

Graduate Students' Association Course Council and AGM Meeting



University of Saskatchewan Graduate Students' Association Executive Meeting Agenda Dec 1st, 5:00 P.M - 7:00 P.M GSA Commons

Present: Omeasoo Butt, Eamon Mc Dermott, Sara McPhee-Knowles, Mohammed Mohammed, Steve Jimbo, Jania Chilima, Rebecca Major, Melissa Driessnack, Shannon Dyck, Spike Pasnikoff, Alison Ward, Bonie Cherewesky, Amy Noakes, Daniel Petri, Ian Larsen, Jason Grier, Johannes Menzel, Edgar David, Emma Turner, Julie Anderson, Justin Botteril, Lisa Johnston, Matthew Munson, Robert Morley, Darcel Daoud, Tanya Andrusieczko, Maria Mampe, Travis Lingenfelter, Wendie Marks, Yasmin Carter, Suhail Mall, Giostino Garcea, Dustin Munroe and Rita Orji

1.0 Call to Order: 5:13 p.m

2.0 Approval of Agenda

Motion moved by Allison- AGM/CC meeting chair:

***BIRT** Agenda approved with the following amendments: 2.1 Further Ratifications of the remaining course councilors for the term, 4.2 Bonnie's report of the International Day of Child and Motion 5.3.*

Second: Jason and Rebecca. Motion carries.

2.1 Further Ratifications

Motion moved by Jania:

***BIRT** to ratify the remainder of the course councilors for the terms by Allison- AGM/CC meeting chair as received.*

Second: Rob and Rebecca, motion carries.

3.0 Approval of Minutes

Motion moved by Omeasoo:

***BIRT** the minutes of the November 3rd, 2010 Course Council be approved as circulated.*

Second: Emma and Rob, motion carries.

4.0 Guest Speakers:

4.1 Jason Sampara (2010 GSA Conference Coordinator)

Jason gave an executive summary of the 2010 GSA Interdisciplinary Conference, “**Impact 2010: Shaping Community Through Research**” which took place Nov 18-19th followed by a Bouquet on the last night of the conference. He said the student had put out a good work, the staff and executives assisted him and his conference team and he was very appreciative of that. He will be providing a full length report shortly which will be passed to the VP Academics for future conferences planning as well as he is going to prepare a communication strategy on how we relate with our wider community. He gave a few statistics as followed:

- The Keynote speakers were: Keith Carlson – from History department
Karsten Liber – Director of the School of Environment and Sustainability (SENS)
- 26 students /presenters registered and 24 showed up.
- \$ 4100 was raised in two weeks from various sponsors
- 22 people attended a bouquet. The St. Thomas Moore (STM) catered this.

4.2 Bonnie Cherewesky

Bonnie was part of the International Day of the Child organized by the SFIC and the U of S. The event took place at the Market Mall in Saskatoon and the intent of the day was to support families and especially students with families /young families undertaking studies at U of S. She thanked Omeasoo and Leone Thompson of USSU for taking the lead in the event as well as the White Buffalo Reserve.

5.0 Motions:

5.1 Motion to confirm the results of the October VP Academic election, Moved by Eamon McDermott:

WHEREAS there was question at the Nov 3rd, 2010 Course Council meeting as to The power of Course Council to approve by-election results in contravention of Policy 2 (Elections and Referenda), and

WHEREAS the election of Sunisha Neupane as VP Academic occurred without receiving votes from 8% of the graduate student body, and

WHEREAS an organization may take action in contravention of its Bylaws at a general meeting,

BIRT Sunisha Neupane be confirmed as VP Academic for the remainder of the academic year.

Second: Julie Anderson, motion carries with one abstainance as noted herein- Sohail M.

5.2 Motion to increase the Honorarium for Executive, Moved by Steve Jimbo:

***BIRT** The Honorarium for the Executive be increased.*

Discussion:

Alison enquired about the range of increase.

Steve advised to be between \$ 350.00-750.00. In his explanation, he advised that the increase in the executives' honorarium would make the positions attractive and increase commitments from the executives in the matters of student governance. He also sees it discouraging for the executives to commit to a lot of issues and move them to the staff who are paid /compensated as per university policies (\$17.02/hr) whereas executives receive \$ 333.33 monthly regardless of how many hours they commit tot GSA related work.

