

Graduate Students' Association GSA Council Meeting Agenda



**University of Saskatchewan
Thursday, October 10th, 2013
5:00 P.M - 7:00 P.M
GSA Commons**

Attendees

Atiqul Islam, Akindamola Awujoola, Rajat Chakravarty, Dmitriy Chesnakov, Ranjan Datta, Seth Dueck, Priyangi Edirisinghe, Brittany Backosa, Federica Giannelli, Layla Gould, Amanda Guy, Nicole House, Mark Kroeker, Carla Labarrere, Cinnanti Loi, Davood Ghadiri Maghadlam, Isaac Pratt, Sarah Purdy, Fedir Razumenko, Fred Sage, Sarah Sangster, Balazs Toro, Kurt Woytiuk, David Bennett, Jules Hamara, Alex Stoddart, Natalia Terekhova, Robin Brown, Nathan Pham, Krisztina Panolur

GSA Executive

President, Ehimai Ohiozebau
VP Academic, Izabela Vlahu
VP External, Steve Jimbo
VP Student Affairs, Reanne Ridsdale
VP Operations and Communications, Kiri Staples
VP Finance, Mohammad Rafati
Aboriginal Liaison/Rotating Chair, Omeasoo Butt

Chair

Dena Burnett

1.0 Call to Order

Meeting was called to order at 5:07 by Chair.

2.0 Approval of Agenda

Motion 1- to Approve Agenda

Motioned by Sarah Purdy, Seconded by Brittany Backosa

Motion carried

3.0 Approval of last GSA Council Meeting Minutes

Motion 2 - to approve last GSA Council minutes

Motioned by Sarah, Seconded by Reanne

Discussion

- Correction– Motion 15.2.b to elect Kiri Staples as VP Operations and Communications should be changed to 21 in favour and 11 opposed
- Correction – names of Mark Kroeker’s and Martin Prusinkiewicz spelled wrong

Motion carries

4.0 Ratification of new Academic Councils: Plant Sciences Graduate Students' Association

Motion 3 - to ratify new academic councils

Motioned by Ehimai Ohiozebau, Seconded by Cinnanti Loi

Motion carried

5.0 Ratification of new Academic Representatives

The members ratified the following new course councilors:

Anita Masse, Qin Xiang, Kurt Woytiuk, Christine Rosser, Stephanie McMilan, Janna Moats, Khalil Sahtout, Malbar Padhee, Nathan Phan, Suranjan Bairagi, Josie Steeves, Krisztiwa Pandur, David Bennett

Motion 4 - to ratify new academic representatives

Motioned by Isaac Pratt, Seconded by Seth Dueck

Motion carried

6.0 Ratification of new Clubs

No new clubs

7.0 Ratification of UPASS Negotiation Committee

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the following serve as members of the UPASS Negotiation Committee: VP Student Affairs (Reanne Ridsdale), VP External (Steve Jimbo), Dmitriy Chesnakov, Ranjan Kumar Datta and David Bennett;

BE IT RESOLVED THAT committee’s terms of reference is to negotiate with Saskatoon Transit and recommend “A Question” to the GSA Council for the February 2014 referendum;

BE IT RESOLVED THAT if this committee is unable to recommend “A Question” to the GSA Council by January 2014, the GSA Council will discuss the February 2013 referendum question for the February 2014 referendum.

Motion 5 – to ratify UPASS negotiation committee

Motioned by Ehimai, Seconded by Josie

Discussion

- Point of information - If the committee is unable to come up with new question, we have to use question from last time.
- Question: If the committee fails to produce question by January, what is the exact date?
- **Friendly Amendment - BE IT RESOLVED THAT if this committee is unable to recommend “A Question” to the GSA Council by January 31st, 2014, the GSA Council will discuss the February 2013 referendum question for the February 2014 referendum.

Motion carried

8.0 Executive Reports

8.1 VP Student Affairs Report

- Student form that is university-wide – need two members to be part of this committee
- Is anyone interested in interested in helping with Childcare Co-op?

