

**Executive Reports and Meeting Agenda**

**GSA Course Council**

**Thursday, January, 2012**

# Graduate Students' Association Course Council Meeting Minutes



## University of Saskatchewan Graduate Students' Association January, 8 2011, 5:00 P.M -7:00 P.M GSA Commons

**Executives:** Xue Yao, Ehimai Ohiozebau, Ranjan Datta and Steve Jimbo.

**Councillors:** Allison Piche, Amy Noakes, Cherie Dugal, Colleen George, Erin Spinney, Erin Wolfson, Jacob Ouellet, Jan Geleeh, John McLeod, Jonathan Doering, Justin Botterill, Karen Gesy, Kristen Schroeder, Layla Gould, Leanne Flahr, Lindsay Stokalko, Madelaine Gierc, Matthew Feldman, Matthew Munson, Sara McPhee-Knowles, Sarah Crawford, Sarah Purdy, Spike Postnikoff, and Teenus Jayaprakash.

**1.0 Call to Order:** 5:05p.m

**2.0 Approval of Agenda**

Motion: *BIRT agenda be approved: John McLeod and Ehimai Ohiozebau, motion carries*

**3.0 Approval of Meeting**

Motion: *BIRT minutes of December, 8 2011, Course Council meeting be approved: Lindsay and Justin, motion carries.*

**4.0 Guest Speakers:**

(1) Mr. David Hannah, Associate Vice-President, Student Affairs: He spoke about the university's childcare expansion program and how it relates to graduate students. The university plans to double its number of childcare spaces by 2014. The project is expected to cost about \$5million and would increase the university's total childcare spaces to 220, up from the current 110. The plan consist of two phases. The first phase include the renovation and expansion of the current university daycare centre located in the education building. That would add about 46 spaces. The second phase is a new, standalone facility at College Quarter that would provide 64 spaces, 12 for infants and 52 for children 18months to 6 years old. There is also a possibility of the reuse of the century old seed barn currently sitting by the volleyball courts on College Drive. According to

Hannah, the later phase is still tentative, depending on the outcome of quality control test. He explained that estimates show the Education Building renovation and expansion would cost \$1.3 million and the seed barn refitting would cost about \$3 million. The provincial government has already allocated \$1.4 million for this project and the university has already committed to a specific amount-probably in the range of \$1 million-before summer. Hannah asked GSA Course Council to support his campaign for a blanket fee on all student for these projects. His presentation was followed by a discussion session.

- (2) Amanda Smytaniuk, Prairie Program Manager, Studentcare.net/works. Amanda gave a general orientation of the GSA Health and Dental Plan. She explained that though she had given a similar presentation in September 2011, before, there was need to represent it again because of new course councillors.

The following reports were presented by executive members:

### **5.0 Ratification of new Course Councillors**

The following councillors were ratified: Erin Wolfson, Farijana Eishita, Fred Sage, Fred Leal, Karen Gesy, KristenSchroeder, Madelaine Gierc, Mohammad Khan, Siping Zhang, Sunny Sharma, and Teenus Jayaprakash.

### **6.0 President report**

GSA Executive and Staff

- Recently the schedule of GSA Executive and Staff needed some modification. Our executives discussed all the possible options and made the decision to hire several casual positions to fill the shifts when the office manager is away for her holiday in February.

Professional Skills Development Program

- Coming up in January the GSA will work on the Professional Skills Development Program. I am searching for more resources from other universities. The proposal for this program has been prepared, and it will be sent out to all possible partners on campus. I've already talked this program with Alumni Association and Student and Enrolment Services Division. They are interested and willing to collaborate to develop this program.

From January, the GSA will have a busy time. VP student affair will organize the orientation and screen the Phd movie. VP academic will work on the conference coming in March. For more detail please read the reports of VP student affair and VP academic.

### **7.0 VP Operations and Administrations Report**

Most part of December, 2011 was holiday season. The GSA Commons was closed from Friday December, 23 2011 to Monday January, 2 2012. However, I came to school every other day to take care of GSA aquarium. We resumed Tuesday January, 3 2012.

The office Manager, Sarah Mansood will be going on her one month annual leave in February 2012. The GSA Commons will be in need of extra staff. Advert was placed for two more Commons in mid December 2011. Over 55 applications were received and interview sessions have been slated for later this week.

GSA Bursary

Announcement will be made to graduate students later this week to apply for 2011/2012 Term 2 GSA Bursary. This

is the only need based bursary on campus. This GSA financial year alone, we have awarded the sum of \$12, 000.00 to 12 recipients and we plan to award the remaining of the budgeted \$18,000.00 to 6 more recipients. A call will be placed soon for councillors to volunteer as members of the award committee. I encourage as many as can be present to respond.

