

Graduate Students' Association Annual General Meeting Minutes



University of Saskatchewan
Thursday, April 17th, 2014
5:00 P.M - 7:00 P.M
GSA Commons

Executives:

President, Ehimai Ohiozebau
VP Operations and Communications, Kiri Staples
VP Finance, Mohammad Rafati
VP External, Steve Jimbo
VP Academic, Izabela Vlahu

Regrets:

VP Student Affairs, Reanne Ridsdale
Aboriginal Liaison, Dana Carriere

1.0 Call to Order – 5:08PM

2.0 Approval of Agenda

- The order of items 4 and 5 were switched
- Motion 10.1 – The Chair rules this out of order. The motion to ratify elections does not appear in the Constitution or in the Policies. This body does not have the ability to rule an election valid or not – the CEO has ruled the election complete and valid. This item is stricken from the agenda.
- Question period will be added after New Business. It will last for 15 minutes.

Motion 1 - to approve the agenda

Motioned by Kari, seconded by Ashton

Motion passes

3.0 Presentation by iTracks – qualitative research tool

- Qualitative research tool we are offering to graduate students – online tool for discussion groups

- Run through of mock discussion group
- Question: what about symbols that disciplines like chemistry might use?
 - Those symbols won't appear in the drop-down list of users, but you can copy and paste symbols
- Question: Can you mask names between participants?
 - Yes – you can assign them names that are not their owns

4.0 Presentation by Chassidy Puchala – graduate student recruitment

- Currently collecting data for research
- Looking into how individuals transition from adolescence to adulthood – particularly how populations who haven't typically been included (i.e. graduate students) experiences this transition
- Having difficulties finding graduate students between ages 18-15 – if you, or someone you know, in that age range is interested, please let me know
- Participants are eligible for a draw of four gift certificates

5.0 Motion to approve previous AGM Minutes

Motion 2 - to approve last AGM minutes

Motioned by Phillip, seconded by Cinnati

Discussion

- Not appropriate to approve minutes without them have being circulated
- The AGM meeting minutes have been online for over a year – students have had the chance to read them
- They were also sent out at a previous Council meeting

6 abstentions

Motion passes

6.0 Ratification of new Academic Councils

No new academic councils

7.0 Ratification of new Academic Representatives

No new academic representatives

8.0 Ratification of new Social Groups

No new social groups

9.0 Executive Annual Reports

9.1 VP Student Affairs Report (See attached report)

9.2 VP Operations and Communications Report (See attached report)

- In addition to report – working on CGSR application for funding, as well as transition for new executive

9.3 VP Academics Report (See attached report)

- Helped students seeking advocacy
- Still want to have Ombudsperson office – often don't have enough information, so we hope this year we will move closer to that
- Organized graduate student conference
- TransformUS – discussions around this initiative, spoke at General Academic Assembly about tuition increases
- Attended Indigenous Voices retreat
- Also teamed with Career Centre for Industry Talks

9.4 VP Finance Report (See attached report)

- If you have questions about the report, don't hesitate to ask
- Had difficulty getting things organized when I first arrived in the position, because it had been vacant for two months
- Auditing project continues
- UPASS payment to City
- Met with studentcare.net regarding Health and Dental to sign agreement for next year

9.5 Aboriginal Liaison Report (See attached report)

9.6 VP External Report (See attached report)

- Want to thank everyone for their time and involvement in the GSA
- Graduate Retention Program – encourage everyone to apply

9.7 Presidents' report (See attached report)

- Thank you for the wonderful times over the past several years
- There is no one size fits all approach for graduate students – encourage the next Executive to take this into consideration

- What is the role of the GSA? Is it to fight the administration or work for our members? I think it is to work for our members.
- I hope that the next executive will continue from where we stopped – the only way we can be successful is for you to participate with them, so please support them

9.8 Questions regarding Executive Reports

- Question: If the tax return wasn't filed since 2010, what action has been taken by the previous executives?
 - In 2010, we received two cheques, but the third cheque wasn't available in April – this is a busy time with the transition between executives
 - The University said the cheque wasn't picked up so they cancelled it
 - I need to follow up and see what happened
 - For the second cheque we received this year, the University made a mistake
 - There are some things I feel I should bring to the Administration, but I'm not the finance person for the University – we need to work with the University to make sure these
 - There was no intention by the previous VP Finance to not file the necessary documents – documents were filed based on the information we had
 - Previous VP Finance didn't think we had to file because of our low income
- Question – In your report you mentioned you signed the contract for the auditor in February – but it has to be approved at this meeting. Am I missing something, or else this is illegal.
 - Signing the agreement with the auditor was done in December after budget was approved in November – if you look at the minutes from the previous year, the auditor was the same as was approved by Council in 2012

- Follow-up: Non-profit corporation act states it has to be approved every year at the AGM – this is potentially very serious and need to figure out how to fix this
- Our understanding is that the GSA Constitution gives the Council the power to approve the auditor, which we followed – it doesn't supersede the Non-profit corporations act, so going forward the next executive should fix this
- Question: In your negotiations with the CGSR was there any comment on how our funding might be affected by TransformUS?
 - Just started looking at application, so I can't comment on what happened last year with the previous VP Operations
 - CGSR approves budget in early May, so we need to submit for end of April
 - Their budget is only for one year, so they can approve what they can
- Question: in the finance report, under UPASS administration, there was no income, but there was expenses. Why didn't we make any money?
 - For the UPASS in the current year, when we approved the final cost, we didn't consider that administration fee (e.g. for staff)
 - In the current year – GSA used part of the reserve fund to cover the expenses for staff or materials for the UPASS. For the next year we considered the \$3 administration fee – this is what is referred to in the report.
 - Follow-up: In 2014-2015 it's budgeted to spend \$11,000 on UPASS, whereas we previously spent \$15,000. Are we expecting it to cost less?
 - If we consider the number of students and the cost per student, we should reduce our expenses of the implementation (e.g. reducing hours of staff) – we shouldn't use reserves in the future, we should only use money from the fee we charge

