

Graduate Students' Association Council Meeting Minutes (Amended)



University of Saskatchewan
Tuesday, October 21st, 2014
5:00 P.M - 7:25 P.M
GSA Commons

Voting Members: Izabela Vlahu (President); Xin Lu (VP Operations); Dana Carriere (Aboriginal Liaison); Rahwa Osman (VP External); Rajat Chakravarty (VP Student Affairs); Ranjan Datta (VP Academic); Sudipta Dasgupta; Setareh Shahkarami; William Bonner; Josephine Steeves; Jason Ho; Tyler Koebel; Brenda Schurr; Aaron Thacker; Kyle Dase; Amin Mohammadbagheri; Colleen Fitzpatrick; Jason Mercer; Kayla Lindenback; Spencer Gall; Dallas Posavad; Tyler Reimer; David Saunders; Garrett Morandi; Isaac Pratt; Anne Janhunen; Devon Stumborg; Andrew Frank-Wilson; Alex Stoddart; Amanda Guy; Kristopher Novak; Venkat Palgat; Kung Chi Cinnati; Kimberly LaFreniere; Lav Mittal; Kathryn Forrester; Chi Su; Md Nazrul; David Bennett; Lotanna Ufondu; Daeung Yu; Mostafa Aghbolaghy; Warrick Baijius; Marion Pollock; Shailza Sapal; Seth Dueck; Kathleen Aikens; Kendra Meier; Hardi Shahadu; Shahid Mehmood; Kurt Woytiuk; Patricia De Ciman; Mohsen Sanayei; Reanne Ridsdale;

Non-voting Members: Liya zhang; Anne Battiste; Erin Spinney; Dandan Huang; Glenn Icton; Linzi Williamson; Krystal Caldwell;

Visitors: Brendan Swalm; Henry Tye; Anna-Lilja Dawson

Chair: Samer Assaf

1.0 Call to Order—5:07pm

2.0 Approval of the Agenda

2.1 VP External moved to add item on the agenda:

Motion to ratify Constitution Review Committee

WHEREAS Constitution Review committee members have not been appointed,
and

WHEREAS all committee appointments shall be made and/or ratified by
academic Council according to item 8.1.6. Constitution; and

WHEREAS the Constitution review committee requires representation of at least
two academic councillors according to item 8.1. 11 constitution.

BE IT RESOLVED that the following members be added to the Constitution review committee.

Izabela Vlahu - GSA President
Rahwa Osman – Vice President External Affairs
Patricia De Ciman- GSA Councillor
Dmitry Chesnakov – GSA Councillor
Ashton Rimer – GSA Councillor
Josie Steeves – GSA Councillor
Hardi Shahadu – GSA Councillor
Kathryn Forrester- GSA Councillor
Marion Pollock – GSA Councillor
Rajat Chakravarty- Vice President Student Affairs
Isaac Pratt – GSA Councillor

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the ratified councillors hold the membership until the new appointment by council.

Discussion:

- 2.1.1** It has not been the common practice for the GSA to interpret the Constitution to mean that appointment of the committee refers to appointment of members. The common practice of the GSA for committee ratification is only for new committee introduced, not appointing members for existing committees; and for existing committees, the Chair of each committee calls for members according to the guidance in the Policies and the Constitution. Therefore, this motion is redundant.
- 2.1.2** It is raised by a Councillor that the committee member ratification process is transparency.
- 2.1.3 Point of information.** Can the secretary read GSA Policy 1.3.1.1.?
- 2.1.4** 1.3.1.1: “The GSA represents the graduate student body on a number of committees within the University. The list below is not exhaustive, as the committee structure of the University and GSA are fluid. The president will appoint GSA members to committees as needed. It is the

responsibility of the following Executive members to sit on or designate representation on the following committees....”

2.1.5 Point of Order: The Point of Information provided above is not an actual one, because the room already knows the Policy.

