



University of Saskatchewan Graduate Students' Association

Course Council Meeting

January 21, 2010 4:30 pm, Grad Students' Commons

Minutes

Attendance:

Jolee Childs, Sangeeta Dalal, Aman Deep, Nicole Seitz, Nav Toor, Yasmin Carter, Spike Posnikoff, Stephanie Nilson, Daniel Petri, Ian Larsen, Maria Mampe, Graham Fairhurst, Edgar David, Andre Doucette, Heather Ksyuniuk, Jessica Patrucco, Heather Touet, Allison Henderson, Nathalie Brunet, Staphanie Danyluk, Laura Larsen, Emma Turner, Janice Gelech, Arron Metcalfe, Genevieve Braganza, Sara Chow, Brian Laird, Omeasoo Butt, Dunis Druo, Julie Anderson, June Yang, Nicholas Fraser, Devin Ens, Shazia Khan, Amanda Hunter, Andrew Cameron

1 Call to Order

4:30 p.m.

2 Approval of Agenda

Motion: Be it resolved that we approve the agenda pending moving VP student affairs report and Ethnomixicology motion to right after Learning Charter presentation by Rick Long.

Amanda / Laura

Carried unanimously

3 Approval of Minutes

Motion: Be it resolved that the minutes dated December 10, 2009 be approved as read.

Ian / Daniel

Carried unanimously

4 Ratification of New Course Councilors

Motion: Be it resolved that we accept the ratification of new course council members.

Omeasoo / Emma

Carried unanimously

5 Presentation on the proposed U of S Learning Charter by Rick Long

How does this relate or differ from to the university mission statement and how will it be visible to students?

This builds on it. There is a reference to the mission statement in the learning charter. There are hopes that this will be pared down to a 1 page handout that will be included with their acceptance letter.

Is this an enforceable contract?

This is supposed to be a guiding document that intends to influence behaviors. There will be no way to enforce it, except through the policies that it influences.

The wording seems a bit negative, especially with the expectations of students. (ie. be respectful...)

This is not the intent. We've used active language with the intent of being as constructive as possible. Please provide suggestions for improvements at learning.charter@usask.ca.

Where will the resources come from to enact these things?

This won't be enforced directly. The policies that it influences will be enforced (and already are). This may, however, be used to gain funding.

Students are customers. This should be reflected in this document. Customer service (front lines) is not addressed in this document.

You don't buy a degree; you buy the resources to get the degree yourself. This is the intent behind the section of the university. We have avoided using language like 'customer'. If students are addressed this way, they are not going to be engaged in the university community and participate in decision making process.

What criteria have been developed to ensure that this is being used and how will it be enforced.

This fits in the purview of Ernie Barbour. There are no specific criteria. The start is making expectations clear. Assessment will be coming soon. The university uses surveys and stats to indicate the success of many things.

6 Updates and Executive Reports

6.1 VP Student Affairs

7 Ethnomixicology:

Motion: Be it resolved that that the GSA host the Ethnomixicology night with a budget of \$1,425.00

Daniel/Laura

Could we omit the smoke? And would it be more cost effective to buy speakers and lights?

Smoke is part of a package, we don't need to use them. The speakers that we have are intended to be used for such events. We had the opportunity to rent them so that we can make sure that we know the limits of our equipment and will be using them in the future.

Could this be used to raise funds for the relief effort in Haiti?

Yes! Great idea. We'll do it.

Carried unanimously

8 Updates and Executive Reports Continued

8.1 President

8.2 VP Operations

8.3 VP Academic

8.4 VP External

Is there going to be a summary of the survey soon? Yes.

9 Computers for Grad Commons

Motion: Be it resolved that an expenditure of up to a maximum of \$7500.00 be made to update the computers, computer peripherals, and software of the Graduate Students' Association.

Nich / Amanda

This would be coming out of the reserve fund, in which we do have enough money there for this.

Carried unanimously

10 Tuition statement

This will be postponed to next meeting.

11 Bursary Selection Criteria

Motion: Be it resolved that the bursary selection criteria presented herein be adopted in the bursary selected procedure.