- As long as a referendum passes, it becomes part of the GSA services - if today we pass the budget, it means GSA would have to fine \$5000 from operating budget to help cover expenses
- UPASS staff calculated expenses for next year – because this was the first year for the service, there were more hours required to figure out what the most efficient way to implement it was. It follows that the subsequent years will be less expensive.
- Question: We have \$34,000 cheque – where is the money if it hasn't been deposited? Would it be possible to release information for the auditor that we signed with? When is the deadline for the auditing?
 - The \$34,000 was deposited into our account for our surplus – it is up to Council to decide what they want to do that?
 - Yes we can release that information, but I'm not sure if we can put it on our website. The name is Ross Breen Associates.
 - End of January was the deadline, but they found information was missing so it has taken longer – I provided this information
 - Yesterday they sent me more questions that requires different information and I tried to send them to previous executives because the questions are related to 2010-2011
 - It's not something I can say they will finish it at the end of the month, but I am hoping it will be done in May
 - We need to do this audit as soon as possible – CRA understands we are a student organization and have a challenge of institutional memory, but we don't want to take advantage of that

10.0 New Business

10.1 Motion 3 - to approve the GSA 2014-2015 budget (included in VP Finance Report)

WHEREAS the GSA Budget Committee has agreed on a budget for the 2014-2015 GSA fiscal year;

WHEREAS the GSA Council has to approve the budget at least one month before the AGM;

WHEREAS the AGM is scheduled for Thursday April 17th;

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the GSA Council approve the 2014-2015 budget as recommended by the Budget Committee.

Motioned by Moh, seconded by David

Discussion

- Wording of the motion suggests it's for the GSA Council, not an AGM, I don't know if it's in order
- Friendly Amendment: WHEREAS the GSA Council has approved budget at least one month before the AGM;
- Friendly Amendment: BE IT RESOLVED THAT the GSA approves the 2014-2015 budget as recommended by the Budget Committee and approved by GSA Council.

Motion passes

10.2 Motion 4 - the formation of a Graduate Student Housing Committee

WHEREAS the Graduate Students Association has a responsibility to represent the concerns of graduate students to the University;

And WHEREAS the graduate student body has expressed concerns about the housing situation in the city;

And WHEREAS centralized student services provide a stronger position for student concerns to be raised

BE IT RESOLVED that the Graduate Students Association VP Student Affairs strike a committee to investigate the on and off-campus housing situation of graduate students regarding cost, availability and amenities;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the findings of the committee be prepared for presentation to the University administration;

And BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the committee actively solicit membership from graduate students that reside in on-campus housing.

Motioned by Sarah, seconded by Dan

- VP Student Affairs deals with housing issues on a case by case basis – we feel having a committee would help with transparency and advocacy, as well as involve more students

Discussion

- Think if the VP Student Affairs wants to recruit volunteers, that's fine, but splitting responsibility seems unproductive
- The committee would be chaired by the VP Student Affairs
- Off-campus housing refers to housing not operated by university
- The intent of the organization of this committee – many international students have very necessary housing needs. I want to understand more of the motive of this committee, as to how available this committee will be – will it be ongoing or a one-time deal?
- The scope of the committee would be up to the committee – the definition of who would be on it isn't on this motion, which means at this point anyone can be on it. The motion is simply to say we want to strike this committee.
- What is the exact intent of this committee?
- The intent would be to have more students among the student population to spread awareness that we can advocate for students on housing issues – we can take members of this committee to the housing office. It will give put the weight of the students behind the VP Student Affairs in negotiating.
- Just to clarify – is it to help facilitate students getting into housing, or is it also advocacy for more affordable housing? Is it more service or advocacy oriented?
- The purpose is advocacy
- As a graduate students I've heard a lot of anecdotal evidence about housing issues, such as grad house – I thought it would be good for the GSA to take stock of the housing issues on campus and what we can do to make recommendations, whether it's rent, conditions, etc. – so the association knows the issue in order to advocate
- Already we are paying too much for our residences – is the structure of a new committee going to make us pay more and increase bureaucracy within the GSA?
- No, this would not result in further expense to housing for students

- The administration respects us more when we have numbers – it's a win/win situation
- My only concern with the motion as phrased is for the committee to have an advocacy role – it's important to emphasize that it's to have an advocacy role within the University, because this committee would struggle to advocate within the City
- Point of information – purpose is to investigate on and off-campus housing

Quorum is lost

Motion 4 - to extend meeting by 30 minutes

Motioned by Cinnatti, Samir

Motion passes

- Friendly Amendment: BE IT RESOLVED that the Graduate Students Association VP Student Affairs strike **and chair** a committee to investigate the on and off-campus housing situation of graduate students regarding cost, availability and amenities

Motion passes

11.0 Question period

- Comment: I expect that we should have statement of accounts rather than budget. I think the Constitution should state this, and that it should be presented at the AGM so we don't have problems where we can't trace issues. President commented on changes over the years and that there was agitation over the fee increases. This is because there is limited engagement between the GSA and the student body. During TransformUS GSA wasn't involved in getting in touch with their membership and that didn't occur. I see that on the GSA Executive we have a representative of the AIGSC and international students represented. I think international students need a representative to speak to their issues, because they face very large fees.
 - When we finish comprehensive audit, after each year we can present auditing information as a part of the AGM so that students have this information. But first we need to complete the

