

# Graduate Students' Association Annual General Meeting Minutes



University of Saskatchewan  
Thursday, April 11<sup>th</sup>, 2013  
5:00 P.M - 7:00 P.M  
GSA Commons

## 1.0 Call to Order – 5:18PM

## 2.0 Approval of Agenda

- Sarah, David – passed

## 3.0 Approval of last meeting Minutes

- Note to change Aboriginal Liaison's pay information from the main constitution as mentioned at the last meeting

## 4.0 Ratification of new Course Councils

- U of S Table Tennis Club
- Bangladeshi Students' Association

## 5.0 Ratification of new Course Councillors

## 6.0 VP Student Affairs Report

- Orientation for next year is being negotiated with the USSU for location, venue and logistics.

## 7.0 VP Operations and Administration Report

- Over this last year over 40 bursaries have been disbursed

## 8.0 VP Academics Report

- State of the university address: president says that there has been over 30% increase. As we identify some of the shortcomings of the university. Work that has been done over the last year will need to be continued
- It was amazing that the president had commented on the success of our GALA at her address

## 9.0 VP Finance Report

- We are expecting a surplus, at the last meeting it was agreed that we will be providing travel bursaries with this past year's surplus.
- Course council is looking at a way of investing past surplus
- There are currently no major debts

## 10.0 Aboriginal Liaison Report

- Since Sept, AIGSC has hosted a total of 6 events
- The last event was a steak night fundraiser to raise funds for next year. Over \$600 were raised
- Trying to increase the council's visibility and this is going to continue

## 11.0 VP External Report

- Absent – no report given

## 12.0 Presidents' report

- Started this year to increase GSA's visibility
- Thank course councils and outgoing executives for the work over the past year – GSA has increased its presence on campus as we build our relationship
- GSA's mission
  - To ensure graduate students have access to quality services that support their academic success;
  - advocate for the unique needs and concerns of graduate students on and off campus;
    - Described the GSA's governing structure
    - GSA is obligated to follow through with the voice of the majority
    - GSA provides services, part of campaigns, provide events and represent the students and also have an aboriginal liaison
    - Bursaries
    - Campaigns
    - Representation
  - Course council has significantly improved but we hope this can be even more improved in the future
    - Committees that we attend
    - Advocacy
  - This year we received 18 student complaints – it takes about 20hrs/month to represent one graduate student, this includes attending hearing meetings and other meetings
  - Students need to look at GSA as a student Union that students play a role in it instead of relying on the executives to do all the work possible to assist the students – working together is key
  - Events:
    - Orientation, Halloween party, awards gala

## 13.0 New Business

- **Ratification of 2013/2014 executives**
- **Motion to ratify:** Julian, Cody - PASSED
- Elections were held on April 4-5
- 9 reports over elections, 3 required investigations, 4 resulted in warnings to candidates
  - President: Ehimai Ohiozebau
  - VP Operations and Communications: Maily Huynh
  - VP Finance: Sara Worsham
  - VP Student Affairs: Reanne Risdale
  - VP Academic: Izabela Vlahu
  - VP External: Steve Jimbo
- **Ratification of 2013/2014 budget – attached**
- **Motion:** Julien, Gareth
  - Budget designed by finance review committee:
    - Similar to the old budget

- Increase in student enrollment, meant increased money that is used to extend common hours and will be used towards providing more services for the GSA
- questions or discussions regarding budget:
  - If surplus, is it necessary to increase the budget?
  - **Answer:** increase is due to more graduate students, we have increased fees is to provide more fees; surplus funds is available for any course council to introduce motions for spending it.
  - Surplus from the last year will be incorporated into travel awards for the following year (May 1st 2013)
  - Is it possible to pay course councillors?
  - **Answer:** It is up to the body that course councillor represent to pay individuals, as they represent those bodies, not the GSA
  - Is the course council fund able to be used to be used for other Graduate Students' Association
  - **Answer:** The GSA will grant money for groups as long as they are ratified or have applied
  - Not clear about the increase in fees, general question
- Motion failed
- **Clarification: voting for if a budget or not, not for an increase in fee**
- Motion to re-vote: Rob, Sarah
  - Yes: 85
  - No: 68
  - Vote passes
- **Clarification:** This vote determines if executive gets a budget or not
- Point of information:
  - Does this require a 2/3 vote?
  - **Answer:** no
- If there are questions or suggestions, please inform the revision committee
- Point of order to enforce parliamentary procedures