Other meetings attended in the past month are:

- Executive meetings
- Teaching and Learning Committee meeting
- Meeting with various student groups wanting to be ratified by the GSA
- GSA staff meeting
- Responding to GSA emails

## **8.0 VP Academics Report**

Regular Activities: Cases of student academic misconduct have been on the rise. There is a high need for Ombudsperson to independently look into these issues. The GSA does not have extra fund for this position. However, I have been searching for free *ombudsperson* position but I have not been successful yet. I would like to request all of you if you have any information regarding this position please let me know.

USSU has their own *ombudsman* person paid position and they have successfully advocated for undergraduate student related issues. As a VP Academics I feel GSA also need to take necessary steps in creating *ombudsman* person position soon. I encourage the GSA to consider the possibility of budgeting for this position in the next financial year.

Beside several academic meetings, I have attended various committee meetings such as student forum, Meeting with President, and Scholarship and Award meeting.

GSA Conference Coordinator:GSA received several potential applications for this position and we interviewed five applicants. I am thankful to VP Operation, VP External, and Office Manager for their active support and time in this process.

GSA Conference: GSA conference date has been slated for March, 8 2012 (Date is subject to change according to GSA Common availability). I would like to request every department council member for their active support in encouraging their department's graduate students' participation in this conference.

### **Conference report:**

The 2012 GSA conference: Interdisciplinary Knowledge Innovation – Speak Up for Change will tentatively be held on Thursday, March 8, 2012 at the Graduate Student Commons. Our target is to have 75 participants attend the conference with approximately 18 student presenters. The call for abstracts will begin on Tuesday, January 10, 2012 and will close on February 10, 2012. There is a 150 – 200 word limit for abstract application and a variety of methods will be used to attract abstract submission from graduates including but not limited to emails, contacting each department as well as on campus posters. Social networking such as the use of facebook will also be utilized to promote the event and increase student participation. The conference will be free of charge for all student participation although registration is required by February 15, 2012. Food and drinks will be provided at the conference and will include a cold breakfast (assortments of baked goods, coffee, tea and juice), a light lunch (to be determined) and cookies and tea/coffee provided during two coffee breaks. A small gift (to be determined) will be given to the keynote speaker. In addition, a small gift (to be determined) will be given to each student

presenter. Each of the graduate colleges will be contacted during the week of January 8, 2012 via email to discuss funding for the conference as well as to encourage abstract submissions. Discussions are currently underway to determine a keynote speaker for the event and the agenda is currently being put together. The email address [gsa.2012conference@usask.ca](mailto:gsa.2012conference@usask.ca) has been set up for all email inquiries regarding the conference and will be used for all related correspondence.

GSA Conference Coordinator,

Maily Huynh

## 9.0 VP Finance Report

- 1) The investment funds have finally been moved to the chequing account thus we are able to go ahead and pay the university the total construction services (for commons) amounted to 233,287.00.
- 2) We are yet to receive the student list form CGSR hence the course council funds for Fall 2011 have not been issued yet.

### University of Saskatchewan Graduate Students' Association

#### Statement of Operations for the Fiscal Year 2011-2012

#### Revenues

	Proposed 2011	Current
GSA Fees	\$ 136,000.00	\$ 72,940.74
CFS Fees	\$ <b>22,000.00</b>	\$ <b>13,216.12</b>
GSA Commons Booking	\$ 1000.00	\$ 2,651.60
Health and Dental Fees	\$ <b>5500,000.00</b>	\$ <b>557,943.32</b>
GSA Orientation	\$ <b>4,250.00</b>	\$ <b>940.00</b>
CFS Handbook	\$ <b>2,000.00</b>	\$ <b>2,140.00</b>
Bursary	\$ 9,000.00	\$ 9,000.00
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$ <u>724,250.00</u></b>	<b>\$ <u>658,831.78</u></b>

#### Expenses

Audit	\$ 500.00	\$ -
Bursary	\$ 18,000.00	\$ 12,000.00
Conferences	\$ 4,500.00	\$ 2,762.75
CFS Handbook	\$ <b>2,000.00</b>	\$ <b>2,278.50</b>
CFS Fees	\$ <b>22,000.00</b>	\$ <b>13,216.12</b>

