. (Alex/Landon)*

**Carried**

***Yes: 18***

***No: 0***

***Abstention: 1***

The motion to approve the February 13, 2024, meeting minutes was approved by the majority of the council members.

### **4. Approval of Minutes**

#### **4.1 GSA Executives Meeting Minutes January 17, 2024**

*Motion to approve the executive meeting minutes from January 17, 2024, meeting. (Alex/Abbas)*

**Carried**

*Yes: 16*

*No: 0*

*Abstention: 1*

The motion to approve the January 17, 2024, executive meeting minutes was approved by the majority of the council members.

#### **4.2 GSA Executives Meeting Minutes February 7, 2024**

*Motion to approve the executive meeting minutes from February 7, 2024, meeting. (Alex/Amanda)*

**Carried**

*Yes: 17*

*No: 0*

*Abstention: 1*

The motion to approve the February 7, 2024, executive meeting minutes was approved by the majority of the council members.

#### **5. Motion to Amend GSA Bylaws**

The chair announced four motions to amend the GSA bylaws and requested the GSA President to provide rationale before the Council prior to voting. Kayla, the GSA President, explained each motion. Motion one aims to prevent executive members removed from their position via council vote from running again, ensuring fair elections with multiple candidates. Motion two proposes extending the nomination period for all positions when only one or zero candidates are nominated, promoting fairness in elections. Motion three involves updating the bylaw numbering and wording to align with the changes proposed in motion one. Motion four suggests the recording secretary create meeting minutes from recordings instead of an executive member, enhancing participation in meetings. These amendments, discussed with the Governance Committee, aim to foster inclusion and broaden the applicant pool for elections.

Riel expressed strong opposition to amendment 4.8.3.4.8, comparing it unfavorably to the impeachment policy of the USSU. He said that permanently barring a candidate from running for



any position, even due to impeachment, undermines democratic principles and disenfranchises the electorate. Riel emphasized that the ultimate right to determine elected officials should lie with the graduate student populace, not solely with the executive. He suggested that instead of implementing such measures, the GSA should focus on making running for executive positions more appealing to graduate students.

Elyse inquired about the location of meeting recordings, citing an issue with the recording from the December council meeting. Abbas explained that Zoom accounts are typically linked to personal accounts. In December, the previous chair used their Zoom account to circulate the meeting link to members, resulting in recordings being stored in the chair's Zoom account cloud.

Shafin inquired about the approval of the proposed language change by the governance committee members. Kayla responded, stating that the GSA governing committee had recently met to discuss these and future policy edits. Following the meeting, an email was sent detailing the discussion and inviting feedback on all items revisited. Kayla acknowledged the need to further define the terms of reference for the governance committee, as the current process lacks clarity on how policy and bylaw changes are initiated. Shafin also expressed concerns about denying former executives the right to stand for re-election, arguing that it undermines democratic principles. He highlighted the importance of allowing everyone to participate in the electoral process to ensure transparency and authenticity. He suggested that if someone has done wrong, they would face accountability through the election process, making the proposed restriction redundant.

Pabitra asked about the potential outcome if a removed executive challenges the removal process and wins. Kayla responded, stating that several outcomes are possible. If the challenge is successful and flaws in the removal process are identified, the executives may be reinstated. Additionally, any deficiencies in the removal process may prompt revisions to organizational policies to prevent similar issues in the future, potentially involving changes to procedures or oversight mechanisms.

Richard expressed concern about the proposal to bar former executives from running for election, particularly if they were removed by the executive body. He argued that in a democracy, individuals removed by the executive body should still be allowed to run again, allowing voters to decide their eligibility. However, if executives were removed by the General Assembly, he agreed with barring them from running again.

Mark questioned the necessity of an emergency meeting for the proposed bylaws changes, suggesting it's unusual outside of emergencies. Ramin clarified that the urgency stemmed from an upcoming election, where waiting for the annual meeting would delay needed changes. Amanda mentioned concerns raised by student bodies about bias in the election processes, suggesting that the emergency meeting addresses these concerns and implements changes to support fairer elections in the future. She also shared some links of reddit posts that initially started the concerns around the GSA as well as the USSU election process.

Catherine highlighted two points: first, the need to adjust compensation for the recording secretary if executive meetings are recorded and transcribed; and second, the importance of ensuring that GSA accounts have access to Zoom recordings to avoid the need for personal account sharing. She emphasized that all recordings belong to the GSA as a collective entity.

Richard also questioned the need for an emergency meeting to discuss the agenda items. He emphasized the importance of democracy and fairness, advocating for allowing anyone willing to stand for election to do so, and letting the voters decide their fate. Richard cautioned against using laws to prevent people from standing for election, believing it would not be helpful and could be seen as an attempt to manipulate the electoral process.