8.2 VP Operations and Administration Report

- Still need one person for bursary selection committee
- Attended web training – new website will hopefully be up next week

8.3 VP Academics Report

- Have prepared document to be presented at student senate – talks about cases we have been facing lately
- Looking for extra funding for GSA Congress
- Orientation attended to introduce new students to GSA
- Received letter from students in English department that their offices are being changed to “hotelling” style – decided to take this to President
- Travel grant – will bring updates regarding this, committee will meet next week

8.4 VP Finance Report

- Gathered information regarding finances
- Deadlines for NGO status and Canada Revenue Agency approaching - will provide financial reports for these

- Is trying to find Chartered Accountant to do audit for last three fiscal years
- One correction in tables report – numbers in surplus should be 160 approximation

8.5 Aboriginal Liaison Report

- Have four rotating chairs because no single person could take on all responsibilities
- Omeasoo will attend all GSA Council meetings
- Next meeting Oct. 22nd in the Commons at 1:30
- Will have meet and greet in October and potluck in November

8.6 VP External Report

- Is attending several conferences in the future

8.7 Presidents' Report

- GSA Congress is going to be the major event that will accommodate all our needs (social, academic, etc.)
- University is looking for members for Sustainability Committee – requires member of GSA

8.8 Questions regarding Executive Reports

- Questions: when you go to the CFS what kinds of thing you are lobbying members of parliament for? What CFS is looking for in terms of motions? Have you heard anything about a letter from CFS members looking to defederate from CFS?
 - Each year at CFS meetings they have about 10 issues that need to be discussed and VP External chooses issues that are affecting issues in Saskatchewan
 - This year will mostly will be talking about access to education, funding for education, student debt, money for research education, international student issues
 - We've not written letters to CFS to defederate – think we should try to see how we can benefit from CFS
- Question: budget for travel bursaries has been exhausted – where will the money come from and will it be presented to council?
 - There are a number of students that haven't picked up travel grants that have a two week window to provide evidence of attendance

- Some students haven't attended conference yet so they will have time to pick up grant, but need to figure out what to do with the money that hasn't been claimed
- Question: There needs to be an announcement for graduate student collaboration, in particular for positions on committee, etc. At the last meeting there was a comment about why the UPASS position wasn't announced that referenced a policy. I couldn't find a policy about why the position wasn't announced. However according to Policy 7.2.1.1: All positions under the GSA will be widely advertised. Postings will be distributed through email, the Student Employment and Career Center Job Posting website and on the GSA website in accordance with Policy 3. Communications. I want to make sure Executives will do this in the future.
 - Didn't say there was a policy for right to first refusal
 - The VP Operations and Communications is responsible for hiring, it is possible she gave right of first refusal. VP Operations will ensure all policies are followed in future in terms of hiring
 - The two positions that the VP Student Affairs just spoke about are unpaid and they are mentioned in the UPASS report. They were also announced at the last council meeting. Council members have first say, but then it will go outside.
- Thanks to Executives for putting minutes and agenda online and having it sent out. If there are ways it could be improved please tell us
- Question: when should we expect an answer from Saskatoon Transit on the bus ridership survey?
 - City takes time to respond and we have asked them several times, so we can't be sure
- Question: Was informed by Saskatoon Transit that survey results should go to UPASS Negotiation committee
 - Yes, the committee was reassured they would get results, and have requested them repeatedly, but still have not
- Question: Where is the process for the audit?
 - Talked to person from CA who tried to accept our offer, as well as several different people who do auditing and they said they are busy

- Recently gave documents to CA - will have more information next week
- There was an incident where professor expressed racism in an On Campus news article. Other student councils on campus would like to address institutional racism and this will take all of our efforts. In the mean time we have a couple of option for the people here today if you would like to learn more about Aboriginal People. The Indigenous Voices program is open to graduate students. Also on Oct. 16th 2-3:30 at the GSA Commons there is an event called Honouring Aboriginal Women, which is a direct response to the comments this professor made in order to allow Aboriginal women to have their voices heard.

