

The University of Saskatchewan Graduate Students' Association



Council Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, September 27, 2016. 5:00 P.M. onwards

GSA Commons

Executives: Ziad Ghaith (President), Kusum Sharma (VP Finance), Carolyn Gasper (VP External), Shailza Sapal (VP Student Affairs), Ali Kiani (VP Academic), Nafisa Absher (VP Operations and Communications), Mylan Tootosis (Aboriginal Liaison).

1 Call to Order: GSA President call the meeting to order at 5:07 PM.

2 Announcements

2.1 Quorum

- Quorum is achieved by default as it is first meeting of this academic year.

3 Approval of Chair

- President nominates Robert Henderson as temporary chair to chair this Council meeting.
- President invited Robert to introduce himself to the Council.
- Robert introduced himself as a graduate student pursuing MBA at U of Saskatchewan, previously did PhD in Physics from U of Waterloo.
- Robert was a GSA executive at U of Waterloo for three years, out of which for one year he was as GSA President.
- Robert leaves the room as the President calls for voting the chair.

- All in favour and Robert is appointed as Chair for this meeting.

4 Approval of Agenda

- Robert asked Council if there is any addition to agenda.
- GSA President did addition to agenda and that is presentation by CFS.
- Robert called for motion for amendment to agenda.
- Motion passed and seconded.
- No further discussion done on agenda.

5 Approval of Council Minutes

5.1 June 21st, 2016 Council Meeting (Attached [here](#)).

5.2 August 23rd, 2016 Council Meeting (Attached [here](#)).

- Motion passed and seconded. No discussion done.
- Minutes approved unanimously.

6 Invited presentation

6.1 University Library Master Plan (Rachel Sarjeant-Jenkins, Associate Dean and Head, Law Library)

Rachel informed

- University library is currently developing a master plan for all the libraries at the campus.
- Did stakeholder sessions, sessions with various faculty councils and public consultation being done using public booths.
- Students comment about library spaces and facilities.
- Focus is mainly on library spaces. We want to know the needs of students regarding library spaces. We have 7 libraries at the U of S campus scattered around campus.
- Every library is not same and is arranged according to the disciplines it caters to. So, we are not talking about a cookie cutter approach regarding our libraries.

- Ali Kiani, VP Academics is on one of our stakeholders group and on our facilities planning group as well. So, graduate students have a voice in library planning.
- We are here to collect ideas from graduate students regarding what library spaces they need.
- With Rachel, 2 representatives (Laura Platz and Bianca Hilbert) from architectural group who were contracted to actually do the library master planning were present.

Laura informed

- She is principal and architect at Group2 Architecture and Interior Design here in Saskatoon.
- This master plan associated with the libraries is really building upon the work we initiated in 2012 where we were just looking at the Murray library at that point doing a master plan and schematic plan for renovation work to be conducted there.
- Big part of this project is identifying and hearing from different groups on campus. Connected with several groups such as GSA. Did session at GSA in July'16.
- Pop-up consultation done being done throughout the campus. Encouraged people to go to our website to provide comments/feedback.
- We are hearing from students about what components need to be included in all of the branch libraries and what special components should be considered for the distinct locations.
- Broadly, we are hearing that students are asking for quite spaces for studying and meeting rooms.
- Other special components we are hearing are visualization labs that we have seen in other campuses across North America, places to take a break through music or meditation, research spaces and makerspaces.

Q/A:

Q: Does university has offsite storage space?

- Rachel said that we do have storage offsite but we do have storage space on campus and we will be working over next few months to expand the storage capacity.

Q: How long the consultation process happens?

- Rachel said that we are continuing to consult through the month of September and then also using the inputs from sessions like this and as well as the website continuing into the early weeks of October and then wrap it up. After that we will present it to our stakeholders group so that they can give us feedback and then ultimately having it ready for presentation to the steering committee in December.

Q: Students would like to see maximum journals available online. What's your plan for that?

- Rachel said one of the things we have been talking about is the collections spaces and to make sure that digital collections are available as well as physical collections are available in an appropriate manner.

Q: Sociology students would like to see more computer labs dedicated for graduate students. In Arts and Science department, we have only 8 computers in the graduate student lab and it is hard for them to access university software's as they are available on university computers only. It is tough for graduate students to use those software's and collaborate with other graduate students.

- Rachel asked the student about the devices they need to collaborate like multiple touch screens up on the wall where they can have swipe able and interactive components or one large screen where they can all see the common information at the same time. Student said we would like to have one large screen and our own separate computers. Student asked for a space designated for a graduate students and if they can book spaces like SSRL as they have lot of computers. Rachel said that I am assuming that

being bookable will be a key component. Student gave an example of Murray library as the rooms there are bookable.

