

GSA Course Council

Thursday, November 10, 2011

Graduate Students' Association Course Council Meeting Minutes



University of Saskatchewan Graduate Students' Association November, 10 2011, 5:00 P.M -7:00 P.M GSA Commons

Executives: Xiu Yao, Ehimai Ohiozebau, Mohamed Mohamed, Ranjan Datta and Steve Jimbo,
Councillors: Cherie Dugal, Rodringgo Albornog, Lindsay A. Stokalko, Amy Noakes, Matthew Munson, Sara Kuleza, Tekuni Nakuja, Erin Spinney, Omeasoo Butt, Gareth Perry, John McLeod, Jan Gelech, Justin Botterill, Wendie Marks, Sara McPhee-Knowles, Matthew Feldman, Collen George, Leanne Flahr, Sarah Purdy, Heather Dillon, Madelaine Gierc, Kana Neimato, Jon Doering, Eonla Labwuleu, Orleigh Bogle, Paula Tnbulo and Eamon McDemott (Speaker).

1.0 Call to Order: 5:05p.m

2.0 Approval of Agenda

Motion: *BIRT agenda be approved: Gareth Perry and Rajan Datta, motion carries*

3.0 Ratification of new and returning Councillors

New course councillors were ratified. Those ratified are:

Regular: Collen George (School of Environment and Sustainability), Faisal Lateef (School of Public Health).

Alternate: Conception Ponce (Chemistry).

Motion: *BIRT the above named Regular and Alternate members be ratified as members of the 2011/2012 Course Council session. Omeasoo Butt and John McLeod, motion carries.*

4.0 Guest Speaker: Dr. Lawrence Martz.

The dean, College of Graduate Studies and Research could not make it for this meeting as he was unavoidably absent. He requested that his presentation be rescheduled for Thursday, December 8 course council meeting.

5.0 President's Report

The president presented her report in the following subtitles,

Events attended:

- Canadian Association of Graduate Studies November 2nd-5th
The topics discussed include: 'Educating for the Future', 'Student and Professional Development', 'Student Funding', 'The Student-Supervisor Relationship', 'News from the Research-Granting Agencies', and 'Interdisciplinarity: Governance & Resources'.
- Developing your career potential as a grad student information session (VP Academic), November 18th

Issues Attended to:

- Ombudsperson
She referred to the following schools that have ombudservice: McGill University, University of Alberta, Athabasca University, University of British Columbia, University of Calgary, Carleton University, Dalhousie University, McMaster University, Simon Fraser University, University of Toronto, University of Victoria and University of Western Ontario. She inferred that it was high time the U of S had similar services for students in general and graduate student in particular and that this present GSA executives are committed to see the fruition of this.
- Graduate professional development program
She is planning a 'Graduate Motivation to Success' program which will provide graduate students with skills beyond those learned within their research program. The president hoped that from attending this program, graduate student will develop skills like project management, effective communication, entrepreneurship/ leadership, Intellectual Property, Creativity, and Social Responsibility.

The meetings she attended in October are

- Senate Meeting (Oct., 15)
- GSA Bursary Meeting (Oct., 18)
- Presidential Search Committee (Oct., 31)
- GSA Executive Meeting (Nov., 1)

6.0 VP Operations' Report

Health and Dental Plan.

Over the summer, he had email and phone conversation with Drew Martin. Mr Drew Martin is a senior accountant

executive of C & C Insurance Company who is proposing that his company-C & C Insurance company-be the administrator of the GSA Health and Dental Plan. The VP Operation reported that after the initial discussion with Mr. Drew, he directed him to the VP Finance to evaluate the financial implication for graduate students.

He also had a meeting with Amanda Smytaniuk the Studentcare.net/works Prairie Program Manager and they are considering opening the GSA Health and Dental Plan for bidding in winter term 2012.

GSA Bursary

He followed up with Dr. Heather Lukey (the Director of Scholarships and Awards at the CGSR) and the payroll department to ensure that the sessional \$9,000.00 matching fund for the GSA bursary was promptly released.

He reported that the five member GSA bursary committee met to consider the fall term GSA bursary recipients. Sixty-two (62) applications were received. Each applicant had a compelling reason why they deserved the fund but they had to use a point based system to pick the first ten. Voting was done on the top 10 to select six recipients who were awarded \$1,000.00 each. The recipients for this term were evenly spread to represent the diversity of graduate students. They are 3 international and three home students; 3 Ph.D and three Masters students from the department of Physics and Engineering Physics, School of Public Health, Department of Geography and Planning, Department of Sociology, School of Environment and Sustainability and Political Science Department.

He explained that they have also updated the online information of previous and present bursary recipients. With this, those who initially received the bursary cannot access it for the next three terms.

Other areas He worked on in October are:

- Attending Teaching and Learning Committee, Copyright Advisory Committee and presented at the University Council.
- Executive meetings
- Wrote and uploaded executive and course council minutes
- Attended meeting with the CGSR
- Held staff meeting
- Responded to emails
- Involved in the general operations and administration of the GSA.

7.0 VP Academic Report

He attended several academic, scholarships, and students' forums. He echoed the president's stand on the need to create an Ombuds position. Other issues he highlighted are: evaluating of courses and instructors, increasing scholarships for graduate students, building sustainability and antiracist educational consciousness.