- Information wasn't available to information because of confidentiality clause that we signed.
- Follow-up: I think that if the GSA had gotten in touch with the student body when negotiating this clause, they would appreciate this. University tried to get in touch with all students, but the GSA didn't do this. That was huge for me. If these issues are coming up, we need support and input from the student body to arrive at a GSA decision within TransformUS.
- I agree that not all students were contacted, but back in February councillors were contacted to participate in a round table on TransformUS, and they were invited to inform their constituents. This should have gone to all students through CGSR, but we ran out of time.
- Question: There was a case where a graduate student was arrested - I would like to know what VP Student Affairs did to get involved in this issue.
 - As much as possible we try and represent our members – usually we are contacted and try and get necessary information, but in this case we didn't know. We have to let the law take its course when we don't know about the issue.
 - An email was sent to the whole University on the issue – based on the accusation, the student was barred from the campus, but the charges were dropped.
 - We try to advocate on behalf of students when they complain to us – but if the next Executive wants to do this, that's up to them. I suggest that they only take up issues where they know all the facts.
 - The decision of the University is out – it has been withdrawn. But the individual has been vilified – his photo and name circulated. Why has the GSA not demanded an apology?
 - Executives are here as elected issues, but we are here on a voluntary basis – for me to serve, students have to come to me, but I can't go out and see who is causing trouble.

- Executives advocate on all students' behalf
- Perhaps the next Executive could ask for an apology, but they need to make sure they have all the facts. We can't cry wolf because no one will listen.
- I think we do need to speak to the individual in question to find out what the student actually wants – but I strongly believe that the GSA is here to represent its membership, and this student is a member. We need to take this seriously, but we should see what the student wants.
- I appreciate the discussion on this and welcome anyone to come forward to the new executive
- Question: Would like to call to attention an issue that a previous speaker pointed out that wasn't addressed – why isn't there an international student committee?
 - Three years ago, I asked the then-President the same question. She responded that more than half of the current executive is made up of international students. I didn't see the need for it then, and I don't know.
 - For information, the VP Academic sat on the International Issues Committee – we advocate for international issues to be addressed throughout the year
 - We always address international issues and recognize that there are different challenges faced by international students because many of us are international students.
 - There is a flaw in that logic because Executives aren't representative of all international students – they have to discuss all of the issues, whereas a committee would focus on international issues. We need someone who is going to present to the Council specifically on international issues.
 - Our reports don't include everything we have done. Each time we talk about funding we raise issue of differential fee between domestic and international students. It's a big chunk of the work we don on a daily

basis. Over 90% of the student issues that come to the VP Academic are from international students. I would say it's not small enough to be separate, because all of our issues have to do with international issues.

- We could also include in policy review that one of the VP positions looks specifically into international student issues. If the majority of members thinks that's the right thing to do, it can be pursued.

12.0 Announcements

- Results of last election was circulated to students
- Message from the Chair – I think there are several issues that have been raised that need to be resolved in a policy review so that all graduate students can understand what happens within this body.
- Message from the President – thank you to everyone here. I plan on going back to Nigeria and join the political movement there – I am letting you know because if anything happens to me, I want to have international support.
- International Workers Day rally – May 1st at 6PM in Rotary Park
- Reminder – GSA Council meetings are open to all graduate students if you have issues
- Congratulations to all new executives and thank you to previous executives

13.0 Next GSA Council Meeting: To be determined

14.0 Adjournment – 7:17PM

Motion 5 - to adjourn

Motioned by David

Executive Annual Reports

GSA Annual General Meeting – April 17th, 2014

VP Student Affairs Report

Dear Various Members of the University of Saskatchewan, GSA and Graduate Students,

First, I would like to express my many thanks to this opportunity that was given to me. I want to acknowledge that this University is situated on Treaty 6 Territory. This land has been very gracious to me in my opportunity to live, learn and grow as a Saskatchewan Woman.

This year has been fundamental to the growth of GSA, we have seen many GSA Firsts! We have been on more committees, and are more present within the university community. I sat on two committees, the Childcare Expansion project and the Student Forum. Both have given me great joy to participate in these conversations. I was very pleased to provide feedback on the Vision 2025 document, as well I was extremely pleased when my feedback was adopted!

The GSA has worked with the USSU in many occasions. Such as supporting the USSU and their campaign for Tuition Waiver Program Support (passed without debate and unanimously). Nour, Sarah Purdy, and I co-authored a letter urging the continuation of the Childcare Expansion Project. The GSA executives also supported a letter I drafted supporting the change of University's policy to include gender diversity and Two-Spirited identity. The Board of Governors accepted this change on March 18th, making us one of the first Canadian Universities to include such empowering policy. Alternatively, the USSU has supported the GSA in our campaign to include Graduate students in the Graduate Retention Program with the Government of Saskatchewan.

This year also saw the opening of the Graduate House, which at times was very trying for students and Residences alike. This gave an opportunity for the GSA and Residences to work together to sort out our differences in a respectful and mutually beneficial way. Two students were helped tremendously by George Foufas. Due to the working relationship we gained, Residence has given other students the same treatment in the willingness to work things out quickly and efficiently without GSA's presences.