Meaghan expressed a different perspective, stating that if someone is removed from an elected position, there's likely a valid reason for it. She talked against allowing them to run again, as they were removed for a reason and it wouldn't make sense to reinstate them. Meaghan emphasized that removal from a position of power indicates wrongdoing, not just a personal dislike, making it unjustifiable for them to run again. Alex also pointed out that according to the current bylaws, graduate representatives already have the authority to impeach. The proposed amendment doesn't grant executives additional power over who serves in the executive, except for the provision that impeached individuals cannot run again. Jennifer also acknowledged Meaghan's point and emphasized that the grounds for removal are crucial, suggesting that democracy doesn't require allowing someone to pursue power if they have previously misused their authority to the extent of being removed.

Elyse expressed concern that the proposed bylaw change might have two underlying agendas. She felt it was targeting specific individuals rather than addressing broader issues. She highlighted that the democratic process involves allowing voters to decide who they deem fit to represent them, rather than preemptively preventing certain individuals from running. She emphasized the importance of using existing impeachment procedures rather than restricting candidacy. However, Meaghan highlighted the challenge of ensuring that graduate students have

access to complete information. She expressed worry that without transparency, voters might unknowingly perpetuate problematic cycles in leadership. Alex also agreed with Meaghan. Amanda expressed agreement with Meaghan's concern about the potential for bias in the removal process. She emphasized the importance of assuming maturity and rationality among council members and suggested that if someone has been removed, it should be assumed that there were valid reasons for it. Amanda highlighted the need to provide opportunities for new candidates to run for positions, addressing concerns about bias in the electoral process.

Shamin asked if the GSA president can initiate policy changes without involving the GSA Governance Committee. Kayla clarified that there's currently no defined procedure for this, emphasizing the need for better transparency in such matters. She explained the role of the Governance Committee in ensuring the association maintains proper documentation and initiates amendments to policies, bylaws, or the constitution as needed.

Richard expressed concern about the democratic implications of barring individuals from running for office after being removed by the executive body. He highlighted the lack of clarity regarding the reasons for removal and questioned whether this information was effectively communicated to the GSA. Richard argued that decisions made by a small group of executives should not have the same weight as those made by the entire General Assembly. He suggested that barring individuals from standing for election should only apply if they were removed by the General Assembly, not just the executive body. Ramin clarified that the decision to remove the previous President was made by the Council, not just a few executives, and was based on a vote involving graduate student representatives. He emphasized that the proposed changes to the bylaws were not targeted at specific individuals but aimed to address broader concerns and ensure future accountability. He also advised Richard to review the published meeting minutes for clarity on the removal process, highlighting that the decision was made collectively by the Council through a motion brought forward. He told Richard to reference the minutes for accurate information. Wyatt stated that it's essential for meeting attendees to be informed by reading the minutes beforehand and suggested that those who haven't done so shouldn't contribute to the discussion. Meaghan also talked about the importance of being informed about the issues before participating in the discussion. She highlighted that the meeting is not a platform to recap past discussions but rather to address current matters with the available knowledge. She stressed the need for attendees to conduct their due diligence by reading the meeting minutes to understand the context fully.

At this point, Catherine proposed amending the language to specify that individuals removed from a particular position cannot run for that same position again. Richard expressed concern about allowing individuals who have been removed from a position to stand for any position at all, particularly if their actions warranted removal. He emphasized the seriousness of certain offenses, suggesting that some offenses might disqualify individuals from holding certain positions again. Richard differentiated between removal by the General Assembly and by the governing board, suggesting that barring someone from standing for any position after removal by the General Assembly might be understandable, but doing so after removal by the governing board could be excessive.

Mark clarified the procedural point regarding discussing a motion before it has been formally moved and seconded, expressing his understanding of Robert's Rules of Order. He emphasized the importance of adhering to proper procedure and indicated his willingness to discuss the motion once it is officially on the floor. Following this, Amanda seconded the motion. After that, Mark expressed concern about the process of conducting the meeting as an emergency session, suggesting that such significant changes to the bylaws should be discussed in a more typical venue. He questioned the absence of a regular appeals process and the lack of specific criteria for removal outlined in the bylaws. Mark emphasized the need for transparency and suggested better informing members about impeachments or removals rather than imposing a lifetime ban on running for office. He viewed such a ban as potentially excessive, particularly if the removal was based solely on a vote by the Executive Council. On the other hand, Wyatt proposed an amendment suggesting that instead of permanently barring individuals from running elections for executive positions, a time limit could be set, such as a four-year timeline, to ensure fairness.

Meaghan proposed a case-by-case approach for dealing with individuals removed from their positions, suggesting the establishment of a council or external source to handle disciplinary matters. She emphasized the importance of ensuring the safety of the GSA and creating a safe space for everyone. Using the example of workplace harassment, she argued that allowing individuals who committed serious offenses to return could compromise the safety and well-being of others. Meaghan acknowledged that while this approach might be complex and time-consuming, it could address different levels of offenses and prioritize the safety of the GSA community. Elyse and Taylor sought clarification regarding any harassment allegations against former GSA presidents and the safety of the GSA environment. Koal expressed concern about bringing sexual harassment into the discussion, stating it wasn't relevant to the past events. Meaghan clarified that she was using the example of sexual harassment to illustrate her point.

about safety, emphasizing that it wasn't related to past incidents. Alex reiterated Meaghan's clarification, noting that she was making an example, not referencing specific past incidents.

