

# Graduate Students' Association Course Council Meeting Minutes



University of Saskatchewan  
Graduate Students' Association  
October, 12 2011, 5:00 P.M -7:00 P.M  
GSA Commons

**Executives:** Xiu Yao, Mohamed Mohamed, Sunisha Neupane, Rebecca Major, Ranjan Datta and Steve Jimbo.

**Councillors:** Amy Noakes, Gareth Perry, Jennifer Campeau, Johannes Menzel, John McLeod, Justin Botterill, Layla Gould, Matthew Munson, Sara McPhee-Knowles, Spike Postnikoff, Jan Gelech, Paula Tribulo, Sarah Kuleza, Bogle Orleigh, Sarah Purdy, Collen George, Svokalko Judocy, Federico Anez, Rodripo Albornon, Alison Piche, Yasmin Carter, Edgar Lele, Rita Orji, Sunny Sharma, Marcos Zerobi and Eamon McDemott (Speaker).

**1.0 Call to Order:** 5:03p.m

**2.0 Approval of Agenda**

Motion: *BIRT agenda be approved: John McLeod and Amy Noakes, motion carries*

**3.0 Ratification of new and returning Councillors**

Councillors who were not ratified in the 2011/2012 GSA inaugural course council meeting were ratified. Those ratified are:

**Regular:** Sarah Purdy (Physics and Engineering Physics), Tekuni Nakuja (Bioresource Policy, Business and Economics), Jan Gelech (Psychology), Sarah Kuleza (Biology), Kota Kimuta (Anthropology and Archeology), Lindsay A. Stokalki (Archaeology) and Yasmin Carter (Anatomy and Cell Biology).

**Alternate:** Andrew Coffin (Johnson-Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy), Alyson Crozier (Kinesiology), Marcos Zenobi ( Animal and Poultry Science) and Loni Williams (Archaeology).

*Motion: BIRT the above named Regular and Alternate members be ratified as members of the 2011/2012 Course Council session. Sarah McPhee and Johannes Menzel, motion carries.*

#### **4.0 Guest Speaker:** Amanda Smytaniuk (Prairie Program Manager [studentcare.net/works](http://studentcare.net/works))

Amanda Smytaniuk is the Studentcare.net/works Prairie Program Manager. She gave a presentation on the GSA Health and Dental Plan (H & D Plan). In her presentation, she explained the health, travel, vision and dental coverages. The highlights of the GSA H&D Plan as highlighted by Amanda are as follows:

**Health Coverage:** Prescription drugs are covered up to 80% while \$20 per visit to health practitioners (physiotherapists, chiropractors, massage therapist, etc.) and \$400 per category of health practitioner per policy year are covered. Other health benefits are: Medical equipment, diagnostic services, dental accident, ambulance, home nurse, hospitalization and tutorial benefit.

**Travel Coverage:** Graduate students are covered for up to 120 days per trip and up to a maximum of \$5,000,000 per incident. Travel coverage also includes: trip cancellation (up to \$1,500 per trip for pre-paid, non-refundable trip expenses in case of medical emergency), trip interruption (up to \$5,000 in case of medical emergency for each trip during the policy year). The coverage is applicable to trips made to anywhere in the world.

**Vision Care:** Up to \$300 is covered per policy year (\$50 for eye exam, \$100 per two policy year for new or replacement eyeglasses or contact lenses and \$150 per policy year for laser eye surgery).

**Dental Coverage:** Up to \$500 coverage for dental visits per policy year. The plan covers 50% to 80% of graduate student dental cost. She also explained how students can get additional coverage through the Studentcare Dental Network.

Other areas are the Continuum Plan, family coverage, change of coverage period and opt out option.

She also presented the statistics report for the 2010/2011 coverage period. The presentation was followed by a question and answer session.

## 5.0 President's Report

The president presented her report in the following subtitles,

### Events:

#### - Campaign

She reported that the CFS and the GSA have been working on the “vote education campaign” which is supposed to ensure that the students’ concerns on tuition and scholarship are taken into account.

### Issues:

- She requested course councillors to volunteer for committee meetings. Under the present arrangement, each executive member already has about 5 committee meetings to attend, and the university still needs more student participation in various committees. Course councillors were encouraged to volunteer for unfilled committees which need graduate students’ representatives. She reiterated the benefits of seating in these committees and reminded councillors that after executive members, they are best to represent students’ interest.

#### - News/Announcement

She informed councillors to make use of the GSA website and newsletters in disseminating information. She directed them to [gsa.common@usask.ca](mailto:gsa.common@usask.ca) for onwards transmission of their information to graduate students.

Other areas touched by the president are:

#### - University Learning Center (ULC) Advisory Committee

Graduate-Level Teaching and Supervision Course has been identified as one of the priorities of ULC.

#### - CGSR

CGSR is working on the Academic Unit System to make the information of each student shown on PAWS.

#### - University Council

The university is moving forward to 3<sup>rd</sup> Integrated Plan.

#### - Planning and Priority Committee meeting

She informed the house that this committee is recommending that graduate tuition be allocated based on recognition of enrolment (40%), instruction (20%), and to acknowledge

graduate supervision (40%), with the supervisory component distributed to the home college (s)/unit(s) of the supervisor.

