



University of Saskatchewan
Graduate Students' Association
GSA Council Meeting Minutes
Tuesday December 11, 2018. GSA Commons

As Council gathers, we acknowledge that we are on Treaty 6 Territory and the Homeland of the Métis. We pay our respect to the First Nations and Métis ancestors of our gathering place and reaffirm our relationship with one another.

Attendance: *See appendix A*

1. **Call to Order**

Mr. Ghaith, Chair of Council called the meeting to order at 5:48PM (presentation by guest speaker 5-5:48PM).

2. **Guest Speaker: Director of Student Affairs and Services**

Mr. Hedley gave a 25 minute presentation based on the wellness resources that can be found on campus and provided some of the thinking that goes into the structuring of those resources. Peter explained that he stepped into his current role 2 years ago from having been responsible for 4 units to now being responsible for managing access and equity services, student affairs & outreach and the student wellness center, where the 3 intersect is at the core of student affairs and services. The Plan, Do, Study and Act (PDSA) strategy was used to understand who, when, how and why student affairs were serving those individuals to better craft their services accordingly. Peter assured the gathering that promotion and self care is always the goal in avoiding the less ideal situations. However, it's important to have social & community support and professional care as one strays from the ideal/ healthy situation. The funding used to support frontline services and initiatives are generated from the student services fee which was increased from \$15/term to \$45/term given the past inadequacies. He introduced several new items to the mental health menu reflected in the following updated offerings: individual or couples counseling, mental health support groups, online resources, training and education, and last but not least the referrals to: family physicians, mental health nurse, nurse, psychiatry, crisis supports, access & equity services, university faith leader and academic advisor. This is significantly more effective than only offering counseling which was done in the past.

In the end Peter left the gathering with 3 questions to spur the Q&A period which were: where are the gaps with regards to graduate student wellness supports? What are some solutions to fill these gaps? and what should our priorities be with regards to graduate student wellness and harm reduction supports?

Q&A

Counselor: Stigma associated with sourcing mental health help prevents folks from adequately making use of those services. How do we correct this?

Peter: More education is necessary so that people respect mental diagnosis and not just infer trivial meaning that often makes those services look unwarranted.

Counselor: Money seems to be a big contributor to the poor mental health status of graduate students especially international students who experienced tuition hikes in both the standard and differential tuition fees. What can be done with regard to money to better mental health here at USASK?

Peter: A lot of conflicts are around funding, maybe looking into how differential fees are used in other universities to assess if more can be done with the additional international fees.

The President reminded the councilors that USASK has one of the lowest differential tuition fees.

Counselor: What added benefit are graduate students receiving from the 15 to \$45 increase in the student services fee?

Peter: Student affairs and services were able to offer more services, like that of a dietician to help students cope with eating disorders. Wait times seem to be the major criticism, so more proactive promotional services are needed to deal with mental health issues in the early stages. No shame involved in seeking help, Peter shared with the gathering that he also attends counseling sessions.

3. Approval of the agenda

Motion to approve agenda. (PAROLIA/ FANSHER)

CARRIED

4. Approval of the Minutes from November 20

Motion to approve November Council minutes (MARTINEZ-SOBERANES/ ROETT)

CARRIED

5. Information to receive

- A. Executive meeting minutes from November 13, 2018
- B. Executive meeting minutes from November 22, 2018
- C. Diversity Committee Meeting Minutes
- D. Sustainability Committee Meeting Minutes
- E. Governance Committee Meeting Minutes

Motion to receive committees reports information (UFONDU/ PAROLIA)

CARRIED

6. Executive reports

A. Report of the President

The president focused on 3 contributions in her report, namely: 1) Student supervisor agreement template being worked on for the new year to show how the GSA plans to mandate this in the University, 2) a graduate faculty support manual is also being worked on, which indicates the resources faculty would have at their disposal especially in the early bit of their careers and 3) the networking event where students got to present for some industry partners was just the beginning as the GSA executive is meeting with the provost and other senior administrators to see how this can be moved to individual departments mirroring such networking activities.

There were no questions for the president.

B. Report of the VP Finance and Operations

The Chair informed the councilors that the VP Finance and operations was out of town and that any question regarding his report could be directed to him via email.

C. Report of the VP Student Affairs

VP student affairs shared that the 3 following events were coming up: Winter orientation in January, conference at the end of Feb and 3MT in March.

There were no questions for the VP Student

D. Report of the VP External

- Health and wellness events, had the last one which was the laughter therapy, the next one would be in Feb during reading week of 2019.
- Attended CFS meeting, many topics were discussed including:
 - CFS has adopted BDS
 - Bill C38 from the UN suggest that solitary confinement should allocate at least 4 hours of human interaction while in Canada this is currently 2 hours. The VP external said this was done to ensure people leave the prison system better than they entered.

There were no questions for the president.

7. Ratification of social clubs

A. Ghanaian-Canada Students' Association

VP Student Affairs and the representative of Ghanaian-Canada Student Association provide some information about this association. Ghanaian-Canada Association is comprised of

graduate students of Ghana and alumni from Ghana. They help find housing for their members to allow for smoother transition to Saskatoon and the USASK.