Comment by a student: Graduate students would like to access Murray library 24*7.

- Rachel added that she has got suggestions from some groups about the need of child friendly spaces associated with the library.

Comment by a student: Moving things in storage is a good way to make space for new journals. This way the space can be increased and we can have more computer screens and it will be useful for students.

- Rachel said that consolidation of the material is being considered. Making sure the material is still accessible and at the same time making more space for new computers and journals.

Comment by a student: A Student said they write lot of code and lot of repositories. Library can teach people how to manage code and how to manage repositories.

- Rachel said if you do have any other thoughts we would love to hear from you. The website library.usask.ca/libraryplanning has information about the master plan and it also has information about consultation sessions. There is text box at the bottom to enter comments or you can email at libraryplanning@library.usask.ca for more feedback.

6.2 Presentation by Canadian Federation of Students (Carissa Taylor, National Chairperson, CFS)

Carissa informed

- She is National Graduate Caucus Chairperson of the CFS.
- CFS represents 6,50,000 students across Canada. It has a national body and has provincial components as well.
- CFS operates in a democratic way and no matter what the size of the local body is, they get to participate equally in decision making in National General meetings.
- CFS primarily offers services, campaigns and advocacy/lobbying. Services include things like student handbooks. We ensure our products are ethically

produced. We offer ISIC card for students which can be availed to get air travel discounts internationally.

- CFS runs ethical purchasing network. We use our bulk purchasing power across the country in order to get really good prices for sustainable goods. We have t-shirts and other textiles developed and produced by single mothers in El-Salvador. We offer notebooks made by Unifor workers here in Canada.
- CFS also offers student saver discount cards and also working on getting student better discounts throughout the country.
- CFS lobbies both at provincial and national level to talk about the things that matter to students such as accessible tuition fee, elimination of student debt, removal of interest on student loans. CFS has provincial lobby week here in Saskatchewan in October to make sure the decision makers understand what issues are important to students.
- CFS runs lot of campaigns such as “No means no” campaign and is spreading material for it, and also talk about “Consent culture” to end sexual, gender based violence and spread awareness. CFS also has materials for “No more stolen sisters”, which is a campaign to talk about missing and murdered indigenous women.
- CFS is running health campaigns where we talk about graduate students need mental health facilities. CFS run campaigns to support international students whether that is through elimination of international differential fee or lobbying to include international students under provincial health coverage that right now in most provinces students have to pay extra for.
- CFS has lot of materials to help students doing jobs at campus such as Teaching Assistant to learn about to how they can interact with unionised workers working at campus.
- CFS has graduate students’ specific campaigns such as Anti-corporatization campaign. We will have a video coming out in the last week of October during CAUT employment week in which we talk about how corporate agenda has impacted student’s experiences on university campuses whether that is through the commercialization of research or research being

funded only if it has potential to make money, or it is through governance, or corporations being able to buy voices in decision making bodies. We also talk about high tuitions fees, student debts and problems associated to it.

- Day of action is happening on Nov 2nd, 2016. There are three primary pillars which we are talking about. First is Education justice in which we recognize that poor and marginalized students are often not getting access to post secondary education. Second is Universal access in which we believe regardless of student's background and family they belong to; they should have access to post secondary education. Last is Public education for the public good. When we talk about having free education, we don't mean a chronically underfunded system as it reduces the quality of education. Government should be investing in strong public services including post secondary education so that everybody is able to access it and it ends up being benefit to society and not only to an individual.
- On November 2nd, we will have day of action at Bowl here at U of S between 3.30-4 PM to talk about the importance of public education. Feel free to talk to us and ask questions. Even we are a national body we respect the autonomy of our local bodies.

Q: Kusum Sharma asked Carrissa to explain Student saver cards.

A: Carrissa said that students can use ISIC cards for the same purpose. Student saver cards are student discount cards. We are trying to get discounts from local businesses for students using Students saver cards. It is not like SPC. For SPC, student has to pay for the card whereas for Student saver cards, students don't pay. Carissa requested students to contact GSA if they know local businesses which would be interested to participate in Student saver cards program.