Motion 6 - to extend meeting time by thirty minutes

**Motioned, Seconded

Motion carried

- Question: Can we get an update on the Graduate Retention Program?
 - Hopefully will have response by next course council meeting
 - Will send message to new Minister to ensure he is on same page
 - Grad students can apply for retention at undergraduate level
- Question: The amounts for scholarships for Masters and PhD students are just recommendations. Is it the decision of department head to increase scholarships or not?
 - We have confirmation from committee on integrative planning that they will increase funding - this will happen next year
 - One member contacted head of their department and like other course councilors communicated for a few months, and the department finally agreed to increase amount. Yes, it is a decision made by the department, not CGSR. It is a movement that should be made by course councilors. Recently CGSR has increased funding to departments, so it is suggested that you continue meeting with them.
 - At previous council meeting it was mentioned that VP Academics will start an academic committee – have advised students who have these issues to bring them and participate on this committee and then they could assist departments and councilors

- Questions in Appendix 1
 - AGM minutes are approved at AGMs because it's a different voting body
 - AGM minutes will be presented on website, but not necessarily approved
 - Next course council meeting should include previous AGM minutes, not for approval
- Question: Executive meeting minutes are supposed to be online. The policy should be changed to have time limit.
 - They have been hand written, but as soon as they are made available to VP Operations they will be typed up and posted online.
- Question: Does the VP Operations follow the policy of the University or the GSA? For the next course council meeting could we have motion to change policy to ensure hiring positions are advertised to everyone?
 - This is an issue for policy review committee and should be taken to them
 - The GSA is not a separate body of the university and is bound by all university policies
 - Want to ask VP Operations to follow this policy and be required to advertise positions when hiring.

9.0 Standing Committee Reports

9.1 Budget Planning Committee (No report)

9.2 Bursary Selection Committee (No report)

9.3 Elections and Referenda Committee (No report)

9.4 Constitution Revision Committee (No report)

9.5 Code of Ethics Committee (Terms of Reference attached)

Motion 7 - to Accept the Code of Ethics Committee Terms of Reference (ToR)

WHEREAS a motion was approved at the 2013 AGM for a committee to draft the Terms of Reference for Code of Ethics Committee

WHEREAS a committee met in July 2013 to draft the ToR

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the GSA Council approve the Code of Ethics Committee Terms of Reference

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Code of Ethics Terms of Reference is effective from October 10, 2013

Motioned by Sarah, Seconded by Fred Sage

Discussion

- Want to ensure executives are accountable – can only implement policy from today going forward to ensure everyone was given due notice
- Is not retroactive

Motion carried

9.6 Travel Grant Committee (no report)

9.7 Gala Committee (no report)

9.8 Questions regarding Standing Committee Reports

- Question: At the last AGM there was a motion to strike a committee to establish feasibility of getting puppies and kittens visiting. What is the progress on this?
 - It is important to have response at the GSA council because it was a motion and we need a report
 - Will now accept volunteers for Puppy Committee
- Will have travel grant report soon. We had 130 student applicants – because the number is so large we would give out whole \$10,000 dollars available. The committee met and decided to award as many students as they could. International travel gets \$350 and domestic travel received \$150 - 30% of applicants were successful. The committee made adjustments to application process for the next round and will have updates as to whether there will be another round once committee meets and will email students regardless of the outcome
 - Decisions were made on selection policies that were not ratified and the committee did not make decisions based on that policy
 - Moving forward we will have to change this
- Question: Who is responsible for standing committees?
 - Each standing committee will have an Executive member affiliated with it
 - Can send e-mail to GSA Executive or Ehimai and it will be forwarded to appropriate VP.
 - VPs can get members two ways: VP Operations will advertise or people can approach VP themselves

10.0 Special Reports

10.1 U-Pass Report

- Implementation started August 19th, ended September 30th
- During that time there were 1,879 bus passes picked up – 66% of eligible students
- Peak days August 19th and Sept.3
- 275 opt-outs processed and distance education students on maternity leave automatically opted out
- Implementation challenges – recommendations in report are to address these
 - i.e. number of students want to hand in opt-out electronically, staff on hand to assist
- Recommendations for negotiation committee also

Discussion

- Question: Have an approved implementation budget for the UPASS, but the work that you are doing right now, are you doing it as a volunteer? If it's not volunteer, what's the source of budget?
 - We discovered in the way that the contracts were set out that she did not work all of her hours, and had 5 extra hours per week that they have been using to date
 - Have supplied GSA with instructions on how to deal with any problems that arise in future
 - Budget is exhausted
- Would like to thank UPASS implementation committee. Going forward we will ensure GSA hiring policies are followed for UPASS implementation.
- Question: It's good that things are wrapped up for office to take over, but the VP Student Affairs has limited time. Perhaps something can be added to report that after deadline it doesn't fall to Executives to deal with UPASS issues?
 - Responsibilities ended with contract so she can't do anything now
 - Doesn't think responsibilities for Executive will be great
 - In automatic reply from UPASS e-mail address, a lot of people's questions will be answered – for sticker issues Commons staff will take care of it
 - Could we put this in for next year though so Executives don't have to put in unpaid hours?

