

The University of Saskatchewan Graduate Students' Association



Council Meeting Minutes Wednesday, March 16, 2016 5:00 P.M. – 7:00 P.M. GSA Commons

1. Call to Order

Called to order at 5:06.

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1jCDi1AJ7tYDnLmd5Hx-HWo_dhFCNkUMgUj2FLPb7A/edit?pli=1%23gid%3D0&pref=2&pli=1#gid=0

2. Announcements

- a. **Announcement of new academic councils** - none
- b. **Establishment of quorum** - established

3. Approval of Agenda

VP Finance – permission to add update from Health and Dental providers. No discussion.
Motion to approve, carried.

Presentation:

Wendy Roy and Scott Adams – Committee President Stoicheff put together to look at mission, vision, and values of U of S.

- Showcased website, showed a video from President Stoicheff
- Two page document succinctly outlining mission, vision, values to be established – all graduate students encouraged to provide feedback
- Committee wants to hear from: faculty; staff; students; governing bodies; alumni; donors; government (provincial and municipal); Aboriginal community; community influencers
- Online surveys in February and April; in-person meetings; emails sent to ourvision@usask.ca; institutional documents: strategic directions, integrated plans, previous missions
- Consultation with students: exploratory survey (phase one), survey post-draft (phase two, April)
- Timeline – surveys and consultations in February and March, first draft for feedback in April, May revised document, ratified by September.
- Questions for feedback:
 - o What makes or could make the U of S unique/distinct among Canadian universities?
 - Canadian Light Source and other unique research instruments;
 - Largest percentage of international graduate students in Canada
 - Increase support and focus on research at the graduate level
 - Emphasize collaboration between departments
 - Spearheaded projects by faculty for research projects
 - o What words or phrases do you think of when you think of the U of S today? In ten years?

- Indigenization
- Heritage
- What are the most important values for the university to articulate?
 - Multiculturalism
 - Emphasize teaching as part of the inherent values, beyond research
 - Environmental sustainability
- What should our aspirations be locally? Globally?
 - Local - Education through provincial reach
 - Local - Become a leader in sharing the multicultural traditions and cultures, breaking some stereotypes that exist today
 - Local - Community development and outreach
 - Local - Development of bilateral relationships between the city and the university
 - Global – taking a role in the goals of food security
 - Global and local – increase visibility (especially of our national laboratories, like CLS, Aquatic toxicology, etc.)
- Other comments:
 - Should be thinking about entering realms of unique programs – ex: optometry, architecture, etc.

<http://www.usask.ca/ourvision/> - for more feedback

Health and Dental Plan Update:

- Financial analysis being done presently.
- Health plans are textbook, do not anticipate increase
- Dental – claims up 29% for the six months of this year from last year
- The plans are meeting the needs of students as per present analysis
- No increases in terms of cost of plan are anticipated, however if increased claims projection happens then it may have impact on future costs of dental plan.

4. Approval of Council Minutes

a. February 17, 2016 Council Minutes

Motion to approve?

Discussion:

- Chemical Engineering Councillor: we don't see a list of attendees in the meeting minutes from last meeting. Motion to postpone Approval of February 17th minutes to next meeting. Seconded. Carried.
- February Council Minutes' approval to be added to agenda

b. Review Voting Allocations

5. Motion to receive Executive Reports for information – not more than two (2) minutes each

a. Aboriginal Liaison Report

- Regrets

b. VP External Report

- GSA Week planning took up most of her last month. Gala was very successful. Mayor and Minister of Justice were in attendance. Video is uploaded on the GSA account YouTube.
- Attended Positive Space workshop, and WUSC China Light performance – fundraising for Refugees.
- ISEC attended
- Health Chat on movement, some professors were in attendance and really liked it. Will have another Health Chat on March 30, facilitated by a professor from the school of Public Health

c. VP Finance Report

- Report was circulated with more details.
- Some preliminary expenditures and revenues listed in the report, will have full financial report will be ready by end of month.
- Provincial election forum and meet-and-greet held, high attendance, great questions. Encourages students to bring post-secondary education issues to the provincial representatives.
- Went to parking and transportation committee. Parking rates will be going up 5%, based on prevalent market rates. Drop-off and unloading zones in residences will be removed and replaced. There are a lot of walking paths, and people have been driving on them, so they will be placing barriers (boulders and bike racks) to prohibit vehicular use of walking paths.

