

# Graduate Students' Association Special General Meeting Minutes



**University of Saskatchewan  
Graduate Students' Association  
Monday, January 12<sup>th</sup>, 2015  
12:00 pm – 2:00 pm**

## **Attendees:**

Taraneh Kazerouni; Aaron Thacker; Brendan Sangler; Bassey Bassey; Kathryn Forrester; Venkat Palgat; Kiela Caupillo; Jeremy Marshall; Kyle Dase; Mohsen Mohkami; Robin Brown; Fengrei Zhang; Michelle Desveaux; Victoria Taras; Yina Liu; Jacques Desmarais; Kai Zhou; Andrei Ichazo; Andrew Frank-Wilson; Maryann Jafari Horestani; Devon Stumborg; Wesam Younis; Dallas Posavad; Kathleen Aikens; Kayla Lindenback; Jed Huntley; Glenn Icton; Madelaine Gierc; Christopher West; Ali Kiani; Vahid Vosoushi; Adehiyari Olwlaseyi ; Sheheryar B. Sheikh; Kota Kimura; Shakt Brazier Tompkins; David Bennett; Setareh Shahkarami; Phil Lagace; Natalia Terekhova; Naomi Malna; Austen Smith; Fred Sage; Erin Spinney; Balazs Toro; Adam Pierce; Julie Wang; Mibed Taghavivand; Dustin Maclean; Colin Gibbins; Qi Guo; Kimberly Lafreniere; Dustin McNichol; Warrick Baijius; Mangaliso Mohammed; Layla Gould; Cinnati Loi; Mohammad Rafati; Jason Ho.

## **Executives:**

President, Izabela Vlahu;  
VP Operations, Xin Lu;  
VP Academic, Ranjan Datta.

### **1.0 Call to Order — 12:05pm**

### **2.0 Approval of the Agenda**

2.1 The agenda was adopted by the room.

### **3.0 Chair's remarks**

3.1 The Chair pointed out that Motion 5.0 is out of order as it was defeated on November Council Meeting. However, the mover and seconder of the motion testified that the motion was never discussed in any meetings before. The motion is still in order.

### **4.0 Approval of the June 2nd Special General Meeting minutes (<http://goo.gl/oqslKs>)**

4.1 37 in favour, 0 object, 1 abstain. The minutes for June 2<sup>nd</sup> Special General Meeting was adopted.

**5.0 Motion Vlahu/Lu**

**WHEREAS section 4.3.2. of the GSA Constitution mandates the GSA Council to approve the GSA fee for the next fiscal year at its December meeting, and**

**WHEREAS quorum was not reached at the December meeting,**

**BE IT RESOLVED THAT this Special General Meeting approves the 2015/16 GSA fee of \$33.65/term for full time students and \$19.27/term for part time students.**

**5.1** GSA fees must be approved every year at the December council meeting, unfortunately quorum was not reached. The university is late in approving the fees, because the time frame changed from the previous years they agreed to wait for a little bit and are giving us this weekend to approve th3 fees. These numbers have a 1.60 increase over the previous year and 90 cents for part time students. This accounts for inflation. The change is insignificant and within the constitution.

**5.2 No objection for calling the question.**

**5.3 37 in favour, 1 objection, 6 abstain. The motion was adopted.**

**6.0 Motion McNichol/Desveaux**

**WHEREAS a significant number of graduate students at the University of Saskatchewan feel that their relationship with their employer is in need of improvement;**

**WHEREAS the University of Saskatchewan - Association of Graduate Employees (USASK-AGE) has been formed in order to work towards improvement of said relationship by unionizing graduate student employees of the university;**

**WHEREAS most graduate students are employees of the University of Saskatchewan, and will see positive improvements to their working conditions at the university if unionization is successful, and**

**WHEREAS a graduate student employees union would be in a legally-enforceable bargaining and advocating position with the University of Saskatchewan, and would offer protections for its members on issues pertaining to their Teaching and Research Assistance that the Graduate Students Association cannot, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Graduate Students Association (GSA) of the University of Saskatchewan offer its**

**official endorsement of the ongoing union campaign being led by the USASK-AGE as a sign of good faith and commitment to shared goals.**

**6.1** In summer 2014, graduate students across departments got together and decided it was time to discuss forming a union. Number of work related issues that are being raised by grad students that re not being addressed by the university. Therefore, the USASK-Association of Graduate Employees (USASK-AGE) was formed. This is not a union but is a group that has its goal of unionization. Since October they have been working towards forming a union. They approached a union line Public Service Lines of Canada who gave them a small budget for materials. Since October, they have collected over 500 signatures from grad student workers in support of the union initiative.

**6.2** The benefit of Union: unions advocate on behalf of a certain group of workers in order to get better wages and better benefits and work protections better health and safety standards, standardized grievance procedures and standardized contracts. Things that clarify the relationship to the university as your employer.

**6.3** The reason asking for official GSA endorsement is that the GSA endorsement is needed, and that a union would work with the GSA to benefit all graduate students. The union is more to have a legal bargaining mechanism for graduate student employees and the university. The GSA is not a trade union, so they are not legally entitled to bargain collectively on your behalf, whereas a union is. This is not asking for any money. It doesn't need any financial for the GSA. All work is done by volunteers. It just needs political and moral support.

**6.4** A Guest from Sessional Lectures Union was invited to talk about what it would mean to be in a union.

**6.5** The President pointed out that questions were asked earlier what the role of the GSA could be in this unionization. In terms of communications with the student body the GSA does not have a contact list of all the graduate students. We do not have the names of all graduate students. We get only numbers at the end. It is only a head count. The way we contact the grad student body is draft an email and send it to CGSR where they make sure it fits with their policies. The last email we sent had a link to the agenda. The link was removed as communications with the university did not want a link pointing to anything that mentions a union. So we are controlled in the information that we send to graduate

students. We do what we can in the unionization drive not in terms of advocating for or against but in terms of facilitating the discussion. The meeting today was initiated by members of the GSA but does not represent an endorsement or a refusal by the GSA in any way. We are happy to provide forums for discussion if there is a need for addition forums.

6.6 38 in favour, 1 oppose, 5 abstain, the motion was adopted

**7.0** Adjournment — 1:14 pm