- Isn't necessary because the system has been changed so that the workload for the Executives will be minimal. Will suggest for next time that a report is done so that it doesn't require as much
- Initially projected \$5000 to pay Executives for implementation, but they weren't paid in the end
- Question: What are the costs for future implementation if it is done electronically?
 - The forms will be e-mailed in so people don't have to be paid to stamp, etc.
 - This has been requested from students
- Question: Can we communicate with ICT to make process easier?
 - We did this and they helped with software – won't need to do this in the future
- For implementation, it is structural authority, not administration that takes up the budget. Through this report and first term practice, this will reduce our budget in the future.
- Have been liaising with USSU to get help on bettering our project, but in the future we want to talk to other universities on how they deal with their students because some of the issues we face are structural that no one has ever thought to fix

11.0 Old Business

11.1 MOTION 8 - TO ACCEPT THE RECOMMENDED POLICY CHANGES

WHEREAS the Policy Review Committee recommended some changes to the GSA policies

WHEREAS the proposed changes have been on the GSA website for all graduate students to review for some time

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the GSA Council approve the changes as recommended by
 Motioned by Sarah, Seconded by Davoud Ghadiri Maghadlam

Motion 9 - to limit debate for 45 minutes

Motioned by Sarah, Seconded by Mark Kroeker

Motion carried

Presentation by Policy Review Committee

Amendment to 3.6.1.1

FROM: The GSA shall distribute a USB flash drive to advertise the services of the GSA. The USB shall contain a copy of the full GSA Constitution and Policy Manual as well as the contact information of current academic councils.

TO: Strike this, no change to 3.6.1.1

Motioned by Sarah, Seconded by Josie Steeves

Motion carried

Amendment to 4.2.1.4

FROM: Changes to coverage will be discussed by a committee of two Executives (President and VP External) and at least one academic councilor.

TO: There shall be a health and dental committee chaired by the VP External Affairs consisting of at least one additional Executive member and at least one Academic Councilor who shall discuss health and dental changes and make a recommendation to GSA Council.

Motioned by Josie, Seconded by Isaac

Motion carried

Amendment 8.1.1.11

FROM: Payments or obligations in excess of 10% of the budget item or 1% of the total budget, whichever is less, require GSA Council approval.

TO: All discretionary expenditures greater than 10% of the budget item or 1% of the total budget, whichever is greater, requires GSA Council approval (simple majority).

Discussion

- Will it be better to use total budget for that year?
- Does it include health and dental costs, fees for UPASS, CFS? Some argue that only the FSA fee is the budget of GSA fee, not excluding services
- Total budget refers to budget approved at AGM

- Friendly amendment to include: All discretionary expenditures greater than 10% of the budget item or 1% of the total annual budget approved at AGM, whichever is greater, requires GSA Council approval (simple majority).
- Question: what about emergency measures?
 - There is a budget for this

Motioned by Josie, Seconded by Davood

Motion carried

Amendment carried

Amendment to 8.1.1.12

FROM: All discretionary expenditures are subject to majority vote of the Executive and shall be reported to GSA Council.

TO: All discretionary expenditures less than 10% of the budget item or 1% of the total budget, whichever is less, are subject to majority vote of the Executive and shall be reported to GSA Council.

Discussion

- Question: There is a line in budget labeled “discretionary spending” – has this been included? Still need Executives to be able to spend discretionary spending, but less than 10% doesn’t make sense here

Motion to defer to policy committee for review

**Motioned, Seconded

Motion passed

Motion 10 - to extend meeting

Motioned by Reanne Ridsdale, Seconded by Mark

Motion carried

Discussion

- Question: What if executives not available to vote on specific expenses, what they should vote on?