2.1.6 Point of Information from the Chair: GSA Constitution 8.1.6. “All committee appointments shall be made and/or ratified by Course Council.”

2.1.7 33 in favour, 0 oppose, 7 abstain. Motion added.

2.2 Isaac Pratt moved to ratify representatives for Student Forum

WHEREAS the purpose of the Student Forum is to provide a venue in which the University Administration, governing bodies, and representatives of the university’s key stakeholder groups hear and consider institution-wide issues that affect the nature and quality of the student experience at the University of Saskatchewan, and

WHEREAS the Student Forum terms of reference provide positions for two members of the GSA Executive and two Graduate Course Councillors appointed by the GSA Course Council, and

WHEREAS Isaac Pratt (College of Medicine) and Seth Dueck (Department of Physics and Engineering Physics) are both Graduate Course Councillors in good standing, and

WHEREAS Isaac Pratt and Seth Dueck represented the GSA Course Council to Student Forum in the 2013-2014 academic year.

BE IT RESOLVED that Isaac Pratt and Seth Dueck be appointed to represent the Graduate Student body at the Student Forum for the 2014-2015 academic year.

2.2.1 Student forum is facilitates discussion and communication among students on current issues to find common grounds. Isaac and Seth were on the committee last year. It would also be an opportunity for GSA executives to participate in student discussions.

2.2.2 26 in favour, 1 oppose, 5 abstain. Motion added.

2.3 VP Operations moved to add approval of September minutes to the agenda.

2.3.1 41 in favour, 0 oppose, 0 abstention. Motion added.

2.4 Mohammad Rafati attempts to move a motion.

2.4.1 Point of Order: the original mover of the motion, the former VP Finance, had just resigned. According to the GSA Constitution, only Council regular members can move and second a motion.

2.5 Ashton Reimer moved to add motion for Health and Dental Fee Increase:

2.5.1 The chair rules the motion out of order. This motion must be moved by the GSA President.

2.5.2 The ruling of the chair is appealed.

2.5.3 Motion to uphold the ruling of the Chair.

7 in favor, 19 opposed, 14 abstained. The chair is overruled.

2.6 Ashton Reimer moved to add motion for Health and Dental Fee Increase:

Motion: Health and Dental Fees

WHEREAS Policy 4.2.1.3 gives the GSA Council powers to approve the health and dental fees and the insurance provider; and

WHEREAS the GSA has increased health and dental benefits to its members; and

WHEREAS the GSA is subsidizing the health and dental fees by \$42 per member (\$90k in total) for 2014-15 year from health and dental reserve fund; and

WHEREAS the GSA health and dental reserve fund won't be sufficient to subsidize such amount for the 2015-16 year; and

WHEREAS the inflation rate based on CPI (Consumer Price Index) for Saskatchewan in 2014 and 2013 were 2.7%.

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the GSA Council approves the 2015/2016 health and dental fees to increase by 2.7% as the 2015/16 fees.

2.6.1 The reason to add this motion to the agenda is that the deadline to submit fees is on November 7th and there will not be another council meeting until after that date. If the increase of this 5% is not approved, the GSA will be getting close to using the entire reserve fund.

2.6.2 A concern was raised that Health and Dental should be affordable and is a service the GSA has always provided. Considering that before moving toward this motion, the fees are not confirmed yet, a concern

was raised that it would be beneficial to send an electronic copy of options and take it to council for further discussion.

2.6.3 24 in favour, 9 opposed, and 9 abstained. Motion added on the agenda.

2.7 Josie Steeves moved to add an item on the agenda.

Motion to ratify members of Budget Planning Committee

WHEREAS GSA budget planning committee members have not been appointed;
WHEREAS all committee appointments shall be made and/or ratified by academic Council according to item 8.1.6. Constitution;

WHEREAS the budget planning committee requires representation of at least two academic councillors according to item 8.1. 11 constitution;

BE IT RESOLVED that GSA council approve, Jason Ho (PEGASUS), Andrew Frank-Wilson (College Kinesiology Grad. Students), Mostafa Aghbolaghy (EGCC), Marion Hewitt Pollock (Education Admin Academic Council) to sit in budget planning committee.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the ratified councillors hold the membership until the new appointment by council.