Course Council Funding	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 100.00
Entertainment	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 910.98
GSA Orientation	\$ <b>4,250.00</b>	\$ <b>3,746.03</b>
Health and Dental Plan Premiums	\$ <b>550,000.00</b>	\$ <b>269,754.60</b>
Honoraria	\$ 28,500.00	\$ 18,999.84
Insurance	\$ 3,500.00	\$ <b>4,018.00</b>
Miscellaneous	\$ 3,500.00	\$ 379.20
Office	\$ 6,000.00	\$ 2,746.15
President/Student Fund	\$ 6,000.00	\$ 6,000.00
Bank Charges	\$ 200.00	\$ 16.71
Office Salaries	\$ 60,600.00	\$ 19,656.40
Operating cost – W/Internet System	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 1,000.00
Operating cost – Media equipment	\$ 700.00	\$ 700.00
Equipment renewal	\$ 6,000.00	\$ 6,000.00
Computer renewal	\$ 500.00	\$ 500.00
<b>Total Expenses</b>	\$ <b><u>724,250.00</u></b>	\$ <b><u>364,785.28</u></b>
<b>Excess</b>		<b><u>294,046.50</u></b>

**NB:**

Numbers that are not in bold in the proposed column 2011 should add up to \$136,000

The excess is calculated from the figures NOT in bold.

The figures in red indicate overspent accounts.

### 8.0 VP Student Affairs Report

The VP Student Affairs gave oral report. In summary, he planned organizing winter orientation by January 2012. He requested Course Council to approve \$1,500 for this event. However, his request was not granted because the process of moving a motion was not followed. Course council needed a consensus to grant a waiver. There was no consensus. Therefore, VP Student Affairs' request was declined. He was advised to submit a written motion for his proposed expenditure by the next course council meeting in February.

### 9.0 Aboriginal Liaison Officer

The Aboriginal liaison Officer neither submitted a written report nor gave oral presentation at the previous Course Council meeting.

**10.0 Announcement:** The Speaker, Eamon McDermott announced that Physics graduate students are trying to kick off an interdisciplinary study of the impacts of Saskatchewan's nuclear/uranium mining industry on rural and aboriginal communities. He invited Course Council members who might be interested in this project to contact him for more details.

**Adjournment:** 7.10 pm The meeting was adjourn with a voice vote.

## **FEBRUARY REPORT**

### **(1) President: Events**

- Conduct Survey for Graduate Students

The GSA is working on the survey for all graduate students which is a great opportunity for students to speak up their concerns and thought.

- Open House Event for graduate students input of Third Integrated Plan

The GSA is collaborating with Institutional Planning and Assessment Division to organize an open house event where all students can come and learn about the Third Integrated Plan, ask questions and comment upon the Plan.

### **Issues**

#### **Rent of the Residence**

- I discussed the issue of residence fee increasing with one manager of the residence office. The clarification is that the GSA executives do not have the authority to approve the mission about the residence fee increasing. The only opportunity that I gave the input about this mission is the meeting held in December and I brought the issue that the graduate students are facing with financial problems. Students complain that the stipend has not been raised but the tuition fee and other expense have increased. However, the Board of Governor had approved the rate of increase. The manager will meet students who sent email to the residence office and then evaluate all the concerns. After the evaluation, GSA will collaborate with the residence office to hold an open discussion about this issue if it is needed.

#### **Childcare Space**

- The Student & Enrolment Services Division presented the progress about Childcare Space in January's Course Council Meeting. The GSA executives inquired into the possible spaces for graduate students and relative issues of finance. It was indicated that the more investment the GSA put into the childcare program the easier access graduate students can get. As for the potential investment the GSA can provide for childcare program, the executives will discuss and find an appropriate way based on the current budget and next years GSA fee.

### **Meetings**

- Planning and Priorities Committee
- Review of Position and Person (Associate Vice-President Research)

### **(2) VP Operations and Administration Report**

**GSA Bursary:** On January, 10 2012, I sent notice to graduate students to apply for GSA need based bursary. Applications will be closed February 15. We need course councillors to volunteer as members of Bursary Award Committee. Decisions are usually made after a second meeting.

**Aboriginal Liaison Officer:** The Aboriginal Liaison Officer emailed in the past month. She explained that she had organized interactive forum with aboriginal students but had low attendance. She also explained that her non attendance to GSA related activities was due to her health challenges. She was however advised to regularly

respond to her official emails.

**Office Staff:** The Office Manager, Sarah Mansood has proceeded on her annual vacation. She is expected to resume duty March, 1. Meanwhile, our new Commons Coordinators are acclimatizing to their new job functions. I decided to engage them on a daily performance check for February just to be sure that things are done properly and assist the new staff when needed.