- Executive committee requires simple majority to operate, they require 3 members to show up
 - Question: On the new changes, the draft of agenda should be sent five days prior to meeting, and the final agenda three days before. Can councilors send motions in that two day period?
 - Yes they can.
 - Question: What is the honorarium for Chief Electoral Officer and Chief Returning hours and how will it be decided how many hours they work?
 - They submit report to VP Operations – they are accountable to VP Operations and Executive.
 - Questions: If GSA ratified group can use Commons for free, why was I asked for damage deposit?
 - Policy manual defers to Commons booking package - damage deposit is included, but you get the money back
 - Don't think we should take out position statement. It is only three years old and think it has been helpful in the past
 - Vote to suspend policy statement with hope to write a more recent policy statement that reflects current students
 - Friendly Amendment to 5.1.2.5 by Ehimai – A draft agenda and call for additional agenda items will be sent to councilors at minimum five days before council meeting
 - Only thing this recommendation says that time that academic council has to response increases
 - **Friendly Amendment to 2.2.7.3 – Council can recommend quorum not less than 8% and recommended by the Executive, subject to debate
 - **Friendly Amendment – position statement will not be struck
 - Strongly recommend policy be reviewed – issue will be defer to policy committee
- Motion passes

11.2 APPROPRIATE GSA SURPLUS FUNDS (no new information)

WHEREAS the GSA financial statement is in surplus,

WHEREAS the GSA is currently renting the Commons space for a three year period,

WHEREAS the GSA is a non-profit organization, expected to have zero profit,
WHEREAS one of the missions of the GSA is to ensure its members have access to
quality services that support their academic success, and
WHEREAS most graduate students are entrepreneurial,
(A) BE IT RESOLVED THAT the GSA is to establish a dedicated infrastructure account
for the purpose of financing a capital project, and move the sum of \$60,000.00 (sixty
thousand dollars) from the surplus fund into this special account, and
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the GSA Finance Committee and the GSA
Council allocates 10% of its annual budget to this pool until such a time the accrued fund
is sufficient for capital investment

(B) Motion to adopt supplementary budget

- i) GSA Conference \$15,000
- ii) GSA Award Gala \$5,000
- iii) Rescue Fund \$5,000

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the supplementary budget be adopted to the GSA 2013/2014
annual budget

Discussion

- Request for more information from GSA on the fund

Motion 11 - to postpone until a certain time when the amount of the surplus fund is
determined and make it a special order

**Motioned, Seconded by Josie

Motion carried

12.0 New Business

12.1 MOTION 12 - TO RELEASE COURSE COUNCIL FUNDING

WHEREAS the GSA provides funding to Course Councils so that they may host events
for their individual constituencies, and

WHEREAS the quantity of funding provided is based on both the number of students
represented by that Course Council and by the attendance rate of Course Councillors to
Course Council meetings, and

WHEREAS this funding is released at the end of the fiscal year, and

WHEREAS the first half of the fall term is the natural time to host events to increase awareness of Course Councils,

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the GSA releases some funding to Course Councils upon request of those Course Councilors during Course Council meetings in the fall term.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the total funding released to each Course Council in this manner not exceed one third (1/3) of the amount that Course Council would qualify for had that Course Council attended every Course Council meeting during the previous year. These funds will be deducted from the total Course Council funding released at the end of the year.

- Required amendment – wherever it says Course Council, it now says Academic Council

Motion by Mohammad Rafati, Seconded by Josie

Discussion

- Questions about funding related to attendance
 - Decided to follow last year's policies - last year the GSA assumed that representatives would attend all of the meetings and based on that number you would get 1/3 of the funding, and then depending on attendance at the rest of the money at the end of the year

Motion carried

12.2 MOTION 13 - TO PROVIDE WORKING FUND FOR GSA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEES

WHEREAS the GSA constitution and policies require the President and Vice Presidents to chair several GSA committees and represent the GSA in several university committees

WHEREAS important discussions are usually not documented in these GSA meetings due to lack of funds to pay staff

WHEREAS there is some funds in the GSA surplus account

WHEREAS the GSA is a non-for-profit organization,

BE IT RESOLVED that the GSA Council approve the use of \$2,000 from the GSA surplus account to finance GSA committee meetings from October 2013 to April 2014

BE IT RESOLVED that the office of the President, VP Operations and Communication, VP Academic, and VP Student Affairs be allocated \$500 each from this funds for the purpose of committee meetings

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the fund will only be used for the purpose of staff payment to take meeting minutes and when necessary, the provision of basic refreshment during meetings.