Discussion:

2.7.1 It was raised that this motion is out of order as it is an intrusion on the duties of the president.

2.7.1.1 A concern was raised by a Councillor that the motion is to enable transparency, and the body needs to change its regular practices. “This is a forum for the students, not for the President to be telling us what to do.”

2.7.1.1.1 Chair’s rule: despite the freedom of speech, the choice of words should be aware of, and people don’t have the right to insult others. (The Chair apologized for raising his voice.) The Chair believed that the rules were broken.

2.7.1.1.2 Point of Order: The President decides when things need to be done, because it’s her duty to do that.

2.7.2 33 in favour of adding this motion to the Agenda, 1 opposed, 1 abstained. Motion added on the Agenda.

2.8 Approval of the amendments of the Agenda.

2.8.1 Question: In what order is approving of the agenda vs amending the agenda different or the same?

Answer: The amendments are amending the draft, not the Agenda itself yet.

2.8.2 It was raised by a Councillor that agenda needs to be set by the Executive, and the Councillor requested the Chair to do that with the Executive.

2.8.2.1 The Chair does not have that power.

2.8.3 32 in favor of the amendment of the Agenda, 0 opposed, 9 abstained.

2.9 Approval of the agenda: 49 in favour, 0 opposed, and 0 abstained. Agenda was approved.

3.0 Chair's Remarks

3.1 One cannot interrupt the speaker, but one can interrupt the speakers' list.

3.2 Point of Information: How can speakers list be limited to get more business done?

3.2.1 Answer: a motion is needed to amend the procedures.

3.2.2 **Motion: speakers list shall consist of 3 speakers for and 3 against the motion item, and possibly consider extending the list, so as to be able to cover more items on the agenda.**

3.2.2.1 **Point of Information:** is there any rule in Robert's Rules of Order that enables the room to restrict the number of speakers or just restrict the time?

3.2.2.1.1 Answer: it's up to the room.

3.2.2.2 The reason to introduce the motion is because we have a full agenda. In addition, this motion is with the understanding that there can be a mover to extend the speaker's list.

3.2.2.3 A concern was raised in the room that everyone has the right to speak on the motion or against the motion. And that right should not be taken away.

3.2.2.4 10 in favour of the speaker list motion, 23 opposed, 6 abstain.

Motion was not adopted.

4.0 VP Operations moved to approve the September 23 council meeting minutes.

4.1 A concern was raised by a Councillor that certain contents are missing from the minutes, such as the appealing of the rule of the Chair and the discussions in budget line dissolution motion. Without these contents, the meeting minutes could not accurately represent what happened at the meeting.

4.2 Chair's rule: Changing the point of order rule—anytime, anyone who wants to state a Point of Order needs to state the rule first and after that say what is wanted. Without a number, Point of Orders will not be accepted. If anyone would like to appeal please go ahead.

4.3 A. Reimer moved to table the approval of the minutes until they are amended to accurately reflect what occurred in the last council meeting.

4.3.1 33 in favour, 1 opposed, 3 abstain. The motion has been tabled till the next council meeting.

5.0 VP Operations moved to ratify new Academic Councils

5.1 List of new Academic Councils:

JSGS-Students' Association (Updated), from Johnson-Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy, 117 members;

Geography and Planning Graduate Student Council, from Department of Geography and Planning, 54 members;

English Course Council, from Department of English, 40 members;

Plant Sciences Graduate Student Association (Updated), from Department of Plant Science, 11 members;

School of Environment and Sustainability Students' Association (Updated), from School of Environment and Sustainability, 95 members

5.2 37 in favour, 0 oppose, 0 abstention. Motion is adopted.

