



**University of Saskatchewan
Graduate Students' Association
Council Meeting
Minutes from Tuesday March 20, 2018**

Present: Marissa Evans (Archaeology and Anthropology), Janelle Smith (Animal and Poultry Science), Karolina Pusz-Bochenska (Biology), Zoe Gillespie, Chelsea Cunningham, Britney Lins (College of Medicine), Morgan Kirzinger, Rifat Zahan (Computer Science), Troy Shapley (Edwards School of Business), Jose Alvin Berkenbrock (Electrical Engineering), Sudipto Mondol, Saman Naghieh (Biomedical Engineering), Afolabi Ayeni (Chemical Engineering), Bethany Thiessen (Geography and Planning), John Bird (History), Indiana Best (Indigenous Graduate Student Council), Amanda Galas-Wilson (Microbiology and Immunology), Nadia Hoosain (Johnson Shoyama), Jocelyn Blouin (Kinesiology), Mona Hamada (Pharmacy and Nutrition), Evan Poncelet (Psychology), Viktoria Hinz (School of Environment and Sustainability), Jovey Sharma (School of Public Health), Samuel Schultz (Sociology), Jennifer Bell (Soil Science), Katherine Raes (Toxicology), Breanne Murray (Western College of Veterinary Medicine)

Executives and Board: Ziad Ghaith (President), David Bennett (VP Finance and Operations), Ali Kiani (VP Student Affairs), Naheda Sahtout (VP External), Iloradanon Efimoff (Indigenous Liaison), Logan Pizzey (Board Member)

Organization of the Meeting: Dr. Scott Adams acted as the Chairperson. The Chair acknowledged Treaty 6 Territory and Homeland of the Métis people and indicated that the meeting was properly constituted. The Indigenous Liaison acted as recording secretary for the duration of the meeting. The VP External compiled the minutes into the final document.

OPEN SESSION

Call to Order (Item 1)

Meeting called to order at 5:00 PM.

Approval of the Agenda (Item 2)

The Chairperson asked if there were any amendments to the agenda as distributed. Hearing none, the Chairperson asked for a motion to approve the agenda.

Motion to approve the agenda as distributed. Moved by Ali Kiani. Seconded by David Bennett.

Motion carried.

Moment of Silence (Item 3)

The GSA received news that Maria Lynn Freeland, a Master of Laws Candidate in the College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies, passed away earlier this month. In honour of Maria, a moment of silence was observed.

Saskatchewan Student-Run Solar Farm (Item 4)

The Chairperson indicated that Jaylene Murray, a candidate from the School of Environment and Sustainability, had contacted him with a desire to share with Council information about a proposed University of Saskatchewan student-run solar farm.

Jaylene introduced students who want to run a student-run solar farm on campus. This group of students is looking for support from both the USSU and GSA for this initiative. The group of students will be presenting on what the solar farm looks like, what it is and what they are envisioning. They have previously presented and approached the GSA Sustainability Committee. They would like to get feedback from Council and gauge general impressions and create a dialogue that would help expand this initiative.

Victoria and Landon – Farm the Sun Student Group

The goal of this project is to try and get a solar farm on campus to reduce our carbon foot print as the University and as the City of Saskatoon. The solar farm will allow for an increase in research behind solar panels and in the area of plant sciences, foraging research as well as incorporation of Indigenous initiative programs. Want to install the solar panels in different phases, as in each year. The project was initiated with endorsement letters from Colleges across campus and energy and construction organizations. A lot of research and consultation led to the idea of implementing a green policy and fund. We want to create a link between the graduate and undergraduate students. Would like to be student funded so as to be able to dictate where money will go towards.

Our consultations include Dr. Bob Tyler, Associate Dean Research and Graduate Students in the College of Ag Bio; Judith Yungwirth and James Cook, from the Infrastructure, Planning and Land Development; Campus Master Plan Meeting at the end of January to see what the future goals and plans for the University are; Aaron Yohnke, a PCL district manager who provided information about the solar initiative that they are trying to push; James Cook, Erin Akin, sustainability office member and strategic advisor, and Colin Tenet, master planning and University architecture. Also met with Dr. Tony Chung, who will be in charge of designing this solar farm due to his extensive research experience and collaborative efforts with SaskPower and Smart-grid. Potentially discussing incorporating this into the Indigenous program in partnership with the College of Ag Bio. We would like a referendum for this green fund and to create a joint committee that would work with this green fund, which would include USSU and GSA members as chairs. We would like to start a green fund that would be open to everyone's green ideas, but would like to kick-start with the solar farm. We would like the support of the GSA for the solar farm and for future discussions about the direction of this project.