- Gift Celebration

She told the house that a donor made significant donation to the university and established numerous student awards for students in Geological Sciences and Graduate Studies and Research.

## **6.0 VP Operations' Report**

The VP Operation was not present in the meeting as he was gone to the field for sample collection. However, he sent a written report read thus:

**“GSA Bursary:** On the 15th of September, I sent an email to all graduate students informing them to submit application for the GSA 2011 Fall Term Bursary. Before then, I had a meeting with Heather Lukey (CGSR Director of Awards). She promised to send CGSR's contribution by way of cheque to the GSA. I encouraged her to send the total sum for this session to avoid constant coming and going to the CGSR every term for their contribution. She agreed to send the total sum. The application deadline is October, 15. I am hoping to get the Bursary Awards Committee seated by October, 20 and communicate to recipients of the bursary thereafter. I encourage councillors to volunteer as members of this committee.

There is a considerable increase on the daily email I receive from graduate students inquiring about GSA bursary. The GSA staff and I as much as possibly try to answer their questions.

**GSA Properties and Booking Policy:** We have put mechanism in place to ensure proper record of GSA properties. An official inventory mechanism has been developed. Over the past month, the office manager (Sarah) has painstakingly drafted a proposed GSA booking policy and we are in the process of reviewing the proposal for executive decision.

**GSA Staff:** I, over the past month was in constant communication with the office manager to ensure that all issues and concerns of GSA staff are given adequate executive attention. Sarah has been exercising due diligence in ensuring that the two Commons Coordinators are given preferential treatment when allocating work schedule. To have an effective feedback, I hold regular monthly meetings with the staff, were I expect them to report their monthly performance, expectations from the GSA and discuss matters arising.

**Health and Dental Plan:** I had series of email and formal discussions with Amanda (studentcare/net representative). We discussed emerging issues and/or concerns of graduate students and I hope to present my findings to Course Council when areas of actions have been agreed upon.

**Teaching and Learning Committee:** I had a meeting with the chair of Teaching and Learning Committee. As the graduate student representative to the Teaching and Learning Committee, he commended my regular attendance and participation at meetings and wanted the GSA Course Council to write a letter supporting the recently adopted Learning Charter.

Point of discussion: I will like to know the house's opinion on this.

**Course Council:** First Course Council meeting for this session was called in September. New and returning members were ratified. NSIDs of new members have been added to GSA PAWS group. Members who have not sent their NSIDs are encouraged to do so.

Other areas of focus in the past month are:

- Call for executive meetings, attendance and minutes writing,
- Meeting with Dean and senior members of CGSR,
- Attending University Council orientation and presenting at University Council meeting,
- Attending different Council Committee meetings e.g Teaching and Learning Committee, Copyright Advisory Committee, etc and
- Dealing with general issues at the GSA Commons.”

## **7.0 VP Academic Report**

The VP Academics reported that he was dealing with three academic cases and he further explained that the GSA needs to find a way to get the office of the ombudsman up and running so that graduate students can have a fair representation on issues that deal with academic dishonesty. He also told the house that he is trying to arrange career building workshop for graduate students in Nov 2011. The career building workshop will mainly focus on resume and cover letter writing.

He requested for a volunteer to participate in Academic Council meeting this Fall Term. The committee meeting is mostly on Tuesday from 2:30 to 4pm and is held twice in a month. He explained that he was not able to participate in these meetings because of time conflict with his classes. He told the house that it will be a great opportunity for volunteers to learn how university academic policies are formulated. He strongly encouraged members to volunteer for this meetings.

## 8.0 VP Student Affairs Report

The VP Student Affairs report was partly presented by Alison Pitche and later supported by Steve Jimbo (VP Student Affairs). It mainly dealt on the 2011 GSA orientation and barbecue event.

## 9.0 VP Finance Report: The report is stated below.

- 1) He reported that there was a minor change to the proposed budget. There was a deficit of 6000 in the proposed expenses for number not in bold. To correct that, the proposed GSA fees have been changed from \$130,000 to \$136,000.

*Motion; BIRT the proposed change is accepted. Motion moved by Mohamed Mohamed and Matthew Munson. Motion carries.*

- 2) For the third year in a row we have had a deficit in the CFS handbook expenditures compared to the revenue. It's anticipated that the deficit will continue since the slots for advertisement has remained the same while the cost of the handbooks have gone up.
- 3) We are yet to receive any fees from the University.
- 4) The audited accounts and changes to directorships have been submitted to Saskatchewan Corporations Boards for renewal.
- 5) We are yet to receive any orientation funds.