7 Executives Reports`

7.1.1 VP Finance Report (Oral report).

- Organized Financial Literacy workshop on September, 13th 2016 held at GSA Commons attended by approximately 50 students. Workshop was about budgeting, credit cards, loans. Got good feedback.
- Another such workshop will be held in first or second week of January, 2017. Encouraged students to attend it.
- GSA will be lending a loan amount of \$ 10,000 for 3 years to the winner of Tech Venture Challenge. However, the conditions agreement for the same has not been finalized yet. Kevin Smith (Corporate lawyer, U of S) and Thomas (Industry Liaison Office) will be helping with drafting the agreement.
- Worked in Scholarship committee. Reviewed 63 applications. 4 students got Marian Evans Younger, John Labbat and TD Insurance scholarships.
- In October, Kusum will be sitting in NSERC award committee to review around 250 applications.
- Attended various GSA executive meetings.

7.1.2 VP External Report (Attached [here](#))

- Helped to organize/manage volunteers and purchase items for GSA Orientation.
- Going to meet with Eleonore coming Thursday, the executive assistant to the Dean of College of Graduate Studies to go over the survey proposal. Circulated the draft to the members of the committee.
- Met with CFS, to talk about to how we can mobilise students on campus to participate on the day of action and what students want to happen on this day.
- Health chats are back. Nafisa and Carolyn did one in early September and it was on stress reduction and providing Yoga to our members. Working with volunteers and planning more of such events in October. I also was able to write a proposal to Student Care to receive funding for such events.

- Began planning Gala. Expect it to be around end of March or beginning of April. Currently looking at two venues right now to get quotes.
- Taken over GSA Guppies from Dana. Registered 4 teams with approximately 60 members.
- Established working relations with executive members at the University of Alberta, University of Manitoba, and University of Calgary, to share best-practices related to graduate student issues in the Prairies region.
- Running “No more stolen sisters” campaign with the Indigenous student council. It will occur on October 4th at White Buffalo Youth Lodge.
- Attended around 20 meetings in the past month for GSA.

7.1.3 VP Operations Report (Attached [here](#)).

- Worked for Sexual awareness week started which started yesterday with the launch of the React campaign.
- The React campaign is basically telling people that the University and GSA will not tolerate sexual assault on campus. We acknowledge that sexual assault does occur on campus. So, if any student needs help, contact GSA. Ziad and Carolyn also participated in this campaign. USafe app came out yesterday.
- Health chats are back. Next will happen sometime in October.
- Mobile GSA app came out on September, 6th during GSA Orientation. Encouraged students to download and ask friends to download as well. It is a great platform to enhance our community and engage with one another.

7.1.4 VP Academic Report (Oral report).

- Attended some committee meetings like research scholarly, artistic work committee, committee of council and facilities planning working group, university council meeting and university library trans-steering committee.
- Meeting with Adam for student problems. 3 new students having academic problems and will follow up with them.
- Meeting with Peter and Patti for discussion regarding having Ombudsperson at the university.

- Had social media workshop on September, 20th 2016 at GSA.
- We will have industry talk at the GSA commons on September 30th and we are working with student career centre.
- We will have a blanket exercise and it will with aboriginal history and issues.

7.1.5 VP Student Affairs Report (Oral report)

- Attended lots of meetings with College of Graduate Studies and University Council.
- GSA Orientation BBQ is the biggest event which falls under VP Student Affairs profile. 1300+ students attended which is more than last year.
- People praised and gave advices regarding food preferences by students.
- Contacted various colleges and students to recruit GSA councillors.
- Trying to increase the number of councillors from all the departments.
- Working on Graduate student survey which will be the first survey to be launched. GSA President along with VP Academics and VP External are also helping with it. Formed the survey committee and we meet 2 times a month.
- Will be covering different areas in the survey. One of them will be covering both the academic and non-academic issues which international students face when they are new here. Another will be student wellness both demographic and academic. Hoping to launch by end of October or starting of November.
- Informed about Wine and Cheese Social happening at GSA Commons on October 30th, 2016 within the hours of 6.00 to 9.00 PM.

7.1.6 Aboriginal Liaison Report (Oral report).

- Elected last Thursday to Indigenous Student Graduate Council.
- U of S is speaking about indigenising the university. So, graduate students' inputs in regards to indigenous people on the graduate and undergraduate level is very important at this time.
- Will be providing support to GSA to help navigate some of those socio-political issues that indigenous students go through.

- Indigenous students' population is growing on campus. So, one of the things we want to concentrate on is that survey to assess what dynamics are these indigenous graduate students existing under here at U of S. It will help us provide the services to indigenous graduate students.
- One thing that keeps coming up from the previous administration is that there is a lot of discussion on the terms "Indigenous" and "Aboriginal". Indigenous is an international term. So, IGSC is open to other indigenous people from other parts of the world to partake in our council meetings.