We have an online PAWS survey which is still open, that is accessible by everyone; however, we are unable to determine of those that have completed it, are graduate students or undergraduates. It was divided into 3 categories; faculty, engineering students and general student, with different questions for different groups of individuals. One question asked was 'how much money would you like to contribute over 4 years' and the overwhelming answer was \$10 / semester. Furthermore, 90 % liked the idea of a solar farm.

Questions for the GSA Council:

- 1) What's the protocol for a referendum?
- 2) What advice do you have for us?
- 3) How can we move forward?

On March 22, we will have an event regarding this project proposal.

Jaylene clarified that the proposed question regarding referendum is based on the following;

- If the students have support from the GSA Council, what would it look like to have a referendum for the rest of the graduate students to see if they would support the addition of a green fund to their fees?
- This is in the early stages and nothing has been set in stone. Those that answered the survey indicated that \$20 / year was reasonable.
- If the GSA and USSU support this, what would a joint committee look like between the two Associations and if possible, how can this be moved forward.

The Chair invited questions from the floor.

Question: How will the money be used during the year? What will this money power? Will the money be enough to build anything? Will this just be benefiting the University of Saskatchewan? Where would this go?

For 1 megawatt, it was 2.5 million on campus which takes up 10 acres of land. We met with Dr. Tony Chung, research chair in Engineering, and he completed simulations through sulfuric heliostopes. Initially we were planning to sell this power to SaskPower, which would cost about 6 cents compared to the 5 cents that we actually pay. With regards to the handling of the money, we need a committee or board to handle it. This is why we want to bridge the USSU and the GSA as this is a student initiative; students should be knowing where and how the money is being used.

Question: In terms of the land?

Ideally we want to use block M and block F. We met with James Cook, Manager, Land Development, and Colin Tennent, Strategic Advisor, Master Planning and University Architect, said we should work on implementing a policy in the University design manual for all the buildings so that we can generate energy within the buildings so that we can have solar panels on University buildings to generate energy. At the Campus Master Plan building, this land won't be developed for the next 30 – 50 years, so it was suggested that we rent the land for 40 – 50 years and put solar panels there before starting development.

It is also possible to roll this out in different stages. We could initially start with policy that enforces that every building has a solar panel design. The committee would be in charge of determining the process. The process will take a few years. The committee would be composed of USSU, GSA, Office of Sustainability, Risk Management and Infrastructure representatives, Collin Tennent – individuals who would figure out exactly what it would look like. It has been received well and phenomenal conversations have occurred. For students, by students – money that is made from this initiative would go back into the same fund and used for more green funds.

We want to stay as a research institution. One way forward is to divest into this initiative. It requires a committee that would handle money and the strategies of this works.

Question: Is the survey still available? If so, perhaps this needs to be advertised more so that more people know about it. If we do a bit of math, 21000 students at the University, \$ 20 / student / year equates to \$420000, which would mean that in five years we would have the funds to source one megawatt.

The survey has been continually posted on PAWS.

Question: This is a great idea – to have a referenda, you should create a committee to go forward before the vote is even sought. There should be a formal proposal with a formal committee. You need to ensure that students will be able to trust where there money is going to.

Question: Great idea but would also agree with previous question. Is this the right setting or should there be more extensive discussions with the Sustainability Committee and maybe the conversation can be more productive with more personal involvement there. Adding a cost to tuition is problematic with tuition increases, especially for international students, so people may be a bit sensitive. It is always a good strategy to flesh it out a bit more. There should definitely be general support for the idea.

This was brought to the GSA sustainability committee who expressed interest with the initiative but wanted to bring it to council. Jaylene encourages people to fill the GSA sustainability committee next year so that there is further growth. It is important to get the general support and to get the message across to more students across campus.