He proposed to have a workshop for graduate students tagged "Developing Your Career Potential as a Grad Student" on Nov 18, (Friday) 9:00 AM at GSA Common. He requested course councillors to encourage their department's graduate students to attend this event.

8.0 VP Student Affairs Report

Student Orientation

He is planning to hold a winter GSA orientation in January. His intention is to open this event to all graduate students.

Student housing

He reported that he would be attending a meeting which will come up with modalities of having students live for free with the elderly while helping them (elderly) with their lives. It is a cost sharing opportunity for students.

Student Issues:

In his report, he stated that he has been working on resolving issues affecting graduate students at the school of public health. He took this issue to the President's breakfast and the President agreed to send a group to look at the issues raised. The Provost and the VP Research of the University agreed to look into the issue. He will be following up the issue with them.

9.0 VP Finance Report: The report is stated below.

- 1) The deficit for CFS handbook expenditures has reduced to \$138.50. The GSA received late payments in the last week of October which were previously not accounted for.
- 2) We have received GSA, CFS, and Health & Dental Fees.
- 3) CGSR sent the promised bursary funds of \$9000.
- 4) Insurance increased by 6% due to increase in our assets. For that reason, we have spent \$518 more than we budgeted for.
- 5) We are yet to receive orientation funds.
- 6) Mohamed had a meeting with Mr. Drew Martin, Senior Account Executive of C&C Insurance, to listen to his proposal for health and dental coverage. Mr. Martin believes they can provide better coverage than what we currently have. One of their unique coverage for prescriptions is called Direct 2U. According to Mr. Martin, one of the suggested coverage could be as shown below;

Meds filled at Traditional Pharmacy

Brand Name	50% Coverage
Generics	80% Coverage
Therapeutic Alternatives	80% Coverage

Meds filled through Direct 2U Prescriptions

Brand Name	80% Coverage
Generics	100% Coverage
Therapeutic Alternatives	100% Coverage

Mr. Martin also stated that:

“Our VIP Network is unique in the way that they have negotiated such discounts for students that the coverage is at 100% (when visiting a practitioner within the network). This excludes dentists. However, all VIP practitioners direct bill, so students don’t have to pay out of pocket and wait for reimbursement. This is a significant enhancement for ALL students. Appointments can also be booked on line.”

He also proposed on Profit Participation Plan. He said: “This means that 50% of any Underwriting Surplus is given back to the GSA. This means that along with the built in surplus (which we decided the GSA already has) if the premium are greater than the claims, 50% is returned to the GSA to help establish a surplus. This is a great step towards our Not For Profit Funding Model. Many of our clients through this model have not had a rate increase in over 10 years. Some for 15 years.”

He would like to meet the course council in the January meeting for thorough discussion of their coverage including other features that will focus on saving the GSA in the long term, saving their members, but increasing the value along the way. Their goal is to create a paperless environment for students. No out of pocket, no wait times, immediate service.

His reported was followed by a question and answer session. Councillors wanted to know if equal opportunity will be given to other competitors and the executives assured the house that any insurance company interested in bidding for the GSA Health and Dental Plan will be given equal opportunity. The VP Admin. and Operation and the VP Finance were advised to work with studentcare/net in effecting this plan.

10.0 VP External Report

The VP External was absent from the meeting and her report read thus:

“I have the UPass on my priority list right now. I met with the manager of UPass from Saskatoon Transit twice and I am in the process of collecting statistics so I can write a proposal to present to CGSR, Saskatoon Transit and to the Provincial Government.

I am still looking for volunteers to start a Constitution Review Committee. Please email gsa.external@usask.ca if you are interested. We will discuss but not limit to the following points

- the booking policy
- GSA membership of Post Docs and their right to run in Executive Positions

Hours worked Hours worked

Oct 12 th	Meeting with USSU regarding Election Forum	1 hour
Oct 12 th	Meeting with GSA VP External 2010/2011	1 hours
Oct 12 th	Course Council meeting	2 hours
Oct 18 th	Meeting with USSU President	1 hour
Oct 18 th	Meeting at Saskatoon Transit	2.5 hours
Oct 19 th	Executive meeting	2 hours
Oct 24 th	Reception for Raj Patel	2.5 hours
Oct 24 th	Review of booking policy	1.5 hour
Oct 25 th	Review of booking policy with Office Manager	0.5 hour
Oct 26 th	Meeting at Saskatoon Transit	2.5 hour
Oct	Emails/ phone calls/ responses	6 hours

11.0 VP Aboriginal Report

As at the time of this meeting, the Aboriginal Liaison Officer's position was vacant. AIGSC representatives later introduced Heather Gayle Dillion as the new VP Aboriginal Liaison. Heather explained that she just assumed the office and will not be able to provide any report at the meeting but promised to report in subsequent meetings.

Afterwards, the course council entered an executive session to discuss classified issues regarding this position and a point of action was taken.

12.0 Announcement

Gareth Perry (Physics and Engineering Physics), informed the house that one of GSA course councillors-Jennifer Campeau- was elected to the Saskatchewan Legislature in the 2011 provincial election. Jennifer is a GSA course councillor representing the Department of Native Studies under the Saskatchewan Party. The VP External was advised to send her a congratulatory letter on behalf of the GSA.

14.0 Adjournment 6:29pm John and Mohamed.