Amanda expressed support for Meaghan's proposal and suggested an additional clause in the bylaws. She recommended specifying that certain serious offenses like lewd comments, sexual assault, or assault against another member would result in a permanent ban from running in the GSA again. For other minor offenses, Amanda suggested implementing a suspension period, leveraging the existing suspension clauses in the bylaws. Richard expressed agreement with Amanda's proposal and emphasized the importance of considering the severity of the offense when determining whether someone should be allowed to run for office again. He suggested that people can change over time. Additionally, Richard highlighted the need for broader consultation and discussion, suggesting that the issue would have been better addressed in a regular general meeting rather than an emergency one.

After all these discussions, the chair initiated the voting process.

*Motion to ammend GSA bylaw 4.8.3.4.8. (Amanda)*

**Carried**

*Yes: 10*

*No: 14*

*Abstention: 9*

Ramin expressed concern that everyone participating in the vote whether a student or not. Richard noted that if anyone suspects that someone participating in the meeting is not a student, they should raise their concern for verification. Otherwise, it is advisable to assume that everyone present is a graduate student. There were 37 attendees in that meeting, in order to approve the motion, 2/3rd vote (at least 24 yes votes) in favor is needed. Abbas raised concerns about missing votes and requested identification of individual voters. Richard disagreed, stating his belief that everyone present was a graduate student unless proven otherwise. Meaghan noted that even if the missing votes were obtained, the motion would still fail. The chair proposed re-voting to ensure transparency, but Wyatt and Amanda argued against it, emphasizing that the vote had already taken place. Meaghan mentioned that claiming to be a graduate student in the chat didn't guarantee it. Amanda referenced the email inviting the general public to attend. Ultimately, the chair noted the lack of majority votes in favor of the motion, which meant that the motion could not pass.

The motion to ammend GSA bylaw 4.8.3.4.8 was not approved by the majority of the general members.

## **5.2. Motion to amend GSA bylaw 4.8.3.8**

The chair asked the GSA president to present her rationale for this motion.

Kayla proposed an amendment to remove the word "that" and include "all" positions in bylaw 4.8.3.8. The amendment aims to extend the nomination period for all positions if no nominees are received after the regular nomination period. This adjustment seeks to foster a competitive and democratic election process with multiple candidates for each position.

Mark opposed the motion, arguing that extending the deadline undermines the principle of timely application. He said that candidates should apply within the posted deadline, and extending it compromises fairness. Taylor echoed Mark's statement, suggesting that the GSA needs improved advertising strategies to attract candidates, emphasizing the importance of effective communication. Mark also highlighted a communication issue, stating that he struggled to find information about the meeting, indicating a need for better promotion. Amanda disagreed with Mark, emphasizing the importance of considering equity and support for all individuals. She shared a personal example of a difficult situation she faced, suggesting that extending the deadline could provide opportunities for people in challenging circumstances to participate in elections. Amanda believed that this extension would enhance accessibility and accommodate diverse living situations.

Jordan supported the proposal, highlighting that many positions often receive no applicants due to lack of visibility on the website or social media. She added that extending the deadline would allow more people to apply, ensuring a more competitive election process. Additionally, Jordan raised concerns about the possibility of uncontested positions resulting in automatic appointments, emphasizing the need for broader participation and democratic elections. Meaghan echoed Jordan's statements, emphasizing that extending the deadline promotes equity and addresses past challenges where positions went uncontested. She talked about the importance of increasing awareness about the election process, citing difficulties in finding information about GSA executive positions.

Richard supported Mark's perspective, opposing the proposal to extend the nomination deadline. He believes that the current nomination period provides sufficient time for interested individuals to apply for positions. He suggested that interested individuals should rely on their networks for

information about election opportunities, emphasizing the importance of respecting the established nomination period.

The GSA VP External, Abbas shared an example to support the proposed change. He highlighted a past experience where they missed the deadline for VP External candidacy, resulting in an extension only for that position. With four candidates competing for VP External, he emphasized the importance of having multiple candidates for fairness and democracy. He also raised concerns about the lack of competition for other positions, urging reconsideration of the criteria to ensure at least two candidates for each role.

GSA VP Finance, Ramin, highlighted concerns about the election process and advertising transparency. He emphasized the need for change to enhance the GSA's reputation and ensure a more democratic election process. Ramin mentioned issues with late advertising and limited outreach to graduate students, proposing individual emails to improve awareness. He expressed a desire to address these gaps and biases for a more inclusive process.

Alex acknowledged the need for improved communication regarding voting for GSA positions and committees. They expressed support for the motion as a means to prevent individuals from running unopposed and taking crucial council positions without sufficient scrutiny. Alex emphasized the importance of having choices in elections to ensure accountability and representation within the graduate student association.