Question: Liability. Is this just a fund going from students to the University?

Fund from students to a committee that would be managing the solar farm.

Question: Why can we not go outside of the University? Liability issues within the University. If doing research, University takes responsibility. If there is buying and selling, there might be liability issues.

Currently working closely with Dr. Tony Chung, the SaskPower research chair. SaskPower has a plan to have 50% of the energy production be green, of that, 20% from green initiatives. They wanted to fund community based initiatives. A professor is currently working on 2 megawatt power generations, and we want to work with him as students so that as a committee, we can approach Dr. Chung and SaskPower, it would be easier to cover the liability issues.

Questions: If someone gets hurt, the University would be responsible because it is on campus grounds. So that is where it becomes tricky.

One of the big points is that it's not only about getting renewable energy, but also about doing research, which would still carry the liability under the researcher and their unit / department. Engineering or plant science could be doing projects with the solar energy. This would be figured out more in detail based on the committee. Need to know if GSA is interested in supporting it before this can be further investigated.

Question: Thank you for being with us today. Where does the USSU stand with all of this?

Met with the USSU general manager, and according to their by-law and constitution, they cannot provide us as a third party with a referendum. That's why they're going to the drawing board to see how they can continue with this project. We came to the GSA and take information back to the USSU to see if something can work with the GSA and USSU.

Comment: In GSA, the procedure for any referendum can be from council or through a petition from graduate students. Participation must be 10% of the general membership. There must be a very clear proposal, because every graduate student would pay money every term continuously. So must be very specific, how much money, why this much money, where it will go, etc. Try to negotiate with University; GSA can try to support the negotiations

For further questions, please email: jaylene.murray@usask.ca

Chair remarks that coming back to this when plans have progressed would be welcomed.

Consent Agenda (Item 5-9)

Motion to receive for information and approve by consent items 5 – 9. Motion moved by Sudipto Shekhor Mondol. Seconded by Indiana Best.

Motion carried.

Ratification of Social Clubs (Item 10)

Two requests have been received to ratify the Brazilian Students Association (BRASA) and the Pakistani Students Association (PKSA) as social clubs. Representatives from both of these associations are present at Council.

The president of BRASA this year indicated that they have been ratified by the GSA for the previous two years. The Association is mainly graduate students, although there are some undergraduate members. They are a branch of the Brazilian Association of Saskatchewan, which works together to promote culture, provide socials, academic and cultural support. The group builds intercultural relationships. Throughout the year, BRASA holds several events to promote the Brazilian culture, such as carnivals, parties, events corresponding to those in Brazil and fundraisers to help the Saskatoon Blood Bank. The group is open to all nationalities and wants to build intercultural relationships for people interested in learning about Brazil.

Question: Is this ratified under the USSU?

No, because most of our members are graduate students.

The President of the PKSA indicated that 2013-14, they were ratified under USSU, and this would be the first time under the GSA. The purpose of the Association is to provide an opportunity for all Pakistani and other ethnic communities to organize on a platform. The main purpose is to promote the multiculturalism among different associations. The major concern for the Association is to guide new Pakistani students through University life. We have been active since 2013 and have guided about 30 students who are currently at the University. The other motivation is to organize Pakistani and Canadian cultural events, to promote our culture within the University and to promote Pakistani food. We would like Pakistani students to be more engaged with different volunteer work within Canadian society. We collaborate with the Open

Door Society with job fairs to help students find jobs after graduation. The membership is open to all graduate students. The group has community support from the Pakistan-Canada Cultural Association.

Motion: to ratify BRASA as a GSA social group. Moved by David Bennett, Seconded by Ali Kiani.

Motion Carried. 2 abstentions (Jose and Carolina).

Motion to ratify PKSA as a GSA social group. Moved by Ziad Ghaith. Seconded by Jovey Sharma.

Motion Carried.

Report of the President (Item 11)

All reports are in agenda. The major item for President Ghaith over the previous month is to continue working on graduate student seat on the Board of Governors. University Council endorsed the motion to support graduate student on the BOG. We started to work with different bodies on campus to sell the motion.

With regards to the tuition consultation – we would like to thank everyone who went to CGPS tuition consultation on March 1st. There was a lot of good discussion, and this should hopefully lead to some further discussions regarding tuition hikes.