6.0 VP Operations moved to ratify new 2014/15 Academic Councillors

6.1 List of new Academic Councillors:

Kurt Woytiuk; Federica Giannelli; Sudipta Dasgupta; Hardi Shahadu; Natalia Terekhova; Adeola Olubamiji; Keaton Wheeler; Bronwyn Craig; Daeung Yu;

Dandan Huang; Kyle Dase; Aaron Thacker; Jason Ho; Linzi Williamson; Liya; Brenda Schurr; Lotanna Ufondu; Colten Goertz; Kathleen Aikens; Lav Mittal; Aimee Schmidt; Khan MD Rashed Al-Mamun; Kristopher; Venkat Palgat; Amin Mohammadbagheri; Spencer Gall; Naomi Maina, Jason Mercer, Reanne Risdale.

6.2 39 in favour, 0 oppose, 0 abstention. Motion was adopted.

7.0 Executive Reports

7.1 Motion: to limit presentation of reports to 3 minutes.

Vote: In favor 36, opposed 2, abstained 1. Motion passes.

Motion: to amend the motion to limit presentation to 5 minutes.

Vote on motion to amendment: In favor 24, opposed 9, abstained 5. Motion to amend passes.

Vote on the amendment: In favor 36, opposed 1, abstained 1. Motion passes, reports are limited to 5 minutes.

7.2 President (report as circulated with the agenda, see report attached)

7.3 VP Operations and Communications (report as circulated with the agenda, see report attached)

7.4 VP Finance (report as circulated with the agenda, see report attached)

7.5 VP Academic (report as circulated with the agenda, see report attached)

7.6 VP External (See report attached)

Motion: to append report to the minutes.

All in favor. Motion is adopted.

7.7 VP Student Affairs (report as circulated with the agenda, see report attached)

7.8 Aboriginal Liaison (report as circulated with the agenda, see report attached)

7.9 Q&A

7.9.1 Question: A Councillor requested to find the appropriate person to answer the current situation with our lack of VP finance and how that is going to be addressed going forward.

7.9.1.1 Answer (President): Thank you for that question council. The VP finance resigned effective October 21st. The reason was due

to high work load for the VP of Finance. The executive is going to implement the policies and the constitution in terms of replacement the vacancy.

- **Motion:** to extend the meeting by 30 min.
- **Vote:** In favor 30, opposed 0, abstained 5. Motion is adopted. Meeting extended till 7:30pm.

- **Motion:** to reject the report of the VP Finance.
- **Chair rules motion out of order:** one cannot move motion to reject the report, but one can disagree with it.
- **Motion:** to censure the VP Finance report
- **Discussion:**
 - The minutes for June meeting were available on website. Very simple oversight. I would discourage council to question the integrity of the former VP Finance.
 - I just wanted to clarify the date that this meeting took place for this travel. Was it before June 27th? Was the issue of this travel of this meeting that happened for the GU 15, did it happen before or after June 27 2014?
 - Answer: GU 15 was in August as per the presented reports. So after the executive meeting in question.
 - Well, see I'm worried about this exchange. And I would like to speak in favor of censuring the report as presented in terms of the finances. And include an amendment of censuring the President's report. So I would like to move that the President's report be censured as well.
 - **Point of order:** Once a speaker obtains the floor to and begins to participate in debate, the speaker cannot move a motion.
 - **Chair rules the motion to amend out of order.**
 - There is one line in the executive minutes that reallocates the expenses to the discretionary fund, so technically one could say that nothing has been done wrong. Because there is one line in a document that says there is going to be a reallocation of an expense. But the bigger problem is this. Was there any discussion about having a vote? There is nothing in the minutes that says what the discussion was. Was there any dissent to reallocate the budget to have the president go on a trip with student money? There