Catherine suggested allowing voters to vote "no" if a candidate is running unopposed. Meaghan highlighted that the issue extends beyond communication, expressing concern about repeated unopposed candidacies. Taylor questioned the reasons behind the lack of candidates for GSA positions. Meaghan mentioned it is due to the past GSA president. She expressed hope for a positive change with the incoming president. Alex pointed out that graduate students are busy, with family responsibilities, and requested respectful communication. Shamin queried the factors leading to unopposed candidacies and potential barriers for candidates. Alex acknowledged the need for better communication from the GSA but noted a prevalent apathy toward student governance among fellow graduate students. Elyse questioned if an extension would address the issue, suggesting the development of student governance and leadership initiatives instead.

Elyse highlighted the trend of low candidacy participation across multiple GSA presidential terms. Taylor suggested returning GSA council meetings to GSA commons to boost student interest and participation, but Alex noted that not all academic councilors can attend in-person meetings, highlighting potential challenges with this approach.

Kayla proposed amending the motion to ensure that each position has at least two candidates, promoting a more democratic election process. Wyatt clarified that the current discussion pertains to whether all positions or only the vacant one should be reopened if there are no nominees. Richard supported extending the nomination period if no nominations are made for any position. Megan emphasized the need to focus on the current motion to avoid getting off track, while Amanda suggested holding a vote on whether to reopen all positions or just the vacant one due to dropping attendance.

After all these discussions, the chair initiated the voting process.

*Motion to amend GSA bylaw 4.8.3.8. (Ramin/Amanda)*

**Carried**

*Yes: 6*

*No: 14*

*Abstention: 10*

The motion to ammend GSA bylaw 4.8.3.4.8 was not approved by the majority of the general members.

#### **5.4. Motion to amend GSA bylaw 2.5.1.11**

Kayla proposed transferring the responsibility of processing executive meeting minutes from an executive member to the recording secretary. This change aims to alleviate the burden on the executive member, allowing them to participate more fully in discussions without being occupied with minute-taking tasks. By shifting this duty to the recording secretary, they would be provided with meeting recordings to process the minutes accurately, ensuring that discussions are accurately reflected.

Jeisson inquired about the consequences of the recording secretary failing to fulfill their duties. Taylor pointed out that altering the policy could lead to an uneven distribution of responsibilities among GSA executives, potentially burdening other executives with additional duties.

*Motion to amend GSA bylaw 4.8.3.8. (Amanda/Alex)*

**Carried**

*Yes: 15*



*No: 5*

*Abstention: 7*

The motion to ammend GSA bylaw 4.8.3.8 was not approved by the majority of the general members.

Kayla expressed hope for new leaders to step forward in the upcoming election, emphasizing the need for strong, transparent, and organized leadership to guide the organization. She encouraged everyone to spread information about the election and thanked them for their dedication to the cause.

### **7. Announcement of Electoral Process**

The chair announced adjustments to the upcoming election schedule due to unforeseen circumstances and revisions in the bylaws. Assuring members of the commitment to fairness and integrity, they mentioned ongoing efforts to finalize details and ensure transparency. The full schedule and necessary information will be published by next week after approval from the elections and referenda committee. The chair thanked everyone for their understanding and patience in upholding democratic standards.

### **8. GSA Executive Reports**

Abbas suggested adjourning the meeting due to members observing Ramadan fasting. He noted that if all members were in agreement, it would be appropriate to do so. The chair agreed, and went for the meeting adjournment.

### **11. Adjournment**

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:49 p.m. (Catherine/Kayla)

**Carried**

**Appendix A**

<b>Academic Council</b>	<b>Name of Councilors and (alternates)</b>	<b>Oct 2023</b>	<b>Nov 2023</b>	<b>Dec 2023</b>	<b>Jan 2024</b>	<b>Jan 24, 2024</b>	<b>Feb 2024</b>	<b>Mar 2024</b>	<b>Apr 2024</b>	<b>May 2024</b>
Biology Graduate Student Association	Shuqi Ren Ilsa Griebel (Alternate) Lynsey Bent (Alternate)	P	P	P	P	P	P	A		
Chemistry Course Council	Nasrin Aliasgharlou Vi Phan (Alternate)	A	P	P	P	P	A	A		
College of Medicine Graduate Students Society – Anatomy, Physiology & Pharmacology	Mary Lazell Wright Farnoosh Tabatabaieian (Alternate)	P	A	P	P	A	A	P		
College of Medicine Graduate Students Society – Biochemistry, microbiology & Immunology	Rachel Harris – Councilor	P	P	P	P	P	P	P		
College of Medicine Graduate Students Society – Community Health & Epidemiology	Zoe Schipper – Councilor Tachlima Chowdhury Sunna (Alternate)	A	P	P	P	P	P	A		
College of Medicine Graduate Students Society – Health Sciences	Elyse Proulx-Cullen – Councilor Shima Hozhabrimahani (Alternate)	P	P	P	P	P	P	P		
Computer Science Graduate Council (CSGC)	Thulani Hewavithana Norah Ridley Mumtahina Ahmed (Alternate)	P	P	P	P	P	P	A		
Engineering Graduate Community Council (EGCC) – Biological	Pabitra Chandra Das	P	P	P	P	P	A	P		