Motion to ratify the Ghanaian-Cdn Association. (MARTINEZ-SOBERANES/FANSHER)

CARRIED

8. Study Permit/Implied status – changes

President Sahtout: International students under implied status (in the process of renewing their study permit after expiry) as of Oct 13th can no longer be able to work on campus. GSA is advocating for the academic part of things as that can affect studies since funds may not be sufficient with no work.

Councilor: Can we find out why the university made this policy change and is this legal?

President Sahtout: They're would prefer if the university would have given more notice (3 or more months). We GSA executive will continue to ask for clarification as we are not willing to accept without appropriate rationale.

9. Other business/Announcements Information

- VP External asked that councilors spread the word about the implied status to their various councils.
- Chair echoed those sentiments reminding councilors of their responsibility to share such information with their colleagues within their respective departments.
- VP Student Affairs announced that this Friday (December 14th) there will be a social event (Winter Social) from 6pm to midnight. There will be food and drinks, alcoholic drinks will be on sale for \$3 otherwise everyone is encouraged to come out and have fun.
- The chair reminded the gathering of the upcoming GSA elections in February/March of the new year.
- Next council meeting was scheduled for the 22nd January,

10. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn (UFONDU/MARTINEZ-SOBERANES) at 6:16

CARRIED

Appendix A

Academic Council	Name of Councilors and (alternates)	Sep.25 2018	Oct.16 2018	Nov.20 2018	Dec.11 2018	Jan.15 2019	Feb.12 2019	Mar.12 2019	Apr.9 2019
Animal & Poultry Science	Brittany Ross (Tess Mills)	P	R	P	A				
ARCHAIA	Alne Dolln (Adrienne Ratuszniak)	P	P	P	A				
Biology	Dylan Baloun (Carmen Marquez Mellidez)	P	P	P	P				
Chemistry	Doug Fansher (Richard Pettipas)	P	A	R	P				
Geography & Planning	Bethany Thiessen (Apeksha Heendeniya)	P	P	P	P				
Geological Sciences	Brittany Laing (James Schulte)	P	P	P	A				
History Graduate Students' Committee	John Bird (Mckelvey Kelly)	P	P	P	A				
IGSC (1)	Tara Million (Adam McInnes)	P	P	NA	NA				
IGSC (2)	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA				
Kinesiology	Natasha Boyes (Natalie Houser)	P	P	P	P				
Computer Science Grad Course Council (1)	Rifat Zahan (Tonny Kar)	P	P	P	P				
Computer Science Grad Course Council (2)	Parastoo Veisi (Kawser Nafi)	A	P	A	P				
PEGASUS	Jason Ho (Ethan Runge)	P	P	P	P				
Soil Science Graduate Student Association	Jennifer Bell (Aimee Schryer)	P	P	P	P				
WCVM GSA	Breanne Murray (Narsimha Pujari)	P	P	P	P				
Master of Business Admin Representative Council (MBARC)	Tyler Gray (Alli Sparling)	NA	NA	P	R				

Academic Council	Name of Councilors and (alternates)	Sep.25 2018	Oct.16 2018	Nov.20 2018	Dec.11 2018	Jan.15 2019	Feb.12 2019	Mar.12 2019	Apr.9 2019
Psychology Graduate Student Assoc.	Sarah Mohammed (Farron Wielinga)	P	P	A					
AREC	Yerebakia Choro (Ran Sun)	NA	P	P					
SENSSA (1)	Peter Friedrichsen (Belizario Carballo)	P	R	P					
SENSSA (2)	Laila Balkhi (Belizario Carballo)	NA	P	P					
Pharmacy & Nutrition Graduate Students' Council P&N-GSC	Lina Kharabsheh (Yvonne Ruhumbika)	P	P	A					
School of Public Health Students' Assoc (SPHSA) (1)	Cheryl Roett (NA)	NA	P	P					
School of Public Health Students' Assoc. (SPHSA) (2)	Chiamaka Ezekwesili (NA)	NA	P	P					
Physical Therapy Student Society (PTSS)	Kyla Collins (Katrin Ritchie)	P	P	P					
Engineering, Chemical	Khaled Zoroufchi Benis (NA)	P	P	P					
Engineering, Mechanical	Bicheng Xing (Stephen Owuamanam)	P	P	P					
Engineering, Electrical	Ozan Gunes (Jose Berkenbrock)	P	P	P					
Engineering, Biomedical	Saman Naghie (Ejalonibu Hammed)	P	P	P					
Biochemistry, Microbiology & Immunology	Kusum Sharma (Mamata Panigrahi)	P	A	P					
Anatomy, Physiology & Pharmacology	Kushagra Parolia (Sarah Martin)	P	P	P					
Community Health & Epidemiology	Jacob Alhassan (Liliana Rodriguez)	NA	P	P					
Health Sciences	Chelsea Cunningham (Scott Adams)	NA	P	P					