## University of Saskatchewan Graduate Students' Association

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

#### Revenues

	Proposed 2011	Current
GSA Fees	\$ 136,000.00	\$ 1,453.00
CFS Fees	\$ 22,000.00	\$ -
GSA Commons Booking	\$ 1000.00	\$ 1,864.10
Health and Dental Fees	\$ 5500,000.00	\$ -
GSA Orientation	\$ 4,250.00	\$ -
CFS Handbook	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 1,540.00
Bursary	\$ 9,000.00	\$ -
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Total Revenue	\$	<u>724,250.00</u>	\$	<u>3,404.10</u>
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**Expenses**

Audit	\$	500.00	\$	-
Bursary	\$	18,000.00	\$	6,000.00
Conferences	\$	4,500.00	\$	-
CFS Handbook	\$	2,000.00	\$	2,278.50
CFS Fees	\$	22,000.00	\$	-
Course Council Funding	\$	5,000.00	\$	25.00
Entertainment	\$	1,500.00	\$	324.00
GSA Orientation	\$	4,250.00	\$	3,077.67
Health and Dental Plan Premiums	\$	550,000.00	\$	-
Honoraria	\$	28,500.00	\$	11,874.90
Insurance	\$	3,500.00	\$	-
Miscellaneous	\$	3,500.00	\$	-
Office	\$	6,000.00	\$	-
		1,945.03		
President/Student Fund	\$	6,000.00	\$	-
Bank Charges	\$	200.00	\$	16.71
Office Salaries	\$	60,600.00	\$	18,112.30
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
Total Expenses	\$	<u>724,250.00</u>	\$	<u>51,854.11</u>

Excess (48,450.01)

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.

## 10.0 VP External Report

Sunisha Neupane (VP External) called for volunteers for the GSA Constitution Review Committee. The following projects worked on were highlighted by her:

- A forum inviting election candidates to answer graduate students' question prior to the provincial election
- Subsidized bus pass for graduate students.

Hours worked

Sept 13 <sup>th</sup>	Executive meeting	2 hours
Sept 14 <sup>th</sup>	Course Council meeting	2 hours
Sept 14 <sup>th</sup>	Meeting with CFS	1 hour
Sept 15 <sup>th</sup>	Breakfast meeting with the President	1.5 hours
Sept 20 <sup>th</sup>	International Office meeting to nominate candidate for Ivany Award	2 hours
Sept 21 <sup>st</sup>	Meeting with CFS	1 hour
Sept 24 <sup>th</sup>	Meeting with CGSR	1 hour
Sept 28 <sup>th</sup>	ISSAC Welcome Reception for International Students	2 hours
Sept	Emails and responses	5 hours
<b>Total</b>		<b>17.5</b>

## 11.0 VP Aboriginal Report

According to her report, during summer months, she maintained contact via email and continued communications

- Attended some AIGSC meetings
- Attended NAISA
- Had surgery
- Met with VP operations regarding concerns about students and departments

August

- Maintained communication regarding matters to do with office, Aboriginal students, and organizing AIGSC table and volunteers for the September BBQ (approx. 14 hours)

August 25, 2011 – Executive meeting (1.5 hours)

September

- Maintained communication regarding Welcome BBQ as well as internal matters (approx. 6 hours)

September BBQ (1.75 hours)

September 13, 2011 – Executive meeting (1.5 hours)

September 14, 2011 – Course Council

September 15, 2011 – Breakfast with the President

September 26, 2011 – Executive meeting (1.5 hours)

- Maintained communication with office regarding office matters, and continued communication via email regarding Aboriginal student matters (8-10 hours)

Approximate hours spent for month of September: 20 hours.

October

Continued to communicate with students and office, and continued to try and arrange AIGSC meetings.

## **12.0 Presentation by Marcel D'Eon**

Marcel D'Eon is the chair of the university council's Teaching and Learning Committee. His main aim of coming to the GSA course council meeting was to intimate course councillors with the dynamics of the Teaching and Learning Committee and the university's newly adopted Learning Charter. The Learning Charter highlights the University of Saskatchewan's learning vision and goal. It defines commitments and Responsibilities of students (learn actively, think broadly, act ethically and engage respectfully); Instructors (exemplify learning, teach effectively, assess fairly, and provide opportunities for student feedback) and Institution (provide opportunities, ensure quality, build environment and support learning).

After his presentation, a follow up on motion moved by Jania in January for the GSA to write a letter of credence for the Learning Charter was directed.

### **13.0 Motion**

WHEREAS Section 5.3.1 of the University of Saskatchewan Graduate Student Association Constitution grants the Course Council to create, alter and/or terminate any policy statements, which are considered to be GSA Policy; and

WHEREAS the 2009-2010 GSA Executive successfully lobbied and negotiated with the University of Saskatchewan for a fair and equitable pay raise for Teacher Assistants; and

WHEREAS the number of Graduate Student Association members, for Term 1 in 2011-2012, is higher than the Fall/Winter Term in 2010-2011; and

WHEREAS the student fee revenue of the Graduate Student Association has been budgeted conservatively;

*BE IT RESOLVED THAT the hourly rate of pay of the Graduate Student Association Commons Coordinators be raised to a rate that is equivalent to that of University Teachers Assistants, effective November 1, 2011 and;*

*BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the hourly rate of pay of the Graduate Student Association Commons Councillors, or any Graduate Student Association position with a similar job description, be in parity with the hourly rate of pay of the University Teachers Assistants, effective November 1, 2011.*

Motion moved by Gareth Perry and Jon McLeod. Motion carries.

### **14.0 Adjournment 6:29pm.**