#### 14.0 Review of the constitution revisions

- on behalf of VP external, Jaime will be presenting the changes
- Question: Motion from Aboriginal student's pay? – Already resolved
  - Payment method of Aboriginal student liaison to the policy manual, this was passed
- Section 5.5 Friendly Amendment
  - Change it to say that course council meeting to start 2 hours after it begins instead of when it is scheduled to begin
  - not friendly, therefore will be tabled for another time
- Section placement of all referendum questions be brought through course council etc. (13.1.7)

- Friendly? – substantive, is tabled and review committee will go over it
  - This would require notice to be given
  - We may not be able to hear from all graduate students

### 15.0 Review of the policy manual changes

- please see attached
  - no major changes in Policy 1
  - Some changes in policy 2 changes
  - Policy 3 – some changes
  - policy 4 changes
  - Policy 5
  - Policy 9 eliminated
- Question about the CEO and CRO – what are these
- Question: reason for limiting number of course councillors for each department (7 → 5 ?)
  - ANSWER: due to trying to reach quorum
  - Due to trying to keep council motivated and active in participation
  - ideal system would have proportional representation, 7 was arbitrary
  - decrease us to enable course councillors to do the work
- Question: instead of decreasing course council, should decrease number of course councillors needed to attend – no question posed

### 16.0 Motions:

- **MOTION to accept the presented constitutional changes**
- Motion: Rob Julien
- Discussion:
  - Gareth, Cody– move to divide this constitutional amendments into 4 issues
    - 1) Name changes
    - 2) Capping size of course council
    - 3) Change alternate votings
    - 4) Change Proxies
  - Vote: Motion passed
- 1. Accept name changes: Ashton, Adrian
- Discussion: no
  - Vote: Passed
- 2. Change number of course councillors: Sarah, Sara
- Discussion:
  - reducing is not good for large departments
  - unfair for departments that regularly attend meetings
  - this can be encouraging to departments – can increase representation if more departments increase attendance
  - change is mostly asking for a way to ensure quorum is met
  - GSA needs to improve communication to encourage
  - GSA has no power to make major decisions without the course council
  - instead of capping, it should be reduced how many students are represented per councillor

- solution proposed not necessarily representing the problem – which is quorum
- Gareth: call of question
  - Vote: in favour of any debate - passed
  - Vote: in favour of changing – motion fail
- 3. removing alternates: Sarah, Ajwa
- Discussion:
  - To ensure that people are consistently attending meetings instead of repetition of arguments at every meeting
  - Vote: Motion passed
- 4. remove use of proxies: Sarah, Cody
- Discussion: no
  - Robert rules strongly recommends that proxies are not allowed
  - in favour of eliminating proxies: at last AGM, an entire department came in with a simple majority
  - Motion passes
- 5) Aboriginal liaison removal of the pay and put into the policy manual: Josie, Sarah
  - not good governance to have paid information in the constitution – should be moved into policies
- Discussion
- Vote: passed
- **MOTION to accept the presented policy manual changes**
  - Izabella, Laura
  - Gareth asking to table this and have it looked at course council meeting
  - Voted: tabling passed
- **MOTION to strike a Code of Ethics Committee to draft a Code of Ethics and Disciplinary Procedures to be added to the Policy Manual**
- Sarah, Ashton
  - motivation: number of complaints against course councillors and execs
  - committee will be responsible for writing the code of ethics which can then be used to take disciplinary actions
  - this way the procedures and communications processes are followed – right now no body for the informal mitigation
  - who will be the members of this committee:
  - idea was to have 1 executive, 2 councillors as well as representation from students that are not representatives or executives
  - what will happen when executive is involved
  - executive would not be able to sit on the committee then – conflict of interest
  - Who sits on the university committee?
  - We are not sure
  - This committee will be keeping all records – graduate students helping graduate students and this will be passed to the university as necessary
  - GSA president sits on the university ethics committee
  - if documents are made and these are then used in another body, this may not be appropriate