Amanda/Emma

Carried unanimously

12 Announcements and Reminders

- 12.1 Grad students are invited to the College of Graduate Studies Grad Council Meeting on Jan 27 at 12:30. Contact Nich for details or to let him know you will be attending (gsa.pres@usask.ca)
- 12.2 T2 bursary applications are due Feb 15. Note that the application form and procedure have been modified a bit. See the website for complete details.
<http://gsa.usask.ca/main/need-help/funding/>
- 12.3 Volunteers are needed to sit on the bursary selection committee. Time required is approximately 2 hours at a meeting time that will be decided upon between volunteers.

Laure Larson, Daniel Petri

- 12.4 Volunteers are needed to select a photo for the cover of next year's day planner. Contact Amanda at gsa.opad@usask.ca

Omeasso Butt, Emma, Laura.

- 12.5 The next course council meeting will be February 25 at the grad commons. Course council meeting dates are posted at <http://gsa.usask.ca/main/about-gsa/gsa-council/>

13 Adjourn

6:36 pm



President's Report – January 21, 2010

The previous month has been filled with detail work surrounding the final stages of opening the GSA Commons, relevant meetings to that end, and regular duties. With the commons opening and the hiring of two Commons Coordinators, my attention will be able to be placed on a variety of other tasks.

GSA Commons

Keys were handed over to the GSA on December 18th, which was the day that we moved in to the space.

Currently we are working on developing the policies that will guide the management of the space. Policies and guidelines will include usage policies, booking policies, events policies, hours of operations, art policies, etc. Currently the GSA will be accepting bookings of the space from Course Councils at no cost with the exception of some food and beverage services that may be required.

A few points to note:

- A space booking form is available through the website.
- We currently do not possess a liquor license, so any course council events with alcohol will require permits to be secured by the Council.
- The GSA insurance will cover events.
- Events will be approved by the GSA Coordinators, at the direction of the exec to ensure that we do not commit beyond our capacity.
- Course Council and GSA events take booking priority, followed by Graduate Student (members) requests. Non-GSA/member space booking requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis. The priority is that the space is to be utilized by graduate students, for graduate students.
- Hours of operation – Monday to Friday, 8am to 5pm (subject to review)
 - We are working to ensure the Commons is open during these hours, however there may be brief periods where we will not have staff and we will be closed. The Executive are working to fill in these gaps.
- For bookings after hours the Commons Coordinators will be on site.

Final project costs of the commons are not yet complete.

Student Advocacy

I am currently advocating on behalf of an international student that has been having problems bringing his wife to Canada for either a visit or to live here for the duration of his studies. This has brought forward, in my mind, the immigration issues that graduate students and their families

face. I will be working both for this student, and to bring forward immigration issues to the university administration as well as the Ministry of Advanced Education.

Graduate House

The successful request for proposals went to Stantec Consulting. The University will be moving forward quickly with an accelerated timeline to construct a 250 bed state of the art premium graduate student residence. The residence will consist of one and two bedroom suites, will seek to enhance the graduate student experience, rather than merely provide shelter, and will work to bring more graduate students to the U of S. I have inquired about the GSA potential interest in having an outlet or service out of that space building and will be meeting to discuss it further with the University. It would be, in all likelihood a leasable space that the GSA, or another tenant could lease and place some form of an operation in.

Once more details are known, we can come up with a request for business plans proposals from graduate students, MBA, as a means of providing practical experience to our members.

Meetings and Committee Work

Most meetings were on hold as a result of final exams and the winter break.

Grad House
Planning and Priorities Committee of Council
Coffee with CGSR
Executive meetings
Next Commitment Progress Workshop
University Council



VP Operations Report – January 21, 2010

Grad Commons Operations

The commons staff is doing a great job! Feel free to send forward ideas about events that you'd like to see happen at the commons.

Bottled Water Campaign

Information is being compiled. Watch for a tab on the GSA website in the next few weeks.

Meetings and Committee Work

Student Affairs:

Programs: the student/supervisor agreement has been approved in principal. This will go forward within the CGSR. This will be presented as a suggested template at this time.

Admissions and Recruitment:



VP Academic's Report – January 21, 2010

Committee work suspended December-early January so available hours may be used for advocacy and conference planning.

24-hour Arts

VP Academic and GSA President met with representatives of Facilities Management. The conclusion of the conversation was that FMD will, upon approval by the Deans of Arts and CGSR, provide graduate students (upon request, for a deposit) radio keys for the Arts Building. We have made it clear that we still think the building should be open to all students at all hours, but that this compromise will suit us as far as grad concerns go. The petition can be made available to others wishing to carry on the campaign for full all-student access to Arts.