Physical Therapy Student Society (PTSS)	Tyler Blanchette Carter Frerichs (Alternate)	P	P	P	A	P	P	P		
SENSSA	Chelsea Ohenewaa Nyarko Aisha Adelah (Alternate)	P	P	P	P	P	P	P		
School of Public Health (SPHSA)	Somayeh Abdi Jacyn Edwards Ahmed Muftah (Alternate)	A	P	P	A	A	A	A		
Sociology GSA	Meaghan Boily Leah Houseman (Alternate) Kayla Arisman (Alternate)	P	P	P	A	P	A	P		
Soil Science Graduate Student Association	Landon Orenchuk Tristan Chambers (Alternate)	P	P	P	P	P	P	P		
Animal and Poultry Science GSA	Megan Dubois Wyatt Armes	A	P	P	P	P	P	P		
ARE Graduate Student Society	Koal Sammons Josh Bourassa	P	P	P	P	P	P	P		
Toxicology Graduate Student Association (TGSA) Academic Councilor	Alexandra Cullen Emily Kennedy	P	P	P	P	P	P	P		
History Graduate Student Association	Kiegan Lloyd Catlin M. Woloschuk	A	P	P	P	A	P	A		
Physics & Engineering Physics (PEGASUS)	Jeisson A. Vanegas Carranza Nicholas Simonson	N/A	N/A	P	A	P	P	P		
Johnson Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy Student Association	Harjot Tu Bazal Khalid	N/A	P	P	A	A	P	A		

<b>Executive member</b>	<b>Name of executive member</b>	<b>Oct 2023</b>	<b>Nov 2023</b>	<b>Dec 2023</b>	<b>Jan 2024</b>	<b>Jan 24, 2024</b>	<b>Feb 2024</b>	<b>Mar 2024</b>	<b>Apr 2024</b>	<b>May 2024</b>
Exec. President	Kayla Benoit	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	P	P	P		
Exec. VP Finance and Operations	Ramin Mohammadi	P	P	P	P	P	P	P		
Exec. VP Academic and Student Affairs	Sristy Sumana Nath	P	P	A	P	P	P	P		
Exec. VP External Affairs	Abbas Fazel Anvari Yazdi	A	P	P	P	P	P	P		
Exec. VP Indigenous Engagement	Kayla Benoit	A	A	P	P	N/A	N/A	N/A		



## **VP Academic and Student Affairs Annual Report May 2023 to April 2024**

Dear Grad Students of University of Saskatchewan,

Please find the VP Academic and Student Affairs annual report for my advocacy works, as listed below:

### **1. Advocacy works for grad students:**

The GSA VP Academic & Student Affairs responsible to do advocacy works for grad students. During this session, the VP Academic & Student Affairs got request from more than twenty grad students for meeting to discuss their challenges. VP Academic & Student Affairs advocated in Student-super/co-supervisor communication problem, reducing funding amount problem, academic misconduct issues, delay for thesis defense problem, international students' employment issues, TA work environment problem, student working hour rights, Ph.D. study discontinuation problems and some other non-academic issues. VP Academic & Student Affairs seat on two hearing boards (one academic and another non-academic) as a grad students' representative.

### **2. Attending Department-wise orientation program:**

VP Academic & Student Affairs attended the orientation of the Department of Public Health and Department of Physical Therapy on behalf of GSA and presented the benefit and services are provided by GSA. We encouraged to open academic council and ratify the council under GSA.

### **3. Hosting one virtual session, Jumpstart, for prospective grad students:**

VP Academic & Student Affairs hosted a 'Grad Student Association Intro Session' session on behalf of GSA in JumpStart event on August 18, 2023, by collaborating with the University Library. I presented remotely about GSA, GSA services and upcoming events to new grad students in this session. Also, we discussed about the importance of academic integrity for grad students' academic life. Also, there is a Q/A session after the presentation and we discussed about on campus and off campus job opportunities, lab working hours for grad students, housing issues and so on.

### **4. GSA Office manager hiring process:**

1<sup>st</sup> round interview (6<sup>th</sup> September 2023): The GSA office manager hiring committee members short-listed five candidates based on their job experience and educational background. After the 1<sup>st</sup> round interview, we selected two best candidates for the 2<sup>nd</sup> round interview.

2<sup>nd</sup> round interview (15<sup>th</sup> September 2023): In this interview, hiring committee members selected Paul Trujillo as a permanent GSA Office Manager. He completed his PhD studies in Public Policy at the University of Saskatchewan.