This year also was the first year that the GSA was able to use the Bowl for our orientation. We had the privilege of His Worship, The Mayor Don Atchinson to welcome our students. The orientation was a great success, the line ups for free food were incredibly long, which indicated students love free food! Next year will we incorporate more BBQs to serve the 3000 students' and their families faster. We had booths that explored the various services around Saskatoon, such as the Police Services and the City of Saskatoon newcomer's information Center. We also had child friendly booths, face painting and Let's Talk Science. Hopefully next year the event

can be bigger and better! This event would have not been possible without the support of Dr. Dave Hannah, Merv Dahl, FMD, and the USSU.

Another first for GSA history, (and perhaps the biggest) is the adoption of a Universal Transit Pass. The one year trial period was voted in Feb 2013. We quickly implemented it for September 2013. This was not always a smooth process. There was many aspects that needed to be worked out, like the coding of classes within the various departments. Having IT build us a program to see students eligible, and then fixing the program to better suit our needs (Graduate students certainly are a difficult bunch). It was absolutely wonderful to have two staff members, Allison Pichee and Josie Steeves. It would have not been possible for all the work that Ray Rabu and Jim Denton from IT Services, Carol Lockhart and Jason Doell whose guidance has been fantastic. Of course, none of this wouldn't have happened without the support and collaboration with the City of Saskatoon Transit, Mike Mollenbeck, Karen Fisher and Bev Stanley. A thanks also goes to Poonam Rana for directing lost Graduate Students to the GSA Commons.

This February the Graduate students voted to permanently adopt Universal transit pass. I will work closely with the next VP Student Affairs to ensure a smooth transition. The Upass has been very trying for all of members associated with it. Our many thanks to the students for their understanding, and for the University Administration, IT services and CGSR for helping us and never losing faith.

Lastly, I was very blessed to be part of the first ever Indigenous Voices Young Leaders Retreat that happened on April 5, 2014. The Indigenous Voices Program that is being led by Sylvia McAdam (Saysewahum) and Colleen Charles is incredible. This program is very unique and should be adopted throughout campus. As our province and University grow, so should the opportunity for the Indigenous voices to be heard. I want to express my deepest thanks for this opportunity that Sylvia, Colleen, and Tereigh gave me this weekend. I hope that this program continues into the future, growing bigger and brighter.

Our university has a wonderful opportunity to become world leaders in education, inclusive of gender expression equality, and of Indigenous education. With the leadership and vision of the University, I believe it will be achieved.

It has been a wonderful year of learning and I am very thankful for this opportunity to serve my fellow Graduate students.

Best of luck to the next Executives!

Sincere Regards,
Reanne Ridsdale

VP Operations and Communications Report

Although I arrived in the position of VP Operations and Communications late in the first semester, it has been a pleasure working with the GSA and getting to know everyone involved. It has been a busy year, and a steep learning curve. I am extremely thankful for having worked alongside such a supportive Executive and staff.

Communications

One of the first items I was tasked with in this position was the launch of the new GSA website. Not only is the new interface now in line with the rest of the University, but it is also easier to navigate. We have used the new website as a tool to share information on graduate student-run events and pictures from GSA events, such as the fall orientation BBQ, wine and cheese, and gala.

In January I wrote and distributed a GSA newsletter, which I hope to become a regular part of the GSA's communication strategy. Not only did this newsletter provide information on the GSA's services, such as the UPASS, but it also offered basic information on what the GSA does.

In the second term, I focused on improving the GSA's social media representation. Our Facebook group has grown in popularity since then, and I believe it will continue to be a central aspect of reaching the graduate student population.

Two major GSA events – the UPASS referendum and the Executive elections – required a significant amount of outreach to ensure students were able to make informed decisions. In order to do so, I worked with the GSA President to create a communications strategy for both events. This strategy included TV ads around the campus, posters, contacting media, e-mails, PAWS announcements, and social media announcements.

GSA Commons

The GSA Commons is a central space for students to gather and for the Saskatoon community to hold events. We continue to hear positive feedback from those who use the space and acknowledge that we are lucky to operate in such a unique and beautiful location. One of the biggest changes in the Commons was the installment of a vending machine, an accomplishment that was organized by the previous VP Operations and Communications. While we continue to offer free coffee and tea service to those who visit the Commons, we hope that the vending machine will further encourage students to spend time in the space.

GSA Bursary

I oversaw two rounds of bursary selection; one in the fall term and one in the winter term. During each round of applications, there were over 60 students who applied. Thanks to the help of a number of dedicated volunteers, we were able to award 30 students (15 per term) a bursary of \$1000 each. We have updated the application and selection forms for the bursary, and will

continue to get feedback from committee members and applicants as to how we can further improve these processes. The bursary is based on financial need, and the volume of applications speaks to the financial stress that many graduate students face. In light of this, I have recommended that the GSA look to increase this fund in the future, if at all possible.

Meetings and Events

Over the course of the year, I represented the GSA at a number of meetings and events, including:

- GSA Graduate Student Awards Gala
- GSA Conference
- University Council – presented updates from the GSA at monthly University Council meetings
- Various GSA social events (e.g. Halloween party, winter term party)
- University of Saskatchewan Copyright Committee

Staff

The GSA has been extremely fortunate to have hired an incredibly hard-working and dedicated staff. I am personally indebted to the GSA Administrator and Commons Coordinators for their patience during the transition from the previous VP Operations. During the second term we expanded our contract position staff to include two minute-takers. These positions were extremely helpful in supporting the various committees of the GSA.

Transition

The transition period between Executives can be a challenging time. As with any student-run organization, institutional memory can be difficult to maintain. In order to facilitate a smooth changeover in the position of VP Operations and Communications, I am working to create a handbook for my successor that provides some direction on what has been done and what may still need to be done in the future to maintain an efficiently operating GSA.