Teaching Assistant Rates

Have not heard back from the University President's office regarding the information on TA rates they had requested. Will be meeting with representatives of the Canadian Union of Public Employees this week to discuss representation for teaching and research assistants.

Advocacy

Have been very busy with two particular cases of student-faculty and student-administration disagreement.

Conference Planning

“Intellectual Property and the Academy” is progressing as planned. Our conference planner is currently fundraising and contacting potential speakers. Most facilities are booked. A call for papers will be circulated at the end of January



VP Student Affairs' Report -January 21, 2010

To be distributed at the meeting



Constitutional Review Committee

An email has been sent out to get this committee going. Hopefully, it will convene shortly. I am in the process of finding a time that works for all interested parties. If anyone wants their feedback heard but does not want to officially join the committee please come talk to me during the Course Council meeting. I am happy to hear any suggestions people might have.

Meeting with the University of Regina

After the ribbon-cutting ceremony at the Grad Commons the executive met with executive members of the GSA from the U of R. There is still a strong desire on both sides to work together to advocate for student rights in the province. With more talks this informal arrangement may be something that could be formalized by a signed agreement.

The U of R GSA has also sent the executive a copy of the constitution. We will be looking over it for new ideas and also providing feedback to them as our Constitutional Review Committee meets.

International Activities Committee of Council

The Taskforce on International Research and Development has received approval for their report from the IACC. The report, as mentioned in a previous council update, outlines several strategies the university needs to take to become more competitive at the international level. These strategies pertain to matters such as recruitment, research partnerships, and exchange programs. There are very preliminary discussions arising at the university to begin development of a dual-degree program that could be earned in conjunction with another international university.

University Planner

The university planner is currently being organized by Sarah our Administrative Assistant. There is nothing major to report on this except that it is going as planned.

Report on CFS

I have decided to postpone the report I promised to give on the CFS until next Course Council meeting. There are some issues that the CFS can help us with that are currently pending. These issues will provide a unique insight into what kind of support this organization can provide for us. That being said I will wait to give the report about the CFS until after these matters have been brought to their attention.



Ethnomixicology Mixer Event

On Friday February 12th, 2010 from 9pm -1am the GSA will be hosting our very first Ethnomixicology night! This event will feature funky house and techno beats spiced up with traditional cultural instruments and sounds from all over the world. What better place for graduate students at the U of S to mingle and be cultured! Discover the language of music shared around the world from your brand new home and realize the opportunities for fun, learning and friendship that await you at the Graduate Student Commons!

Beer/wine/coolers will be sold for \$2.50
Pop will also be available for \$1.00

Volunteer Requirements

1 Coat Check person (9 pm to 1 am)
2 Bar tenders (9 pm to 1 am)
2 Security (9 pm to 1 am)

Staff Requirements

1 Commons Coordinator

Schedule of Events

9:00 – arrivals (House music): DJ Shaz (VP Student Affairs)
9:30 – Ethnomixicology: DJ Shaz (VP Student Affairs)
11:30 – DJ 2 (yet to be finalized)
1 am – Event over – clean up

Event Budget

Honorarium (DJ 2)	150.00
Speakers, disco lights and smoke	500.00
Liquor Permit	25.00
Alcohol* (mix)	500.00
Food	250.00
Total	\$1,425.00

*Alcohol will be served as a method of cost recovery.

Motion

Be it resolved that the GSA host our first Ethnomixicology night, with a budget of \$1425.00.



Motions to purchase computers

Rationale:

To function properly the Graduate Students' Association needs to update its computer systems. The existing computers in use by the GSA executive and staff (with the exception of admin) is outdated and cumbersome. Now that the GSA is located in the new commons space, the organization will see growth in staff (with the hiring of two part time Commons Coordinators), increased utilization of GSA offices by the executive (during the previous year of being in the trailer, the exec has been working from personal offices) and increased usage by members (with several bookings already scheduled). To ensure that the GSA is operating efficiently and effectively it is important that the GSA purchase a new suite of computers and software to meet our new and growing needs.