#### **5. Meeting with Associate Dean of Academic Engagement Rachel Sarjeant-Jenkins:**

The GSA executives met with Associate Dean of Academic Engagement how we engage more grad students in library. We discussed the equity resource sharing and usage, supporting the transition to grad school and the graduate research workshops. We discussed about the library's academic integrity tutorial and writing support that focused on improving thesis writing.

#### **6. Organized t-shirt design contest for grad student:**

The GSA organized a t-shirt design contest to involve grad students with GSA. The winner received \$100 for a T-shirt design. We ordered 700 t-shirts for our new grad students and distributed them at the GSA orientation. We ordered XL: 125, L:175, M: 300, and S: 100 pcs. The winning t-shirt:



#### **7. GSA Fall'23 Orientation:**

The VP Academic & Student Affairs responsible to organize orientation program for grad students. VP Academic & Student Affairs presented a presentation briefly about GSA, GSA events & benefits and some other important academic and non-academic matters.

The guest list is below:

- Robyn Paches, Program Manager, Student care
- Jesse Todd, Regional Representative, North Saskatchewan Region, PSAC
- Mirjana Mandaric, Senior International Education Officer, Regulated International Student Immigration Advisor (RISIA), ISSAC
- Kacia Whilby, Events and Communications Specialist, University of Saskatchewan, Career Services
- Guest Speaker, Dr. Debby Burshtyn, Dean of College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies

- Angie Gerrard, Liaison librarian for psychology and political studies
- Susan Bens, Academic Integrity Strategist, Teaching and Learning Enhancement

We organized Pizza and drinks for lunch and arranged some snacks for volunteers in breakfast time. Few snapshots are attached in the report.







### **8. GSA Winter'24 Orientation:**

In winter'23 semester, VP Academic & Student Affairs organized half-day orientation event for grad students. The Dean of CGPS was a guest speaker of this event and her speech encourage to new grad students to pursue higher study.

The event details and guest list are below:

- T-shirt Distribution: 10:00 AM
- Start and Land Acknowledge: 10:15 AM
- GSA VP Finance and Operation: 10:15 PM
- GSA VP External Affairs: 10:20 PM
- Orientation Presentation: 10:25 PM
- GSA Health and Dental Plan by Ali Versi, Program Manager, Student care: 10:50 AM
- Guest Speaker, Dr. Debby Burshtyn, Dean of CGPS: 11:00 AM
- Elise Bird, Safety Resources: 11:10 AM
- Lecia Ellis, International Education Officer, (ISSAC): 11:20 AM
- Zsuzsa Papp, Senior Advisor, Business Development | Mitacs: 11:30 AM
- Shalisse Pelly, Student Support and Outreach Coordinator, Student Affairs and Outreach: 11:40 AM
- Kacia Whilby, Events and Communications Specialist, University of Saskatchewan, Career Services
- Ian Worme, Indigenous Initiatives Coordinator, CGPS
- Jesse Todd, Regional Representative, North Saskatchewan Region, PSAC: 11:50 AM



### **9. Attending meetings with Dean of College of Engineering:**

Discussing grad students TA hiring process issues with Carey Simonson, Interim Dean and Ramakrishna Gokaraju, Acting Associate Dean of Graduate Studies, and Strategic Projects.

### **10. Holiday Hangout 2023**

Last year, holiday hangout was organized collaborately by GSA, Wellness and ISSAC for grad and under grad students. My main responsibility was organized indoor game. Participants played UNO, cards, Zenga, Poker and monopoly games.





### **11. GSA Research Conference:**

VP Academic & Student Affairs coordinated to organize the GSA Research Conference with VP Finance and Operations. Over 50 grad students presented their posters in this conference and USASK Postdocs were the judge to evaluate the poster. The group photo and four winners' photo are enclosed in this report.







## 12. GSA elevator pitch competition:

The GSA executives organize the GSA research elevator pitch competition. It is 60 seconds talk to represent the research without any slides. Our university president was chief guest of this event.





### **13. Encourage to Ratify the Nursing Graduate Student Association (NGSA):**

VP Academic & Student Affairs tried to communicate different grad students to open a new academic council. I discussed the benefits of ratification academic council under GSA and College of Nursing open a NGSA association.

### **14. Lunch with Usask Board of Governors:**

We, GSA executives meet with Usask Board of Governors and discussed what types of services GSA provides to grad students. Also, we discussed the GSA's new priority of establishing Childcare.

### **15. Received a Judging invitation for Image of Research:**

As an VP Academic and Student Affairs, I received an invitation to seat in the 10th Annual Image of Research competition. They received 22 submissions in this competition. The meeting happened on March 11, 2024. As an VP Academic and Student Affairs, I received an invitation to join in the 10th Annual Image of Research competition at Remai Modern. That was a wonderful event to celebrate the winners of Image of Research competition. The award ceremony happened on April 03, 2024.

### **16. Working on Academic Councils and Social Clubs ratification:**

The academic 2023-2024 session, the GSA ratified in total 18 Academic councils and five social clubs under GSA. The VP Academic & Student Affairs reviewed the forms and applications, then passed to the GSA Chair to ratification in Council meeting.