VP Academics Report

Academic Advocacy

Throughout the year I assisted about 40 graduate students with academic challenges. Some of the issues brought forward had to do with: gender discrimination, racial discrimination, abuse of power on behalf of the supervisors, failure to comply with the guidelines for fair and valid assessment, failure to comply with departmental policies, inappropriate student supervisor relationships, failure on part of the supervisor to adequately refer to the research done by the student, unjustified loss of funding, office space and others. In all cases brought forward to the GSA, the students were the complainants. In comparison to the previous year, we saw a 300% increase in students coming to the GSA and asking for academic advocacy. I am happy to report that we were able to resolve some of the cases to the benefit of the students, but in other cases the limitations of the resources of the GSA played to the benefit of the faculty and academic units the students were complaining against. To ensure that students feel safe and bring forward all serious forms of Academic Misconduct, the University needs to provide an advocate for students at arms length from the University Administration and Faculty. The GSA remains firm on the position that the University of Saskatchewan needs to establish an Ombuds Person's Office as soon as possible.

GSA Conference

This year's Graduate Research Conference Curiosity was organized on the 6th, 7th and 8th of March. We were able to organize the conference with the generous support from the President's Fund and the College of Graduate Studies and research. The conference was organized with the intention to bring together graduate students from as many diverse programs as possible. We had over 70 student presentations, about 10 faculty speakers and over 200 participants, from a number of different departments. The conference gave an opportunity to all student participants to deliver a presentation that was appealing to a very general audience and made them the experts in the room as they were presenting in an interdisciplinary setting. Many of the students who participated in the conference, reported that they found the experience very valuable both academically and socially and expressed their hope to see this conference repeated annually. In addition to bringing presenters together, the conference connected a number of volunteers whose help was instrumental in the success of the conference.

TransformUS

As the Vice President Academic of the GSA I had an opportunity to give feedback as the graduate student representative on the four committees of council I sit on. In addition to that, I tried to be proactive in seeking feedback from the student community and organized a round table discussion on TransformUS in early February. As I previously noted in my February report, the graduate students present at the round table discussion raised a series of concerns regarding the TransformUS process. Some of the concerns raised include: the source of deficit - it was not clear to the students what exactly was the source of the deficit, the failure to define the priorities

of the university that were meant to guide the work of the task forces, the inconsistencies in the justification behind the placement of programs in certain quintiles, the failure of the Dickeson model to capture the interconnections of the academic programs, the likely damage on the reputation of the institution, the likely negative effects on future student enrollments. In addition, the students were not convinced that the approach would save the institution money in the long run as the fifth quintile consists of very inexpensive programs, namely 20% of the programs are given 3% of the budget, while the first quintile consists of 3% of the programs receiving 20% of the operating budget. It didn't seem reasonable to increase the financial support of few very expensive programs and as a result eliminate many inexpensive programs which significantly contribute to the diversity and reputation of our university.

Indigenous Voices - Young Leaders Retreat

As a young leader I was privileged to participate in the Young Leaders Retreat and learn about Indigenous history and culture. I also learned a lot about colonialism and the discrimination that is present in our everyday lives. The retreat opened my eyes to many issues that were more or less invisible to me. I gained appreciation for the Aboriginal ways of knowing and I wish I would had experienced the retreat much earlier. I feel that the University of Saskatchewan needs to work to expose new students, and in particular new international students, to aboriginal ways of knowing and aboriginal history at orientation. That will be very beneficial to the Indigenization and Internationalization of the Institution. Also it will help prevent any misconceptions and barriers related to Aboriginal Culture that new International Students are brought into just few weeks upon arrival. To sum up, I would love to see a program such as the Young Leaders Retreat offered to all new students as part of their orientation, as that will help to greatly decrease the discrimination on campus.

VP Finance Report

The GSA Business budget is enclosed. The GSA also operates the Health and Dental fund, Saskatoon transit, and as well as the CFS Membership dues. However, because the GSA acts only as an intermediary for these accounts (we collect the money, and then hold on to it until we are billed by the appropriate agency), the GSA is unable to spend excess money in these accounts on anything that does not pertain to their nature, these budgets will not be reported here. I can provide details on these accounts upon request.

GSA business Budget 2014/2015 - Revenues

Revenues	2014-2015 (budgeted)	2013-2014 (budgeted)	2013-2014 Actual (est.)
GSA Fees	\$189,953	\$186,000	\$182,947
Commons Booking	\$4,500	\$3,500	\$6,130
GSA Handbook Ad Sales	\$1,500	NA	NA
CFS Handbook Ad Sales	NA	\$2,000	\$713
GSA conference Ad Sales	NA	\$1,000	\$0
Orientation Contributions	\$1,500	\$1,500	\$3,055
CGSR Bursary Contribution	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$20,000
Upass administration	\$10,000	\$0	\$0
Total Revenue	\$227,453	\$214,000	\$212,844

NA=Not Applicable

- GSA fee is the same as 2013/2014 year. However, the budget committee estimated 1.5% plus postdoc buy-ins (\$350) increase in student population in 2014/2015 (based on the 2013/14 year budget) to calculate current GSA Fee revenues in the budget.
- The revenue from the booking was more than what was estimated. Therefore, this item increased in revenue.
- GSA does not use CFS handbooks anymore. It is replaced by GSA handbooks.
- Revenue from the conference ad sales was \$0 in the past two years and in this year it is removed from the revenue.
- GSA allocates \$20,000 for need based bursary and CGSR matches our contribution to student need bursaries. We will award 40 \$1000 bursaries (likely 10 in summer term, 15 in fall term, 15 in winter term, but this is left to the discretion of the executives).
- The U-pass GSA administration comes from \$3 administration fee embedded in U-Pass fee with consideration of 1% deduction by university for their financial services. The estimated number of U-Pass is 2600 students.