President Ghaith would like to acknowledge the GSA executive work over the previous month, including Vice President Kiani for his work on the 3MT, Bennett for his work on finances, Sahtout for her work in promoting the GSA and on the Gala, and the Indigenous Liaison for all her work beyond the portfolio of Indigenous Liaison.

Report of the Vice-President Operation and Finance (Item 12)

All the finances have been caught up. Saskatoon transit, CFS and health and dental have been paid. Currently working on a budget proposal with the Finance and Budget committee for next year. Sahtout has helped a lot with this.

Report of the Vice-President Student Affairs (Item 13)

The 3-Minute Thesis competition took place on March 15th. Would like to thank the GSA executives for being involved and for the financial support from CGPS. Fundraising was obtained from Engineering and Medicine as well. This competition occurred in one day. Although it was difficult to judge, those who won and received honourable mentions received free tickets to the Gala.

Report of the Indigenous Liaison (Item 14)

There is a current call for an Indigenous student union on campus that is being organised by Indigenous students. Currently maintaining position in the GSA with the knowledge that the GSA is a non-profit entity that is separate to the University. Working extensively on the Graduate student survey; we have final ethical approval for the survey and this should be sent out shortly.

Report of the Vice-President External (Item 15)

Currently working on the final health chat, which is art therapy and meditation held this Friday. This would conclude the health and well-being sessions for graduate students for the year. Currently working on the awards gala. All of the winners have been finalized by the awards committee and they will be recognized at the Gala. The Governance Committee has met and are discussing recommendations to bring forth to the annual general meeting.

Co-Curricular Records (Item 16)

This is being brought forth as information in this Council meeting and will be discussed in further detail in April. The University has created a co-curricular transcript that will go alongside your academic transcript. The meaning of co-curricular – things that are not related to courses, but extracurricular activities that have taken a bit of your time and are professional development. Examples include the GSA executives and councillors who sit on GSA committees. This is meant to acknowledge your efforts as students on campus. This is not meant to replace letters of reference, but could show prospective employers activities and workshops that have been attended, in order to complement a CV or resume.

President Ghaith adds that this initiative started late last year, and has been happening all over Canada. The GSA has flexibility to decide the activities that will be present on the CCR: participation in committees, councillor participation, etc. You can pick and choose what you want to appear on your co-curricular based on what you are applying for. Each college and unit (like the GSA) can add to a CCR.

Sahtout indicated that this is retroactive back to September 2017. Sahtout indicates that if there are any suggestions, these can go to the VP External (gsa.external@usask.ca) for further discussion and decisions.

Membership of the Sustainability Committee (Item 17)

One of the members has indicated that he is no longer able to sit on the Sustainability committee. In order to ensure our records are updated;

**Motion: To remove Palash Sanyal from the Sustainability Committee at his request.
Moved by Sudipto Shekhor Mondol. Seconded by Iloradanon Efimoff.**

Motion carried.

Other Business / Announcements (Item 18)

Bennet would like to thank the hiring committee for their work on hiring an office manager and would like to welcome Candace Suessmilch, who has a background in law office and at UBC, to our team.

Ghaith indicates that the PSAC AGM is on March 26 @ 3:30 PM in Arts 241. Ghaith invites us to attend. At the AGM, PSAC will report on their activities and do elections for positions. All RAs or TAs can vote in the AGM.

Ghaith indicates that the GSA elections will be held very soon. He invites interested individuals to run for GSA executive positions. Please feel free to approach the executives at any point to ask any questions.

The Chair encourages all of the councillors and colleagues to run for the elections. A call for nominations will be sent out tomorrow. Any questions about the elections process can go directly to the Chief Electoral Officer at chair.gsa@usask.ca.

Motion to move to in-camera session. Moved by Ziad Ghaith. Seconded by Sudipto Shekhor Mondol.

Motion to move out of in-camera session. Moved by Sudipto Shekhor Mondol. Seconded by Victoria Husz.

The next Council meeting will be held on April 17 at 5pm.

The AGM will be held on April 24th at 5pm, and a minimum quorum of 50 is required.

Agenda has been exhausted.