### **17. Meeting with Susan Bens, Academic Integrity Strategist:**

The GSA VP Academic and Student Affairs and USSU Academic Affairs met with Susan Bens to discuss academic integrity strategies to improve awareness among USAK students. I attached the discussion agenda below:

①

# academic integrity

topics that students want to advise the university about

②

undergrads	grad students
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>AM regulations are <u>very</u> stressful to participate in</li> <li>Students do not know what to expect how to prepare</li> <li>Stress is a barrier to participating</li> <li>programs with placements and professional codes confuse the matter - distressing               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>↳ combines with other biases</li> </ul> </li> <li>need to feel listened to, heard               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>↳ "they blew me off"</li> </ul> </li> <li>GenAI               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>↳ need to learn to cite, paraphrase</li> </ul> </li> <li>need help near due date → help?</li> <li>need to tell you a <u>great</u> fear               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>↳ approachability</li> </ul> </li> <li>TA grading schemes can seem unfair and not</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>international students need an <u>indepth</u> orientation - lack of knowledge for USask</li> <li>requests for extensions that are denied add to students <u>stress</u> stress can lead to AM</li> <li>need specific guidance about on-line Gen AI tools</li> <li>pressures related ↓ funding → ↑ work → time pressure</li> <li>students may share examples of their work to help each other, then a receiving student → very</li> </ul>

reg.

- who/when should I tell about problem

ethical just

what if you don't tell a TA

TA

TA struggle

trust

TA

rubric

student pressures

②

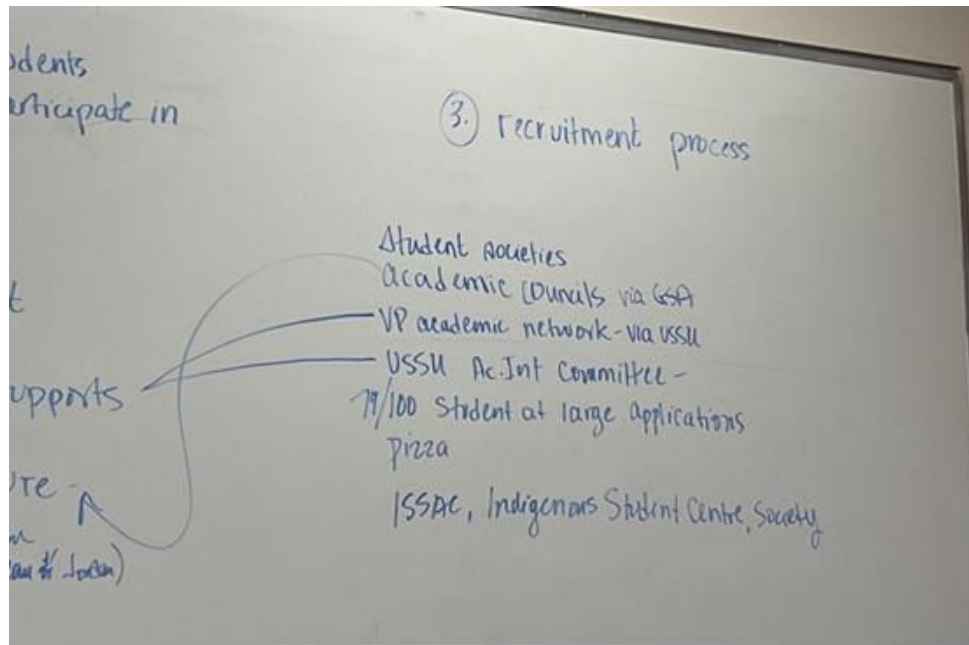
structure that students would want to participate in

1. Gen AI
2. Ethical Assant
3. Regulations/Supports
4. Role of pressure
  - ↳ someone from outreach (Beau & Jordan)

student pressures

pressure work out → very

VA  
U  
TA/1



### **18. Meeting with Dean and Associate Dean of College of Arts and Science:**

We, GSA Executives, met with Dean and Associate Dean of College of Arts and Science. We discussed about minimum funding issues, maternity leave benefits, lengthy graduation time for MSc and PhD students and equity & access service, those are our priority advocacy awards.

### **19. Meeting with Vice-Provost of Students and Learning:**

We, GSA Executives, met with Dr. Jerome Cranston, Vice-Provost, Students and Learning and we discussed with the below agenda:

- a. Student Wellness Centre Service Efficiency
- b. Access and Equity Office service delay
- c. Monthly Tuition Fees Payment Option
- d. Introduction to Mandatory Ethics and EDI Courses
- e.

Later, we discussed student issues specifically of Computer Science Department, requesting to establish some sign boards in the roadside for students and guests to find the GSA office easily, requesting to a dedicated notice board or display board in Place Riel for GSA to share the flyer and advertisement for upcoming events.