d. VP Operations and Communications Report

- Represented Library committee and President's award committee
- GSA Student Advocacy Steering Committee – report is ready now.
- GSA Achievement Week – very successful, with a lot of great feedback.
- Tomorrow will be a Winter Bursary Committee meeting, announcing winners; apologies for tardiness on this bursary.

e. VP Academic Report

- Regrets

f. VP Student Affairs Report

- Has been addressing student issues with residency over the last couple of months.
- Childcare services is coming up a lot, current spaces for childcare are for undergraduate students, with wait-lists for Graduate Students
- Met with Childcare Advocacy Steering committee to shift policy to be more inclusive of graduate students' childcare needs.
- Newly constructed residency – certain portions of it has been allocated to graduate students but as of yet are not fixed.
- Sitting on the committee discussing next dean of CGSR, encourages students to engage with this process and send comments to the CGSR Dean selection committee.
- Preparing a final report for the end of the year, for the AGM in April.

g. President Report

- GSA Week was a huge part of working this last year.
- Has been speaking to people in senior admin, they are very interested in how we have been doing the events and are interested in providing sustainable

- Tuition consultation is officially over – the issue is that the surveys we have had are not going to be effective; still has the data and will collate it and create some statistics, encourages any who are interested in collaborating on that project to contact him
- Planning a poster campaign for the provincial election – getting out the vote of graduate students.
- Annual reports for the GSA will be comprehensive, if anyone wishes to contribute to that in terms of photos or information, contact him.
- GSA Executive has approved year end social on April 27th
- Thank you to council, this is our last council meeting.

h. Q&A – not more than ten (10) minutes

- Chemical Engineering Councillor – Thanks for the success of GSA Week. In the past meetings, we saw that the VP Student Affairs was missing from various meetings – question for Executive: Are there problems between the VP Student Affairs and President? Why was he missing?
 - o VP Student Affairs – missed only one executive meeting, due to scheduling conflict. Has missed two GSA Council Meetings, so the question does not represent actuality of absence rate.
- Computer Science Councillor – Has not received emails of GSA Council announcements and minutes, even though his contact information has been updated.
 - o VP Operations – It is our responsibility to provide this information to you, apologizes that the contact information update was not done. It is the Chair Person responsibility to notify the council and update the councillor list. Chairperson apologizes for missing CS Councillor, if there is an update to contact information please contact Chair Immediately.
- GSA Week Gala Coordinator – VP Student Affairs did not have any contributions to the GSA Achievement Week, did not attend the gala, was not present for any of the photos. Further, he worked very hard on the funding applications for CFS Saskatchewan, and noticed that VP Student Affairs also did not participate in those
 - o VP Student Affairs – calls into question the integrity of the GSA Week Gala Coordinator, citing a potential personal attack. VP SA suggests that there was no correspondence sent to him by the coordinator, and that he did in fact make contributions to the . Secondly, re: CFS Saskatchewan, VP SA was selected to go to Regina to the CFS meeting, but was not given any information about when to be going by VP External, suggesting that VP External and President moved to attend the meeting to represent the U of S in place of VP Student Affairs.
- Chemical Engineering Councillor – Based on the current documents for the GSA agenda, there is no documentation that the VP Student Affairs attended the last two executive meetings, and several other meetings. He is basing his question on GSA minutes.
 - o VP Finance – Encourages all executive members to remember that they are public servants
 - o VP Student Affairs – Admits that February 24th meeting was missed, November meeting conflicted with another meeting that VP SA was representing GSA at.

Time has expired.

6. Motion to receive committee minutes

- a. **Executive Meeting, February 24, 2016**
- b. **Executive Meeting, March 9, 2016**

Motion to receive. Seconded. Carried.

7. New Business

- a. **Motion: That the 2016/2017 operating budget for the financial year to commence May 1, 2016 be approved as presented.**

Link to 2016/17 Operating Budget:

<https://app.box.com/s/x4tol9epzp68ashalid8ik4n0m7ac1nz>

- VP Finance – Thanks to budget and finance committee for their hard work on this.
 - o March 1st – YTD amounts have changed, and most accurate amounts are on report (goes up to March 12)
 - o Opens floor to any comments or questions about the present budget

VP Finance Moves to adopt the Budget. Seconded.

- VP Operations asks if there is a possibility to increase the \$7,000 budget line 88 to \$10,000

Motion to increase budget line 88 from \$7,000 to \$10,000. Seconded. Discussion.