Motioned by Josie, Seconded by Davood

Discussion

- Have constant complaints that committee meetings aren't recorded because they are too understaffed
- If it is approved VP Operations will send out e-mail to students if anyone is interested in minute-taking
- Amendment – so that the offices of the President, VP Operations and Communications, VP Academic, VP Student Affairs , VP External and VP Finance will be allocated [\$2,000 divided by 6 each] for the purpose of committee meetings

Motioned by Steve, Seconded by Davood

- Why were these numbers chosen?
- Hours per months for 7 months - mainly for minute taking
- Why weren't the other VPs included to begin with?
- Their work with committees is not supposed to be as significant

Amendment fails

- **Friendly Amendment – change to: BE IT RESOLVED that the office of the President, VP Operations and Communication, VP Academic, and VP Student Affairs be allocated **up to \$500** each from this funds for the purpose of committee meetings

Motion 14 - to call to question

Motion passes (In favour 14, opposed 7)

12.3 MOTION 15 - TO PAY UPASS ADMINISTRATION FEE

WHEREAS the university will only remit 99% U-Pass fee to the GSA

WHEREAS the GSA will remit 100% U-Pass fee to Saskatoon Transit

WHEREAS the GSA estimates to receive U-Pass fees from about 3000 graduate students

WHEREAS this estimation is for 3 terms

BE IT RESOLVED the GSA Council authorize the VP Finance to spend up to \$10,000 from the GSA surplus to balance the deficit accrued from the 99% remittance from the university

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the \$10,000 is only for the purpose of paying 100% U-Pass fee to Saskatoon Transit.

Motion by David Bennett, Seconded by Reanne

Discussion

- Is this the position of the USSU as well?
 - Yes
- Why are we required to pay this?
 - Administrative costs
- Are there options to move to another provider so we don't have to pay that money?
 - Not sure who this would be – only people who has access to student accounts is University
 - All student fees do this

Motion 16 - to extend by 30 minutes

Motioned by Reanne, Seconded by Cinnanti

Motion carries

- Why is this estimation for 3 terms and why not 4?
 - Only three terms – no summer term
 - One of recommendations in the UPASS report is that this implementation fee is included in original fee – this should be a one-time thing that should have been dealt with last year
- If money is eventually paid to Saskatoon Transit, can't the fee go directly to them?
 - If you can come back and say they will fund the 1% that's great, but this year we don't have it

- Contract that we have signed now lasts until the end of August so nothing can be changed so any negotiations for winter and summer term wouldn't happen to 2014-2015
- Even if we switched source that is providing administration, it would increase implementation costs
 - In the USSU contract, money is sent to University for opt-out and implementation

Motion carries

13.0 Announcements

- Bursary Selection Committee is looking for at least two volunteers – please contact Kiri Staples, VP Operations and Administration, if interested
- Need each course academic councilor requesting 1/3 of their funds
- Childcare committee looking for members
- Student form looking for members

14.0 Next GSA Council Meeting: Wednesday, November 20, 2013

15.0 Adjournment 7:35

Motion 17 - to adjourn by David

Appendix 1

Questions from Dmitriy Chesnakov

(A) UPASS negotiation and implementation process

- Status of UPASS survey conducted by city of Saskatoon?
- Who was on board of UPASS committee?
- Timeline of negotiation and implementation?
- Indication of change in UPASS fee in previous minutes?
- Why lack of notice to course councilors?

(B) Student request to GSA

- Request for results from UPASS survey was given to executives – when was meeting to process this request and who was at the meeting?

(C) Meeting minutes preparation and publishing

- Policy 5 clearly indicates that "An information package containing the agenda, previous meeting minutes, reports from all executive members and pertinent appendices will be available to course council members by email and on the GSA website no later than three days before Course Council Meetings".
- Who is arguing about "that previous AGM minutes can only be approved in the following AGM."? Who are "Others have argued otherwise."?
- Why have these concerns not been delivered to the attention of GSA councils?