GSA business Budget 2014/2015 - Expenses

	Expenses	2014-2015 (budgeted)	2013-2014 (budgeted)	2013-2014 Actual (est.)
1	Office staff Salary	\$70,000	\$70,000	\$67,729

2	President Stipend	\$6,397	\$6,397*	\$6,397
3	Executive Stipend	\$33,265	\$33,265*	\$33,265
4	Academic Council Funding	\$10,000	\$8,000	\$8,219
5	Annual Audit	\$1,500	\$1,500	\$0
6	Bank Charges	\$350	\$300	\$284
7	GSA Handbook Printing	\$6,000	\$2,000	\$7,518
8	Commons Insurance	\$5,000	\$3,500	\$3,691
9	Commons Renewal and Repairs (Equipment)	\$1,000	\$6,500	\$6,429
10	Executive travel fund	\$3,000	\$5,000	\$5,173
11	Entertainment/Refreshments	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$2,422
12	Executive Discretionary Fund	\$3,000	\$3,500	\$3,129
13	Grad Student Club Funding	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$4,930
14	GSA (CGSR) Need-Based Bursary	\$40,000	\$40,000	\$40,000
15	GSA Awards Gala	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$6500
16	GSA Conference	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000
17	GSA Fall and winter Orientation BBQ	\$7,500	\$7,000	\$7,406
18	Office Supplies & Operating Costs	\$6,000	\$6,000	\$6,055
19	U of S Student Travel Award Contribution	\$6,000	\$6,000	\$6,000
20	Upass administrations	\$10,940	\$0	\$15,000
	Total Expenses	\$227,453	\$216,463	\$235,148

*At **March 2013** council meeting a motion was passed to increase the GSA executive honorarium by 6.2%. This increase was not considered in the projected budget for 2013/14 in the last year AGM report. This is the reason that this report shows a different total expenses than what is available on the GSA website for 2013/14.

Highlights for the expenses:

- **1-3:** GSA student fee stays the same as this year. Increase in GSA business (such as U-Pass, commons bookings and GSA conference, and meetings) requires more working hours for the GSA staff. Due to limited budget, no extra money was found to increase the expenses for GSA staff. This gives less flexibility to the GSA to increase the working hours for the coordinators.
- **4:** The academic council money covers expenses for election materials, referendum, as well as funding for ratified academic council. During last year more academic councils attended the GSA meetings, thus, the budget for this item increased.
- **5:** Based on the information presented to VP Finance, annual audit for GSA is approximately three times higher than what was projected in the GSA budget previous years. We kept the value similar to previous year. However, it is recommended to allocate part of the GSA reserve fund for annual audit.

- **6:** Bank charges is expected to increase due to increase in using bank services such as issuing certified cheques (for GSA events) as well as the possibility of installing a debit machine in the office.
- **7:** The main reason for printing cost is the U-Pass and promotional materials. The actual value was much higher than projected in 2013/14 budget. Due to limited budget in 2014/15 we could allocate up to \$6000 for this purpose.
- **8:** Commons insurance depends on value of common's equipment, and the GSA ratified groups using the commons. Due to increase in the number of these groups, as well as plan to improve audio and visual equipment, the budget for the insurance has increased.
- **9:** The budget for the last year was used for designing and maintenance of the new GSA website. We do not anticipate any specific costs, but it is better to budget for it in case. For large infrastructure costs, such as furniture, audio-visual equipment or wheel-chair lift repairs, it is recommended to send a motion to council with a detail estimated cost to use reserved fund.
- **10:** This item covers the external conferences such as regional, national, and international conferences at which the executives represent the GSA. Due to limited GSA budget, funding for this items was reduced. It is recommended for the executives to negotiate with university to fund some of travel costs for these conferences.
- **11:** The refreshments budget stays the same to allow food to be served at every council and committee meeting.
- **12:** The Executive Discretionary Fund is for small purchases that are deemed necessary by the Executive but are not budgeted for. The Executive must unanimously agree on these expenses, but no more than \$500.00 per month may be spent from this account.
- **13:** Last year (2013/2014) all the funding for GSA clubs and academic councils' social activities was used. GSA could approve and fund almost all requests for social events. Therefore, the next year fund stays the same.
- **14:** It was described in the previous section
- **15:** At the time of writing this report the exact expenses and revenue for the awards gala is still not fixed due to some changes in the invoices after the event. The main reason for the difference between the projected budget and actual cost is the difference between the estimated guests number and actual ticket sale.
- **16:** The GSA conference was fully sponsored by GSA and university. Therefore, we could stay on the budget line.
- **17:** GSA orientation went over the budget by less than \$500. The main expenses were for the fall orientation. Therefore, very limited funding was available for winter orientation. Due to disorganized nature of the GSA finance during August and September (when GSA had no VP finance) it was hard to track all details of the expenses and revenues. It is recommended for the next year to leave some fund for winter orientation as well.

- **18:** The office Supplies and operating cost are combined into a single entry. Both items in this category are used for running GSA commons, and include routine office materials, such as paper or printer as well as phone and fax bills.
- **19:** The U of S Student Travel award is a University-wide fund for awarding travel bursaries. The GSA has been a long-term contributor to this fund. Since the total travel awards claimed by GSA members far exceeds our \$6 000.00 contribution, we should continue to support this fund.
- **20:** Based on the total revenue from the U-Pass fees, we defined the budget line for the U-pass administration which covers all U-Pass related expenses, such as stipend for staff who will be working on U-pass implementation as well as promotional materials.