7.1.7 President Report (Attached [here](#)).

- Glad to see new and old graduate students at GSA Orientation BBQ interacting.
- Working on improving graduate representation in different university committees including the Board of Governors and University Council. In the university council, there is only 1 voting graduate student whereas there are 8 voting students representing undergraduate students. In the board of governors, there is only one seat for graduate students.
- Talked to University administration, Deans of various colleges, Secretary of the university and formally sent a letter to the minister of Advanced Education to help the GSA to get representation for the better future of the university.
- Unfortunately, got negative response from the Government and that was expected as opening the University act to add new representation to the Board of Governors is a long and complicated process.
- On October 5th, I will meet the Saskatchewan Government to discuss the importance of graduate students' representation in the Board of Governors, and the provincial support for the postsecondary education in Saskatchewan.
- Working with Associate Dean of College of Graduate studies and Research to formulate the relation between supervisor and student. The goal is to make all the parties in this relationship accountable. Dean invited Ziad to present draft of agreement/memorandum of understanding.
- Graduate surveys goal is to get information from different groups of graduate students to use it as a tool to advocate for graduate students.

Encouraged councillors to inform other students regarding the survey.

- Working for Day of Action happening on November, 2nd 2016. The goal is to request the provincial government to freeze the tuition fee, increase post-secondary education funding and increase the grants for aboriginal students.
- Working with CFS representative to promote the Day of Action event. Working with the University Council to pass a motion to ensure academic accommodation for those students who would like to be part of the day of action.
- Represented the GSA at 35 meetings in the month of September.
- Thanked newly elected councillors to be the part of council and invited graduate students and post doctoral fellows to Wine and Cheese social happening on September, 30th 2016. Also informed that it is 19+ event.

7.1.8 Q&A

Q: One of the councillor asked about GSA council and the role of the councillors.

A: Ziad said that GSA council is a governance body where councillors get to know about work done by the GSA executives in council meetings and approve the important decisions. A GSA Councillor is a key connection between their department and the GSA. A Councillor can get inputs from their department and bring it to GSA Council for discussion. A Councillor's duty is to communicate about the decisions taken in GSA Council meetings to the graduate students in their department.

- Ziad added that in October, GSA Councillors' orientation will happen, where we will discuss about the role of council and councillors.

8 Committee Minutes

8.1 Website Committee meeting minutes (6/6/2016) (**Attached [here](#)**)

8.2 Website Committee meeting minutes (11/7/2016) (**Attached [here](#)**)

8.3 Summer Bursary Selection Committee meeting minutes (**Attached [here](#)**)

8.4 Executives Meeting Minutes (16/8/2016) (**Attached [here](#)**)

- 8.5 Executive Meeting Minutes (7/9/2016) (**Attached [here](#)**)
- 8.6 Executive Meeting Minutes (20/9/2016) (**Attached [here](#)**)
- 8.7 Executives Meeting Minutes (19/7/2016) (**Attached [here](#)**).
- 8.8 Executives Meeting Minutes (14/6/2016) (**Attached [here](#)**).
- 8.9 Executive Retreat Minutes (15/5/2016) (**Attached [here](#)**).
- 8.10 Executives Meeting Minutes (10/5/2016) (**Attached [here](#)**).d

- Moved and seconded. Motion carried unanimously. All the above mentioned meeting minutes got approved.

9 Approval of Social Clubs

- The chair seeks the approval of these two social clubs.
- GSA president mentioned that these clubs have sent their ratification for this year, and they were ratified last year.

9.1 Focus club

Q: Councillor Seth asked What is Focus Club?

A: President Ghaith answered that he is not in a position to speak on behalf of the club, but this club submitted all the required documents for approval.

- Councillor Seth, moved to separate the approval of these 2 clubs, and to postpone approval of Focus club until next council meeting motion passed.
- Councillor Seth moved a motion to postpone the approval of ratification of Focus Club.
- Motion passed to take up the approval of ratification of Focus Club to the next council meeting and seconded.

9.2 Let's Talk Science Outreach

Q: Councillor asked What are they doing?

A: They organize workshops for science students regarding their field of

studies.

- Councillor Isaac Pratt commented that I used to be coordinator for Lets talk science. The goal is to bring science to kids in schools. They present experiments in classes and go to communities. I don't know what they are doing with GSA money.

Q: Councillor asked how much money is allocated to the Let's talk Science?

A: Ziad answered that according to our constitution, we can allot up to 500 dollars.