Budget:

Computers*	\$6500.00
Software	\$1000.00
Total	\$7500.00

*Computer budget based on Pride quote from the Campus Computer Store (Attached)

Proposed purchase:

4 Desktop computers (2 Computers for executive, 2 Computers for commons staff)

- All required monitors, keyboards, etc.

1 Laptop computer (for minutes at meetings, council, and out of office use – such as orientation and other presentations)

Software including operating systems, office suite, accounting software, editing software, etc.

Motion

Be it resolved that an expenditure of \$7500.00 be made to update the computers, computer peripherals, and software of the Graduate Students' Association.



Tuition Increase Position Statement

Graduate Students' Association Position Statement on Tuition, 2009

The Graduate Students' Association (GSA) at the University of Saskatchewan cannot support the notion of any future tuition increases for graduate students at this institution. We recognize that the University of Saskatchewan has one of the lowest graduate tuition rates amongst Canadian universities, but we also recognize that the universities of many other wealthy nations require no tuition at all from their citizens. Not only do the citizens of these countries benefit from this opportunity to partake in higher education, but the countries in which they live benefit from a "better quality of life" due in part to the effect of having a better-educated population. Given this, and given the disagreement that exists on campus regarding spending priorities, the GSA believes that there are alternatives to tuition increases for balancing our institution's budget.

Saskatoon has seen a dramatic cost-of-living increase in recent years that negatively impacts the ability of graduate students to afford education. Increasing costs for food, transportation, and accommodation in the city of Saskatoon are leading to an increased financial burden for all students. An increase in tuition will only compound this burden and push students away. An increased financial burden does not just mean less pocket money. It means many students who may otherwise be able to commit themselves fully to their studies will have to take additional employment. This is not just an inconvenience for students; this reduces the quality of scholarship coming out of the U of S.

While one could argue that our lower tuition rates may not serve to bolster our prestige, the fact is that other universities can justify higher tuition only because they already have higher scholarly prestige. Until we generate the prestige to put us on par with more expensive universities, our lower costs will continue to be one of our key attractions.

If the U of S wishes to become a competitor amongst Canada's top schools, it needs to foster an environment conducive to higher quality scholarship. Scholars are most productive and progressive when they are free to focus all of their attention on their work. This demands both that they have access to the resources and facilities they require and that they be as free as possible of extraneous constraints. Tuition is exactly the sort of barrier this university should be working to remove from the path of talented scholars. It is certainly not something to be increased.

The GSA strongly believes that the Provincial Government needs to take a stronger role in supporting the financial needs of the University and should increase its contribution to the budgets of the University. The GSA also very firmly believes that increased tuition would reduce the diversity of voices among the scholars of this institution by placing a further impediment in the way of disadvantaged populations and is contrary to best interests of the university and the broader community.

The GSA believes that the University should view graduate students as investments in the both the social and the economic future of our community and work to make sure that tuition:

- Be reduced annually with an end-goal of zero tuition.
- Be considered a barrier to education and not necessary.
- Should be equitable and continue to be assessed without differential fees for international students.
- Approached with leadership in mind rather than comparison.
- Increases should be brought to the student body before approval and implementation in the interests of transparency and legitimacy.



Graduate Students' Association Bursary Selection Rubric

Agreement of Non-Disclosure

The University of Saskatchewan Graduate Students' Association Bursary Selection Committee agrees to keep all personal and otherwise identifying information provided in this application confidential.

The bursary selection committee consists of the VP Operations, Finance and Academic and 2 graduate students.

Points will be assigned by the Bursary Committee from both information on the application and provided in reference letters to assist in gauging applicants. The point system is as follows:

		Proposed Weighting
Academic Average	<70%	2
	71-80%	3
	81-85%	4
	86-100%	5
Children	have children, co-parent is an active parent	5
	<i>have children, co-parent is absent but contributes</i>	10
	<i>have children, co-parent is absent and does not contribute</i>	20
International Student		20
Disability		20
Income	<\$500	60
	\$501-700	50
	\$701-900	40
	\$901-1000	30
	\$1001-1100	20
	\$1101-1200	10
	>\$1201	0
Justifiable Extenuating Expenses	<i>Medical expenses, acceptable high cost of living, and other.</i>	<i>Up to 50</i>
Community Involvement and Merit		<i>5 or 10</i>