have been repeated requests from students to have clarification about the spending of our money. These requests have been shut down. There has been formal email that has been ignored. There have been requests for in person meetings that have been shut down. I don't think it is an invalid question to know why our president is spending our money to go on trips. I think there should be more justification of why they are going to make these decisions. There is no reflection or accountability to students in this document. There is some really sneaky maneuvering about the rules to reallocate the budget. This is not good governance. This is not how an organization should be run. I think it's really important that we as a body pay close attention to what is going on because it's important that we are engaged in our executive and when there is perceived wrong doing that those concerns are addressed instead of shut down repeatedly. Instead of using poor policy to hide behind, I find it rather appalling that we receive a financial report that shows a total incoherence of the understanding of this executive of the rules. One minute they say it's okay for us to amend the budget because they made a mistake and we made too much money, and the next minute they turn around and say we had permission to spend this money. There have been no answers to our questions. Because you are technically following poor rules does not mean that you are acting in a transparent manner. It does not mean that you are participating in a process that includes all voices of the graduate students. And for that I would like for us to censure this report. Not because it is technically correct because it is philosophically reprehensible. We need to hear some reasons as to what is going on. That is all we want to know. For that I will not support this report.

- (President): To clarify, I certainly welcome any and every question from council and the GSA membership. And all executives welcome such questions. To my knowledge there has been no request for a meeting that has not been met. However, considering that it is my duty to ensure that every executive does his or her job I would like to encourage every person in the membership to please point out who has not accepted to meet with a councillor. And now in terms of how decisions were made – it was our understanding that the executive has the discretion to decide what conference to represent students on. Clearly that was in the minutes of the June 27th meetings. Personally, I don't think it is a big problem that one of the executives overlooked the minutes considering that he went

into the minutes and found this information and brought it to the attention to the executive and council.

- **Point of information:** At the last council meeting you put a motion to increase the budget for the executive travel fund. At that point it wasn't just the VP finance that was responsible, it was the entire executive. How do you explain that?
- (President): thank you very much for that question. At the last council meeting the executive was in no way asking to increase the budget. We had received funds from the university that we were trying to refer to other budget lines. We were in no way going into the savings of the GSA or trying to overspend the current budget. The motion moved by the VP finance was attempting to allocate 6000 received through the university under the reference GSA initiatives. I would be happy to provide a report about this in the next meeting should there be an interest in this.
- If you look at the June 27th minutes there was no vote taken. If you look through the minutes, there isn't a single vote in any of them. So who is making these decisions?
- (President): When no voting is recorded in the executive minutes it indicates consensus. Had there been any concerns raised, they would've been recorded in the minutes.
- I would like to speak against the motion because I don't understand what it means. I don't know what it means to censure a report. Especially after it has been presented to council. I would like to be informed.
- Answer: what it actually means is that council does not believe that this report is accurate, or that it is within the parameters of acceptable information. If I am wrong please correct me.
- It's not just we think it is inaccurate. It is that it is inaccurate OR unacceptable. There is a slight difference there. We can say you have given us accurate information but that information is unacceptable to us.
- If you look at how the September report compares to the October finance report, the executive travel fund decreases by 1,700 or something dollars. If you look at October finance report, that money can be seen in the discretionary fund. Also, it seems that the travel expenses have grown in total.
- Some of the claims of the travels were made after the conference. Although some of the executives were in conference in august, they claimed some reimbursement after the

September report which explains the changes. I think maybe as a point of information I ask the VP of operations to read policy 8.1.6 in finances. We are talking about this for a long time. And we need to talk about many other issues in this council.

Reading of 8.1.1.6. *The Executive shall have control of all money, subject to ratification of the budget by Course Council.*

- **Question is called:** no opposition.

- **Vote:** to censure the VP Finance report.

In favor 10, opposed 15, abstained 12. Motion not adopted.