Also in comparison, course councilors are honored way more for meeting attendance as per formula in the constitution. He sees this increase to the executives' honorarium to be an incentive for better involvement as this will require better accountability of time spent on GSA work from both the constituency and from the course councilors and within the executives themselves.

Steve urged if this can't be done for the current executives, should definitely be for executives coming in the following term.

Shannon wanted to know how can the hours executive work be measured and also said the money added to the honorarium could be used elsewhere...

Rita also said for GSA executive position, the motivation shouldn't be the "attractiveness" of the honorarium but need to be other things since this is to a position of leadership and its volunteering. Also she mentioned the money given to people in these position could be used elsewhere.

Steve answered that we work a lot of hours and its needed because the 5 executives are the ONLY volunteers in all the university issues involving the graduate students and sometimes we (executives) miss classes. There is no choice to miss meetings with the university administration since there wont be anyone else to go to these meetings for example, as the general student body is slow to respond to requests for volunteering their time when executives are either sick or away on conferences or unable to attend for any reason. He sees it as more than volunteering.

Jasmine Dhillon asked if anyone knows how much is the honorarium given to other different groups? Amy also added that it's important to first measure executives work and compare if any changes are needed. Also, another student (**was seated next to Amy**) emphasized that this is an honorarium to begin with why should it be increased?

In regards to Jasmine's questions, Eamon said the question is relative because it depends on how the group has set its constitution, what kind of a group it is (what operations they have, how many times they change their operating budget, what other sources of external funding they have, what other types of seasonal assistance – i.e. meeting scribes, secretaries, other paid staff/volunteer position etc) and also explained how other universities student governance bodies work as he has about 5 years experience in student governance as well as from his current position has been able to travel around Canada plus through his research travelled to the US to U of C at Berkley and

comment on the differences. However he did not agree or disagree on the raise of honorarium at this moment.

Allison- the chair, advised since this discussion was not ending she will request one comment for the motion and one against:

FOR THE MOTION: Rebecca gave her personal account of how many hours she has committed to GSA work so far and advised that she keeps a diary of all her accounts for herself and the future incumbent.

AGAINST THE MOTION: Shannon wanted to first set and work out mechanisms to be followed to measure work done by executives because this amount of funds to be increased could be used somewhere else instead.

Amendments: Allison suggested that the operating budget would be passed again in April 2011 so that it can be approved with any changes by the VP Fin and perhaps then will be the appropriate time for the honorarium adjustments.

Ian alone had voted for the motion from the pool of the course councilors. Steve agreed to withdraw the motion for now however advised that he might not be ready to re-propose any further changes in the future.

5.3 Motion moved by Jania Chilima to endorse the U of S Learning Charter:

WHERE AS the learning charter is a directive on what the university defines to be the aspirations of the U of S as an institution and what are the learning experiences and the roles played by the students, instructors, and institutions in realizing these aspirations.

The endorsement will allow the graduate students to read and understand the charter, correct its gaps and implement it in their learning experiences.

WHERE AS other students group- USSU and some specifics departments have endorsed the charter.

***BIRT** GSA officially endorses the learning charter by providing a position statement on it that can be included in the formal GSA position statements document.*

Shannon advised that the Charter is not well known perhaps time should be given for the course councilors to get time to read the Charter.

Karol advised perhaps endorsement is a strong word and we should say we recognize the learning charter.

Allison advised that we should table this motion until the next course council meeting on January 5th.

6.0 President Report

Omeasoo summarized her report. See President Report as circulated

No discussion arose from the report.

Omeasoo also added the following announcements, other businesses and calls for volunteering:

6.1 Saskatoon Speaks.

Commented on our involvement and circulated a survey to be filled during the meeting as an add-on and further participation. See Appendix 1.

6.2 Christmas Party.

Said can work to organized a non-denomination Christmas Party that is family friendly at the Commons and also circulated a sheet of paper for volunteers.

6.3 Safety at the Commons

Advised we have put out a survey on what can be done to increase safety at the Commons given that we have high traffic at the Commons however once its dark there is hardly anyone here. Also since our operating budget is not that large, once the full time employee Office Manager leave at 4:00 p.m there remains one staff at any given moment. Campus Security therefore has worked with us to provide the survey and requested everyone to fill out the survey. See also President's report on this initiative.

6.4 Staff Shortlist

We are hiring a Commons coordinator and Omeasoo advised currently there is a staff shortlist for this position to be filled in a week's time.