- This motion is just to strike a committee, not for the specifics yet – these discussions can be made at the point, if you have an interest, join the committee
- Vote: passed
- **MOTION to strike a committee to examine the feasibility of establishing a monthly or semesterly visitation from puppies, kittens, small dogs, and cats so that graduate students may benefit from spending time with animals.**
- David, Cody
  - other universities have established something similar (bringing in a puppy room)
  - will this cost anything?
  - will have to be investigated by the committee
  - Is this committee intending to include family of students, or just students?
  - This is up to the committee to decide
- Vote: yes

## 17.0 Questions and Answers

- 6:55, meeting should end at 7, can vote to extend by 30 minutes at 7
- Q: Who's idea was the U-PASS
  - At a course council meeting, a petition with substantial names that asked for a referendum
  - At this point, after committee was struck, the referendum was held asking for a vote, referendum was passed
- Q: Were there alternatives discussed about this, considering the cost? At other some universities, we should look at other alternatives since the University has a \$40 million deficit – should use this money to do other things for students such as providing computers or help departments
- **Motion to extend meeting:** Fred, Josie
- Passed
  - Continued: Josie addressed
  - Don't understand what the university deficit has to do with this question
  - Referendum was voted by an overwhelming number of students
  - It is fraudulent for the GSA to collect money to use for other purposes
- Q: Asked for numbers from referendum:
  - Provided
- Point of order: Chair should limit questions 1 per person at the mic and limit the time
  - 2 minutes to ask and 2 minutes to answer
- Q: Democracies have constitutions, which has the right to protect the right/preferences of the minority. The question at the referendum cannot be harmful to the minority. Were injurious consequences to minority looked into?
  - A no votes just says no, not the circumstances of student
  - The constitution says that we cannot harm students, students were provided with the opportunity to provided input
  - It is unconstitutional to question a referendum after 72 hours
  - This information was presented to course council
  - What actions can be taken as part of the minority

- Students should take action at the next referendum on this issue as long as constitution is followed
- Q: Asked the Chair to present the report from IT regarding how many people did not receive the information regarding the referendum. Why was this not investigated
  - There were errors in rebuilding the directory that IT was not aware of this until voting has started, as a result the voting time was extended
  - Voting results from previous elections:
  - We do not know how many students did not have the voting tab
  - Results of surveys/overview of the original survey was released to course council but not individuals to protect privacy
- Q: UPASS issue may have generate a lot of anger and emotions, thanked the chair, councilors and executives
- Q: Referendum should only be used in specific circumstances, if not everyone does not benefit, it shouldn't be held. The GSA should ensure that those who are harm are identified and asked to come forward
- Point of information: UPASS information was available on the website and course councillors were asked to bring this information back to their departments/faculties to ensure that as many students were made aware as possible as well as to ask for feedback
- Q: The referendum is a done deal, some people are not satisfied with the results – felt deceived as the day approached the voting day. Was told that people had said there were more opt-out options. Does not think that everyone was well informed. Why was a deal made that did not satisfy everyone.
  - Sadden that if anyone had provided any misinformation, all official GSA documents had disclosed the full information
  - Unfortunately it is not possible to represent all interests in any policies
- Q: Proxy voting was cancelled, did students take into account students that are not able to attend this meeting due to this exams, etc. Cannot solve the problem of the majority by putting the problem on the minority. Maquan park should be considered part of this campus.
- Q: for VP finance and president. 2 years ago, they had planned to change fees. 90% voted no. If GSA wants to help students, GSA should go outside to find the resources to do so. If we are in good financial shape, what are the plans for the increased GSA fees?
  - Not all graduate students are hurting. We do not have lawyers present to discuss the legalities.
  - If there is dire financial circumstances, please apply for the bursaries
  - We are trying to improve the services we provide
  - President has said that increase in graduate student funding is a priority
- Q: GSA website says that 1500 students asked for the UPASS but only about 500 students voted in the referendum. Was it mentioned that the UPASS is mandatory? Do we know how many students live in McEwan part or on campus or near campus? – about 700 students living in these buildings
- Motion to extend for an extra 30 minutes
- Gareth, Matt
- Passed