### **20. Collaboration with Mitacs:**

I met with Zsuzsa Papp, PhD, Senior Advisor, Business Development, Mitacs to organize workshops on career building, grant writing, how to find community and industry partners for funding, with collaboration with GSA. She proposed to organize two sessions:

- 16 January 2024 (natural science and engineering)
- 8 February 2024 (social science, humanities, arts)



### **21. Meeting with University External Relations Committee:**

We, GSA Executives, met with the USFA External Relations Committee. We discussed the tuition fee hiking each year and low funding issues for grad students.

### **22. Meeting with Celene Anger, Chief Strategy and Transformation Officer, City of Saskatoon:**

We, GSA Executives, met with the Chief Strategy officer of City of Saskatoon to discuss the grad students transport issues. We requested a new contract for Spring/Summer semester for grad students and need to make it flexible. And we discussed the 81/82 no. bus service needs to be add stop in Place Riel bus stop.

### **23. Meeting with Cheryl Hamelin, Vice President, University Relations:**

We, GSA executives, met with Vice president Cheryl Hamelin to discuss about the initial plan about opening GSA Childcare. She is managing the leadership to the University Relations team that includes fundraising and development, alumni relations, strategic communications, and operations and services. She promised to help GSA to fundraising for opening childcare. Secondly, we discussed about opening endowment fund for GSA.

### **24. Meeting discussion about establishing GSA Daycare center: December 19, 2023**

The GSA executives meet with Greg Fowler, Vice-President of Administration and Chief Operating Officer, to discuss the proposed Childcare center under GSA's leadership team. Greg Fowler invited Associate Vice-President, Services, Professor Wade Epp, Deputy Provost, Professor Patti McDougall. We discussed about the space in the university, initial cost for setup a daycare. They gave us facility cost idea: With original costs of \$4.795m capital and \$144k operating, based on CPI since 2015 (and estimate 3% CPI in 2024/2025) future costs are roughly estimated at: \$6.3m capital / \$190k annual operating.

### **25. Meeting with Residence Manager: April 04, 2024**

- rate increase proposals: residence rate 3% and 4% meal plan
- no RCC card value is increased
- elder indigenous student
- food insecurity program, free three meals in culinary service
- garden program will be started in Spring
- open the playroom for kids in Souris Hall under parents' supervision.

<https://culinaryservices.usask.ca/culinary-supports-and-initiatives/food-insecurity.php?fbclid=IwAR1emqlfs4hw6mf0kEIT7YCFongltD0IRmFOtd3spoKYIY8Y7pmZyu3xU7A>

### **26. Attended regular (monthly/quarterly/event-based) meetings of VP Academic & Student Affairs portfolio:**

- I. Academic Program Committee Meeting



- II. Graduate Programs Committee Meeting (Until December)
- III. Graduate Academic Affairs Committee Meeting
- IV. PEC/Student Executives Monthly Meeting
- V. University Council Meeting
- VI. CGPS Faculty Council Meeting
- VII. Academic and Student Life Technology Meeting
- VIII. Parking and Transportation Committee Meeting
- IX. Residence discussion
- X. GSA-USSU Meeting
- XI. GSA Council Meeting
- XII. GSA Executive Meeting
- XIII. GSA Bursary Selection Committee
- XIV. GSA Governance Committee

Regards,

Sristy Sumana Nath

VP Academic and Student Affairs

Graduate Student's Association, University of Saskatchewan

# Graduate Students' Association (GSA) Executive Election-2024/2025

Total number of voters: 496

## President

David Ohene-Amoako	177
A K M Munzurul Hasan	93
Oyuntuya Shagdarsuren	75
Zahra Ghaderpanah	72
Kavin Rahmani	45
Abstain	34

## Vice-President Finance and Operations

Lindsay Gray Carlson	233
Zinat Akbarzadeh	183
Abstain	80

## Vice-President Academic and Student Affairs

Nickson Joseph	216
Parsa Nateghi	177
Abstain	103

Vice-President External Affairs- Do you have confidence in (Reza Golpayegani) fulfilling the roles and responsibilities of the Vice-President External Affairs?

Yes	291
Abstain	151
No	54

- Eligibility
- Terms of Use

University of Saskatchewan

# Graduate Students' Association (GSA) Executive Election 2024/2025-Vice-President Indigenous Engagement

**Total number of voters: 18**

Vice-President Indigenous Engagement- Do you have confidence in (Jennifer Amarualik-Yaremko) fulfilling the roles and responsibilities of the Vice-President Indigenous Engagement?

Yes	17
Abstain	1
No	0

- Eligibility
- Terms of Use

University of Saskatchewan



# GSA EXECUTIVE ELECTION 2024/2025



**President:**  
**David Ohene-Amoako**



**VP Finance and Operations**  
**Lindsay Gray Carlson**



**VP Academics and Student Affairs**  
**Nickson Joseph**



**VP External Affairs**  
**Reza Golpayegani**



**VP Indigenous Engagement**  
**Jennifer Amarualik-Yaremko**