6.5 JSGSPP

The JSGSPP will be having an event on January 7th and there are special ticket at student pricing that are being sold by Omeasoo and whomever is interested was asked to contact her or fill out a sheet of paper provided at the meeting.

6.6 Increased Feedback

Omeasoo urged the Course Council to increase feedback on the issues she has been raising especially in eh increase of the GSA membership fees , she wants to know what is needed to have this done and what the university can relieve us from once we have a better operating funds and be bale to make further autonomous decision on our developments as well as implement many more programs for graduate students. She added that the increased funds would also look at the following issues such as :

- Ombudsman: of which the proposal is to have this office funded as follows- 1/3 GSA, 1/3 USSU and 1/3 the university. This will allow a proper representation of GSA concerns.
- To increase the honorarium as proposed by Steve to \$ 750.00: Omeasoo advised she basically doesn't do any school work since she assumed the position because this position is equivalent to a full-time job, and since there is no school work being accomplished it means no stipend is being given to her. She wishes to have part-time option for graduate students to have at least some time dedicated to schoolwork and proper leadership without over burdening those students interested in sharpening their leadership skills.

Edgar has a question: what % was Omeasoo looking at increasing given that International student fees are already going up and this will clearly not be welcomed with opened arms?

Omeasoo advised its true that fees are increasing but this will not be through the tuition fees but GSA membership fees and at a very small % perhaps something as little as \$ 4/graduate student. She advised as directed by Eamon before (see on the Honorarium increase Motion 5.2) and asked for him to elaborate further on the U of C at Berkley.

Eamon summarized what he learnt and said this university is actually at a transition as is U of S and that their current graduate student body is comparable and that their model might work here since this increase will let us achieve a different operational level.

6.7 Community Involvement Learning Communities

Omeasoo advised that Angela Ward –Provost Academic , will be working with AIGSC on Community Involvement Learning Communities. The topics under discussion will be decided later on prior to the meeting on December 9th.

Sara enquired and elaborated on the issue of learning community and said for the undergraduate these are structured into the courses and was wondering how this might work for graduate level studies and said perhaps Gwenna Moss Teaching Effectiveness course model might work better.

7.0 VP Academic Report

Sunisha introduced herself and advised that she is still trying to keep abreast the many emails in her inbox given the position was vacant for a long time. She is also working towards understanding the University council committees and try to schedule herself to attend their future meetings.

8.0 VP Aboriginal Report

Rebecca delivered her report. See executives Reports.

No discussion arose from the report.

Rebecca also advised she is working towards better communication with recruitment and retention towards increased Aboriginal students.

9.0 VP External Report

Eamon summarized his report. See executive reports.

No discussion arose from the report.

He just added on the philosophy behind trying to get a GSA pub and elaborated on the event to follow today's AGM/CC, which is to build Culture on campus.

Eamon also elaborated on the announcement made on Nov 16th by the Minister Rob Norris of the Ministry of Advanced Education, Employment and Immigration on the new Masters and PhD graduate stream to the Saskatchewan Immigrant Nominee Program.

He sees this is a major victory for international students and their representations through the GSA

given that brainstorm sessions and advice on these issues started in July from our end!

10.0 VP Finance Report

Omeasoo delivered Mohammed's report on his behalf. See executives' reports.

No discussion arose from the report.

11.0 VP Student Affairs Report

Steve delivered his report. See executives Reports.

No discussion arose from the report.

In addition, he advised that he was planning to have a social for the January graduate student intake however this is not going to be possible given a short planning time remaining. However he has taken over the ideas put forward by a course council- Shannon for raising funds for the GSA Bursary. For this he circulated a sheet of paper for volunteers to come forth and strike a planning committee for the various social events to take place throughout next semester.

12.0 VP Operations Report

Jania delivered her report. See executives Reports.

No discussion arose from the report.

Jania added on Health and Dental that a lot of services are covered, including various vaccinations for those working with animals or in the fields planning trees or collecting tree samples in the forest or some other remote areas etc.

She encouraged the course councilors to share the information on health and dental in their home council especially given there are some students who begin their intake at different times of the year and not in September. She added for the January graduate student intake , we will have the health and dental reps come to give a brief presentation in the January Course Council.

13.0 Next executive meeting: January 5th, 2010 from 5:00-7:00 p.m

14.0 Adjournment

Motion: **BIRT** the meeting be adjourned at 6:29 p.m

Second: Amy, motion carries.