Shailza added we as GSA executives look if the Club or Association applying for ratification is doing something for graduate students and how beneficial it is for graduate students. We check their cause when they come for ratification application.

- Carried unanimously. Motion is approved and seconded by Ziad.

10 Old Business

10.1 Motion: GSA Budget (Kusum Sharma/Ziad Ghaith)

- Kusum introduced the Motion to the council.
- Councillor Isaac Pratt asked a question "Why do we need two revenue lines?"
- Kusum said that One of the revenue line will be accommodating is ISIC sales. Another one will be focused on only those sales which GSA might do in the future and has done in the past years. It will not be mixed with ISIC card revenue line.
- After the discussion, Kusum would like to amend the motion.

The Amended motion is as follows:

WHEREAS the GSA receives revenues from its ISIC card service

WHEREAS the aforementioned revenue must be included in the financial statements of the GSA for financial transparency

WHEREAS the GSA recently sold its non functional vending machine and has generated revenue as a consequence

WHEREAS the vending machine revenue must be included in the financial statements of the GSA for financial transparency substantive

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the GSA introduce two additional budget revenue lines called 'ISIC card' and 'sales'

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a budget expense line called 'ISIC Card' be introduced for expenses related to improving the service

- Carried unanimously. Motion is approved and seconded by Ziad.

10.2 Motion: GSA Budget (Carolyn Gasper/Ziad Ghaith)

Preamble

The University of Saskatchewan Graduate Student Association (GSA) attends GU15 conferences as an informal sharing body of best practices. In August 2016, 7 out of 9 school attendees at the GU15 conference voted for incorporation.

The new name of the incorporation is “ThinkGRAD” (Graduate Research and Development), the first graduate think tank in Canada. This think tank will expand its memberships to other universities with strong research vigour and try to understand the Canadian graduate student experience through research.

The incorporation of “ThinkGRAD” is to hold schools accountable for their duties and to help graduate student lobby internally within the UofS administrative for students’ matters on campus and nationally with supporting data.

The GSA will play a historical part of “ThinkGRAD” by hosting the first “ThinkGRAD” conference in April 2017.

This motion is a reaffirmation of the GSA’s commitment to the GU15 conference.

WHEREAS incorporating “ThinkGRAD” will help our association to work and cooperate with other Graduates associations in Canada

WHEREAS The incorporation of “ThinkGRAD” is to hold schools accountable for their duties and to help graduate student lobby internally within the UofS administrative for students’ matters on campus and nationally with supporting data.

BE IT RESOLVED the GSA Council allocate \$1100 dollars from the unallocated fund revenue budget line toward this incorporation

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED the GSA agrees, in principle, to levy a student fee of up to \$.50 per member, per term (Term 1 and Term 2 of the UofS academic year), to be paid to the “ThinkGRAD” membership fees as an on-going financial contribution to participate in future conferences.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the final decision to approve or disapprove a levied fee shall be made through a referendum, pursuant to Section 4.18.8 of the GSA By-laws, held during Term 2 of the 2016-2017 U of S academic year;

- Ziad recommended to take this motion to the next council meeting. Would like to wait till next meeting to have complete council present. Asked chair to move the motion to October 18th, 2016 meeting.
- Ziad asked councillors to read the motion as it is very important motion and asked councillors to come with insights and inputs in next council meeting.

Q: Is it for profit?

A: Carolyn said that It is not for profit.

Q: What is the benefit?

A: Carolyn said that currently CFS is an undergraduate ran body and they don't do research in terms of graduate student experience. It will help CFS understand and address Graduate students' issues and advocate for graduate students at both provincial and national levels..

Q: What is the history of CFS regarding advocating graduate student issues?

A: Carloyn made no comment.

Ziad added that he is not in position to comment as a GSA president but promoting as a graduate student.

Nafisa added that right now in Canada there is no evidence based decision making for graduate students. This will help in issues regarding graduate students. It will enhance our advocacy.

Ziad said we had discussion with College of Arts and Science. They are willing to provide money for the same and it is a positive response.

11 Q&A.

- No questions asked.

12 Next GSA Council Meeting 18th of October 2016

- Ziad invited everybody to GSA Wine and Cheese Social and asked to help GSA regarding day of action. Asked students to contact GSA to know more regarding Day of Action.
- Nafisa said that as part of Sexual Awareness Week, GSA will be having conference on Thursday and asked to join people.
- Chair added that Councillors' Orientation will happen next month and it is important for GSA Councillors to attend to have better understanding of their roles and responsibilities.

13 Adjournment

- Meeting adjourned at 6.52 PM