VP Finance moves to amend the amendment by including that: we move \$5,000 from Campus Legal Services fund to budget line 88.

Motion to reduce the CLS budget line by \$5,000, and adding \$3,000 to budget line 88. Seconded. Discussion.

- President – we should ensure there is policy in place for how the money will be used
- VP Operations – there is an established condition as to where that money should be spent, although it is not a policy it is a memorandum of understanding that seems sufficient.

Motion to remove \$5,000 from the CLS Budget Line and add \$3,000 to the budget line 88. Seconded. Carried.

Motion to adopt budget. Seconded. Discussion.

- Councillor – proposes that the carry-overs are not displayed as revenues but rather to add a column of carry-overs. Motion to amend budget to include carry-overs as opposed to revenues. Seconded. Carried.

Motion to adopt the budget. Seconded. Carried.

**b. Review of Certain Events of the 2014/2015 Financial Year
See attached document, pages 31-32 of the Agenda Package.**

Allegations of financial impropriety from last year addressed:

- In November, VP finance resigned, and another executive began collecting their stipend.

- March 10th a new VP Finance was selected, and according to lawyers obtained it was a legal fact; but he did not receive any stipends, the stipends still went to the Executive.
- Payments were made to an executive for taking minutes with their laptop, has been reimbursed.

Positive shifts moving forward:

- All cheques must be signed by TWO executives, neither of whom the cheque is addressed to.
- Budget transparency and detailed budget breakdown accessible by entire council.
- If an executive steps down, there will be an immediate by-election and there will be no vacancies on the GSA executive for any period.

Motion that the report form the review of certain events of the 2014/2015 financial year be received as information. Seconded.

Questions on the issue invited:

- Councillor: How is it guaranteed that someone could not sign their own cheques?
 - o VP Finance: The by-laws have now been changed to include “an executive may not sign their own cheques.” See: Financial by-law 5.1.6
- VP Student Affairs – We have new bylaws, and if they are respected internally then it is fine. But if they decide to sign the cheques, against the by-laws, then the bank will cash them. We need to ensure that the bank is updated on these bylaws.
 - o VP Finance – this is true, as most cheque signatures are not verified. In theory, this could happen again. But the bylaws at the GSA do reflect that, and the Executive will explore facets to avoiding such problematic occurrence as this again.
 - o VP Student Affairs – Suggests that there may be a way to set up signature recognition guarantees.
 - o VP Operations
- President – All the expenses that were unapproved by the previous executive are still able to be recovered. It will be a civil case, and would be a relatively large expense for the GSA.
- Councillor: Do we have a total of the amount of misappropriated funds?
 - o VP Finance – the receiving of the VP Finance stipend was not technically a violation of past practices, bylaws, or the constitution. \$616.03 is the amount that was misappropriated, from March 10th onward. A criminal investigation was undertaken but it was deemed not in the public interest to pursue charges.

Motion that the report form the review of certain events of the 2014/2015 financial year be received as information. Seconded. Carried.

8. Questions and Answers:

- Orientation meeting on March 29th – mandatory for all prospective candidates. Nominations will open following this meeting.
- VP Student Affairs – Apologizes to council for inappropriate language in debates today. Wishes to let council know that he came into the role of VP Student Affairs to serve the needs of the students, and has kept that as his priority for the past year in this position. He is not wanting to contest any accusations against him, but to let council know that in his role he served the interests of the GSA membership only, and that membership remains his priority as he carries out his term.
- Councillor Engineering – to follow up, does not accept the apology and wishes to reiterate that the question was “what was the contribution of the VP Student Affairs in the GSA Week and Gala” and this question has not been answered. Re-poses this question.

- The Chair wishes not to recognize this question for this council meeting's purposes – encourages parties to seek conflict resolution.
- VP Student Affairs wishes to challenge the Chair's motion to disallow this questions – it is within council's rights to ask questions. Motion to appeal the Chair's ruling. Not seconded. Fails.
- President – Please encourage people to stand in these elections. The USSU has done a great job this year encouraging students to become involved in student politics; please consider running.
- Councillor – is on the bargaining committee for the Graduate Student Union – encourages all students to contribute feedback on needs and issues of Graduate Student Body to the bargaining committee.

9. Next meeting: April 27th at 5pm in the GSA Commons

This will be the last council meeting. The Chair wishes to thank the council and the Executive for their service throughout the course of the 2015-2016 academic year.

10. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned 6:48.