7.9.2 Question: Apologizing to people who maybe this is their first meeting or what have you that this is all going on interruption: this is a question and answer section. There is a reason for all of this. It will be a bit clearer. I am wondering why the president said to wait for council to get the answer of a question that I asked via email. I want to know why the president refuses to answer emails from students who have concerns about what is happening. Just to explain I sent an email after last council meeting, the day after, asking what they were going to do next for the administration of the U-Pass in term 2. Also about the laptop. Doesn't matter the substance. I was rudely told I have to wait for council and it happens once a month for two hours and we are constantly told that we can't bring our stuff up so what are we supposed to do. I'm super frustrated to get simple answers to questions that would make this whole thing work a million times better.

Question: why didn't the president respond to my email?

Point of personal privilege: I feel the tone of the chair is mocking. Stop mocking people that are dissenting.

Overruled.

7.9.2.1 Answer (President): I would like to draw the attention of the gallery to Policy 3.1.1.3 “E-mail will not be used to resolve conflict. This may be used as a tool to schedule a meeting to solve conflict face to face only.” Every counselor can ask for a meeting. President has met with council members that had concerns and I am ready to meet at any time should the next scheduled council meeting be too far away.

7.9.2.2 Point of information: Are you saying that you didn’t reply or that you did reply and told her to wait till next council meeting?

7.9.2.3 (President): There was a reply saying that issues raised were important and should be addressed at the next council meeting.

7.9.2.4 Point of information: did you suggest a meeting?

7.9.2.5 (President): No I did not.

7.9.3 Question: Why hasn’t the executive been reporting decisions that they make in their executive meeting in the minutes? CFS we always go to, GU 15 was a special case. But the Vancouver conference? Was it discussed that the president could go to that? Because of all this lack of communication what is going on and who is making decisions and what money is being spent on what and who is making decision to spend that money, and questions are given the response to wait till next council meeting, and communication policies are being used to say we can’t resolve conflicts over email, I have to ask, what is there to hide? Have they been discussing things in executive meetings and why haven’t they been reported in the minutes and why aren’t you answering questions? What is there to hide?

7.9.3.1 Answer (President): I don’t understand the question what is to hide. To my knowledge there is absolutely nothing to hide. However, if any member of council would like a specific explanation on a particular issue I would be more than happy to go over it. I have had a meeting with counselor A. Reimer who promised to send me a summary with his recommendations. I

assume that he was busy and was unable to submit the summary to me. His only request at the end of the meeting was to better communicate, and we have been trying to send more information to the members in the last couple of weeks. Should there be specific information this council requires we are happy to provide it.

7.9.4 Question: Is the president saying she will follow up to these emails? If there have been discussions why weren't they reported in the executive meeting minutes and what is the process of answering the questions?

7.9.4.1 Answer: (President): Councillors submit requests and the answers will be provided at next council meeting.

7.9.5 Question: Are you saying that you will not be answering any of these questions via email but only at the meetings?

7.9.5.1 Answer: (President): I am trying to say that I cannot make that commitment. Oftentimes things come out of nowhere and we end up having 5 meetings on the temporary bus eservice. We can attempt but I cannot make that promise.

7.9.6 Question: Was the 1673 from the discretionary fund approved by council as per Policy 8.1.1.11 and 8.1.1.12? And if so why is it not recorded anywhere?

7.9.6.1 Answer (President): Reading 8.1.1.11. All discretionary expenditures greater than 10% of the budget item or 1% of the total annual budget as approved at the previous AGM, whichever is greater, requires GSA Council approval (simple majority). Since the amount in question is less than 1% of the total budget, 8.1.1.11 is no applicable.

7.9.6.1.1 Reading 8.1.1.12. 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. This expenditure was discussed with the

executives at the meeting. If there is an item on the agenda and there is a clear understanding that the executive has no objection to it we don't go through the motions of voting. However if there is an objection we go to a vote. So the reason there is no vote is that there was no objection.

7.9.7 Point of information: Is the Executive committee subject to Robert's rules of order?

7.9.7.1 (President): I'm not sure.

7.9.7.2 Chair: I will check and get back to you.

8.0 Quorum has been lost (34 voting members present).

9.0 Meeting adjourned at 7:25pm.