Update on Comprehensive Audit:

GSA Auditor has completed audit of opening balances for 2011 (ie. 2010 ending balances had to be verified in order to ensure that audit opening equity is fairly presented). In addition, U of S has provided the required information with respect to the revenue collected by the U of S on behalf of the GSA for years 2010 - 2013. With this information, auditor will be able to complete the 2011 audit, and start on 2012 as well. Assuming that no issues/delays are encountered in the 2012 fiscal year, she should be able to get the audits for 2011 & 2012 completed and submit it to Breen associates for their final review in the later part of April.

Important point: During the auditing process we couldn't find the information for the one of the payment by university in 2010. After communication with financial service at U of S it turned out that a cheque valued \$33,895.48 was issued on April 30, 2010 to the GSA, but was never cashed. Therefore, the cheque was cancelled in April 2012 by university without any notice to GSA. Upon the GSA inquiry, University re-issued the cheque in March. Therefore, it means that GSA should pay more attention on its financial records.

Update on U-Pass:

The GSA sent three cheques to Saskatoon transit in April. The summary of the cheques are as follows:

\$242,917.92 (=2493x \$97.44): the GSA Upass Fee for the 2013/2014 Term 2.

\$5,359.20 : the GSA Upass Fee due to students' late registration in 2013/2014 Term 1.

\$675.00 (=45 x \$15): For lost or stolen stickers in Term 1 and 2 till March 1st 2014.

The detailed information for the U-Pass fee for term 2 is:

- 1) Number of registered GSA = 2922 members
- 2) Number of opt-outs = 429 members
- 3) Number of GSA Upass Fee assessed = 2493 members

Highlights on U-Pass:

During reviewing the financial records I noticed some conflicts between the money GSA is paying to Saskatoon transit based on the records and the Money we are receiving from university. It seems that university has paid GSA \$20000 less than what we should have received. This is the second time during the year that university is making mistake in sending its cheques to GSA, and it takes a lot of time to understand the problems. It is highly recommended for the next executive team to negotiate with university to have more efficient way on receiving accurate, updated and detailed information for the payments to GSA.

Update on the GSA reserved fund:

The Graduate Students' Association is in good financial status. We have no large outstanding debts, and a rough estimation of the GSA accounts after deducting the major expenses in the 2013/2014 budget shows \$126 000.00 surplus in its general business account. This value is calculated based on the numbers in the table below:

Item	Main checking account	Health and dental account
Bank Balance (April 7 2014)	\$510,000	\$100,227
Total remaining expenses	-\$115,000	NA
Remaining from the last university payment (CFS+GSA)	\$28,640	\$26,888
U-Pass payment	-\$260,000	NA
CFS fees	-\$30,000	NA
GSA fees	\$7,400	NA
University Credit Account	-\$15,000	NA
Estimated surplus	\$126,040	\$127,115

It is recommended to invest some part of the GSA surplus on improvement of equipment and furniture in the commons. This would bring more revenue for the GSA. Thus, students would experience better quality in commons.

Aboriginal Liaison Report

Since September, the AIGSC has hosted a total of 5 events: Meet & Greet, Miyasin Potluck, two 8th Fire screenings during Aboriginal Achievement Week, and our annual Steak Night Fundraiser. Our Steak Night Fundraiser was a success as we raised over \$1300 in funds that will support AIGSC events and activities in the 2014/2015 academic year.

Other events that AIGSC members were a part of include: Men's and Women's' Protocols for First Nations Spiritual Ceremonies; Saskatoon Aboriginal Professionals Associations networking events; Graduate Research Conference; 2nd Annual Graduate Awards Gala in which the AIGSC hosted 13 Aboriginal graduate students who are interested in becoming involved with the AIGSC, and; Indigenous Student Council Awards Ceremony in which 4 AIGSC members were nominated.

The AIGSC coordinated with the Aboriginal Student Leadership Group (ASLG) on many initiatives such as supporting the changing of the mascot and the term "Redman" at Bedford Road Collegiate, requesting that the Metis flag be raised in Convocation Hall, and were a part of Vision 2025 Aboriginal Student Leadership consultation meetings. The ASLG also attended a dinner at the President's residence to discuss many issues. These include: treaty education being mandated in the U of S; VP of Aboriginal Affairs sitting at the highest level with other VP's; cultural competency/Native Studies to be mandated in colleges, and; the need for appropriate consultation amongst our respective colleges – including giving students enough time to gather information and then present their findings.

I attend the Gordon Oakes Red Bear Subcommittee planning meetings, which will continue throughout the spring/summer months. The AIGSC is putting forth a request for space for Aboriginal graduate students in the Gordon Oakes Red Bear Student Centre that will be completed in Fall 2014.

The AIGSC put forth six priorities this year (please attached document). Of the six priorities, one of the priorities was successful, as the Indigenous Voices at U of S implements cultural awareness teachings for all levels of University administration. The AIGSC believes that the U of S cannot expect to become a leader on Aboriginal Engagement without arming all of its leaders on campus with a basic understanding of Aboriginal issues and expectations. Two other priorities were discussed with the President at the at the Aboriginal Student Leadership consultation meetings and at the dinner at the President's residence, however, no movement on these priorities has been made to date. These priorities include the creation of an Ombud's Office for equity issues on campus and affirmative action hiring at all levels of University administration.

The AIGSC strongly believes that administration needs to be doing whatever they can to support us, including recruiting more Aboriginal graduate students, offering more scholarships, and making the University a better place for Aboriginal people to undertake graduate studies. The AIGSC continues to increase the council's visibility and have gained a lot of support in the past year. We recruited two new council members this year, and have recruited a few more that will be a part of the council in the 2014/2015 academic year. Our AGM and elections will be held in September.