Other notable activities in January are as follows:

- Executive meeting
- University Council meeting
- Graduate Council meeting
- Council Teaching and Learning Committee meeting
- Provost Review Committee Meeting

### **(3)VP Academic Report:**

#### **2012 GSA Interdisciplinary Conference, WEDNESDAY MARCH 7, 2012**

Please join GSA conference, this year we have key note speaker (**Dr. Verna St. Denis**) who is well known for her wide contribution in aboriginal rights, antiracist education, and positive changes for all. If you are not able to join for whole session please join us at least in our opening session (at 8:30 AM.) and encourage your department students.

#### **Developing Career Potential as a Grad Student Information Session, Feb. 17th, 9:00 AM**

Please encourage your department graduate students for this workshop.

#### **Update *Ombudsman* Person Position**

GSA should have some budget for this position first. Once GSA knows how much we can spend for this *ombudsman* position, it may be easy to find *ombudsman* person. However, *ombudsman* person position will require as same as one professional annual salary scale.

### **(4)VP Student Affairs:**

#### **U-PASS:**

I have been working on the issue of having graduate students be allowed to have U-PASS and also with an option of opting out for those who drive or who do not need it. I have held a series of meetings with the Saskatoon transit and am having a series of meetings with USSU to figure out how best this can be done.



**Student Residences on Campus:** There has been an issue raised by the students regarding the intended increase in the rents they pay for the residences. The residence service management purport to have consulted the GSA regarding this issue but we were not consulted and thus we have been consulting them to stop this increase.

**PhD movie:** We intend to screen the PhD movie after the February reading break. There will be a series of shows depending on the numbers of students who come out for the first movie show.

**Graduate Student Stipend raise:** I have had consultations with the University in regards to having the graduate student stipend raised. The student stipends have not been raised over a long period of time. We intend to engage the university to facilitate this raise.

**(5)VP Finance Report**

- 1) The construction services (for commons) amounted to 233,287.00 have already been issued and received by the university.
- 2) We are yet to hear from CGSR despite sending two reminders inquiring on the student list they were to send in order to issue the course council funds for Fall 2011.

**University of Saskatchewan Graduate Students' Association  
Statement of Operations for the Fiscal Year 2011-2012**

**Revenues**

	<b>Proposed 2011</b>	<b>Current</b>
GSA Fees	\$ 136,000.00	\$ 72,940.74
CFS Fees	<b>\$ 22,000.00</b>	<b>\$ 13,216.12</b>
GSA Commons Booking	\$ 1000.00	\$ 2,651.60
Health and Dental Fees	<b>\$ 5500,000.00</b>	<b>\$ 557,943.32</b>
GSA Orientation	<b>\$ 4,250.00</b>	<b>\$ 940.00</b>
CFS Handbook	<b>\$ 2,000.00</b>	<b>\$ 2,140.00</b>
Bursary	\$ 9,000.00	\$ 9,000.00
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$ <u>724,250.00</u></b>	<b>\$ <u>658,831.78</u></b>

## Expenses

Audit	\$ 500.00	\$ -
Bursary	\$ 18,000.00	\$ 12,000.00
Conferences	\$ 4,500.00	\$ 2,762.75
CFS Handbook	\$ <b>2,000.00</b>	\$ <b>2,278.50</b>
CFS Fees	\$ <b>22,000.00</b>	\$ <b>13,216.12</b>
Course Council Funding	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 100.00
Entertainment	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 910.98
GSA Orientation	\$ <b>4,250.00</b>	\$ <b>3,746.03</b>
Health and Dental Plan Premiums	\$ <b>550,000.00</b>	\$ <b>269,754.60</b>
Honoraria	\$ 28,500.00	\$ 21,041.49
Insurance	\$ 3,500.00	\$ <b>4,018.00</b>
Miscellaneous	\$ 3,500.00	\$ 379.20
Office	\$ 6,000.00	\$ 3,012.56
President/Student Fund	\$ 6,000.00	\$ 6,000.00
Bank Charges	\$ 200.00	\$ 16.71
Office Salaries	\$ 60,600.00	\$ 21,264.98
Operating cost – W/Internet System	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 1,000.00
Operating cost – Media equipment	\$ 700.00	\$ 700.00
Equipment renewal	\$ 6,000.00	\$ 6,000.00
Computer renewal	\$ 500.00	\$ 500.00
<b>Total Expenses</b>	\$ <b><u>724,250.00</u></b>	\$ <b><u>368,701.92</u></b>

### Excess

**290,129.86**

### NB:

Numbers that are not in bold in the proposed column 2011 should add up to \$136,000

The excess is calculated from the figures NOT in bold.

The figures in red indicate overspent accounts.