- This is an assumption that students in resident do not want the UPASS
  - We want to hear from the students and hear the feedback, this should not be confrontational and presenting the picture that the GSA is an opponent
- Q: Other universities have passed a similar UPASS, it does not have to be used just for school, can be used for other purposes. About the policies and 2/3 majority
  - Course council has the right to determine the percentage to bind the referendum
- Q: What percentage of students should come out for a referendum to pass, it should be 50% of graduate students to vote. This is the same as for elections, what percentage of students are needed to participate?
  - 8% is a requirement
  - Election turnout was over 25%, the highest for GSA
- Q: voted against the upass but more students voted for so, that must be followed. This is only a 1 year term, there is an opportunity to reconsider this in a year's time.
  - Yes
  - If you would like to run a NO campaign, then it is doable just as there is a YES campaign but only during a referendum process
- Q: Do students need the UPASS in the summer? It is expensive for students. International students may not have the same resources as Canadian students. Didn't see any information that the UPASS would be mandatory
  - Regularly attending course councillor finds that this is a contentious issue
  - Should have made it clearer that it was not opt-in but an opt-out process
  - Undergraduates have a summer UPASS
  - Graduate students currently have no representation on the board of governors
  - The U in Upass is universal, and it was mentioned that it was mandatory
- Q: The UPASS shouldn't be such as huge students and students should not have to be responsible for paying so much
- Q: If people are not satisfied with the result or how to vote, what should they do, should they go to court?
  - Yes, if you feel that you would like to hire a lawyer then yes
  - If we go against the referendum, then we would also risk going through court
  - A democratic process was followed, students are encouraged to run a NO campaign at the next referendum
- Q: Not able to vote, if could, would have voted no. Some people did not know that it was mandatory
- Q: Question did not ask if students want a UPASS. For students that can opt-out should not have a voice.
- Q: Be careful because transit is looking for money.
- Q: Nothing in the constitution that does not say anything about having the referendum in a year. Does a motion have to be made to ask for an opt-out for maquen park?
  - Meetings with council were held by VP Students Affair personally to see if something could be done to improve the terms
- Q: How do you define the University areas? How far would you draw the lines?
  - Questions presented here were taken to the city



- Q: Is GSA here to facilitate graduate students' lives? ??Have other issues of students been looked at?
  - Yes
  - GSA executives would love to improve the GSA relationship with graduate students
  - We have received many feedbacks and notes are being taken

**18.0 Adjournment**

- **Sarah, David**

Motion details:

Motion 16.3:

WHEREAS the GSA has no procedure or entity to establish and uphold disciplinary procedures

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the GSA Council strike a Code of Ethics Committee to draft a Code of Ethics and Disciplinary Procedures to be added to the Policy Manual.

BE IT FUTHER RESOLVED THAT the Code of Ethics and Disciplinary Procedures *drafts* be circulated to Course Councillors by email for Council feedback, and then be presented to the Executive for preliminary approval, and should take effect immediately after approval. The Code of Ethics and Disciplinary Procedures must be presented to the GSA Council in September and may be reviewed and revised as a Policy under the Constitution.

Motion 16.4:

WHEREAS the GSA is dedicated to ensuring graduate students have access to quality services that support their academic success,

WHEREAS graduate students often experience an extreme level of stress which can affect both personal health and academic performance,

WHEREAS spending time around animals has been shown to decrease levels stress and groups at Dalhousie University and the University of Alberta have successfully implemented 'puppy rooms' to help students cope with stress.

BE IT RESOLVED that the GSA strike a committee to examine the feasibility of establishing a monthly or semesterly visitation from puppies, kittens, small dogs, and cats so that graduate students may benefit from spending time with animals.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that said committee report its findings to Course Council in September or October of 2013.