2013-2014 Aboriginal & Indigenous Graduate Students' Council Priorities

We request that the University of Saskatchewan undertake:

- 1) To compile a report by 2015 on the past forty years of the Aboriginal experience at the University of Saskatchewan. This report will examine the experiences; productive and positive, as well as negative of Aboriginal faculty, staff and students. These highlighted experiences will attest to a strong presence of Aboriginal people on campus and demonstrate the efforts they and the University have taken to create a more indigenized campus. It will also serve to address continuous issues and challenges facing Aboriginal people at the University of Saskatchewan. This report should feed into the creation of the Gordon Oakes-Red Bear Centre, and guide and assist its new Director.
- 2) Create a human rights office for student issues on campus. The requirement of annual reports from the Human Rights Office will allow the University to examine on a yearly basis issues that affect Aboriginal students on a systematic level, including instances of institutional racism. This report will not be meant to punish or embarrass the University, rather to be beacon to shine light where improvements can be made to enhance the student experience. The AIGSC supports the efforts of the GSA in forwarding this request.
- 3) Create an Ombud's Office for equity issues on campus. The Ombud's Office would be an officer for fairness, responding to policies, procedures or practices that are not equitable within the University. The Ombudsperson creates an outlet to report Aboriginal equity issues on campus, an important component to addressing institutional racism.
- 4) Affirmative action hiring at all levels of University administration. The University of Saskatchewan will be unable to "transform" without actually undergoing transformative change. A critical mass of Aboriginal leadership on campus will create an Aboriginal perspective at all levels of decision making and visioning.
- 5) An annual meeting of University Presidents from Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia regarding the advancement of Aboriginal students. This leadership opportunity will allow for our President to meet with other western Universities with Aboriginal students issues, challenges, concerns and advancement as a priority. This annual meeting will allow for the University of Saskatchewan President to share information and best practices with other similar institutions.

- 6) Implement mandatory Annual Cultural Awareness Teachings for all levels of University administration. Many programs exist on campus to provide important knowledge and cultural sensitivity training to individual faculty on a voluntary basis. However, the University cannot expect to become a leader on Aboriginal Engagement without arming all of its leaders on campus with a basic understanding of Aboriginal issues and expectations.

VP External Report

Graduate Retention Program

When I took over my new role as VP External, one of my major goals was to ensure all the graduate students benefit from the Government of Saskatchewan, Graduate Retention Program (GRP). Over this year, we have held consultations and meetings with the Government most prominently the Minister for Advanced Education, Hon Rob Norris. During these consultations we have expressed our desire for the expansion of the GRP to include Masters and PhD degrees. One thing that we have managed to achieve is the expansion of the GRP to include all students as long as a person has a Bachelor's degree. Because of our consultations and meetings with the Government, the Provincial government recently announced a 28% increase in the amount of money allocated for the GRP. This means that there will be more money for more students and this will make Saskatchewan more attractive to new students and individuals.

CFS

As VP External, one of my mandates has been to act as a contact for the GSA to other external organizations or bodies. One such organization that is of great interest is the Canadian Federation of Students (CFS) that brings together students from numerous universities across Canada and helps students speak with one voice. My main aim was to see how our relationship with CFS could be enhanced and how we could benefit from this relationship. At the beginning of my term I was elected the chair of CFS Saskatchewan. A role that I have played with a lot of zeal. Throughout this term the GSA has been able to invite officials from CFS to come and listen to our concerns. They have also attended a few of our events coming all the way from Ottawa. I have attended Student Lobby week in Ottawa that is organized by the CFS. The lobby week gives the GSA an opportunity to talk directly with our representatives in both parliament and the senate in Ottawa and tell them what our concerns are. I have held constructive discussions with all the MPs and Senators from Saskatchewan. One issue that I really lobbied for was the combination of Work permits, Visa and study permits into one document. I believe the government recently made this a reality. CFS also lobbies for reduction of tuition, increased funding for scholarships, increased enrollment of aboriginal students at our universities, increased funding for research, student loans debt forgiveness amongst other things.

Through our enhanced relationship with CFS, they recently sponsored our 2nd Graduate Awards Gala to the tune of \$3000.

GALA

I recently successfully organized the 2nd Annual Graduate Awards Gala on the 8th of March 2014. The event was attended by over 437 students, faculty, university administrators and friends of the GSA. We were very glad that this year's gala was graced by the University President, all top administrators of the university, a representative from the Government of Saskatchewan, the President of the University of Prince Edward Island who was also the Key Note Speaker and the

Minister for Advanced Education, Hon Rob Norris. We had 10 different awards to give out to students in different categories. The GSA made a call for nominations to all graduate students and the university community. We got an overwhelming response with lots of nominations for the different categories. We then put together an awards committee of volunteers who were all graduate students from different departments. This committee is the one that came up with a list of awardees. The whole process was competitive and above board. I would like to recognize and thank the members of this committee. I would also like to thank Nicole Callihoo for all her help and contribution during the gala. Nicole helped me in the gala organization free of charge. She is truly a GSA champion.

I would also like to recognize the Alumni Association who were our Key Partner and the official sponsors of the Key Note Speaker. The Alumni Association, sponsored the gala to the tune of \$5000. I would also like to thank student Care who sponsored our Gala to the tune of \$2500. Overall, this event was a success and I hope subsequent events will even be better.

Presidents' Report

The President's Report will be presented as a PowerPoint presentation during the AGM.