



**University of Saskatchewan
Graduate Students' Association
Council Meeting
Minutes from Tuesday June 19, 2018 @ 5 PM**

Present: Marissa Evans (ARCHAIA), Zoe Gillespie, Joshua Pickering (Medicine), Douglas Fansher (Chemistry), Rifat Zahan (Computer Science), Jose Alvin Berkenbrock (Electrical Engineering), Saman Naghieh (Biomedical Engineering), Brittany Laing (Geology), Mamata Panigrahi, Amanda Galas-Wilson (Microbiology and Immunology), Mona Hamada (Pharmacy and Nutrition), Viktoria Hinz (School of Environment and Sustainability), Aimee Schryer (Soil Science), Katherine Raes (Toxicology), Breanne Murray, Narsimha Pujari (WCVM) Alex Wojcichowsky (School of Physical Therapy), Sarah Greenwood (WCVM)

Executives: Naheda Sahtout (President), Jesus Corona Gomez (VP Finance and Operations), Edgar Martinez-Soberanes (VP Student Affairs), Somtochukwu Ufondu (VP External), Marie-Eve Presber (Indigenous Liaison)

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. Douglas Fansher acted as the recording secretary for the duration of the meeting.

OPEN SESSION

Call to Order / Opening Remarks (Item 1):

Meeting was called to order at 5:05 PM.

Approval of the Agenda (Item 2)

The Chair asked whether there were any amendments to the Agenda as circulated. WCVM Academic Council asked to add an item RE: Maternity Leave Benefits. This has been added as Item 12.

Motion to approve the Agenda as amended. Moved by Maria-Eve Presber. Seconded by Jesus Corona Gomez.

Motion Carries.

Consent Agenda (Items 3 – 6)

The Chair asked whether there were any amendments to the Minutes of the April 17, 2018 Council meeting. Hearing none, the Chair called the question.

Motion to approve the consent agenda. Moved by Mona Hamada. Seconded by Amanda Galas-Wilson.

Motion Carries

Report of the President and President's Annual plan (Item 7)

The GSA President discussed her Annual Work Plan in brief indicating that there were three things that she wanted to focus on that previous Executive have initiated.

1. Graduate student representation on the Board of Governors is currently non-existent, so the GSA will continue working towards establishing a representative member of the GSA to sit on the Board. This builds upon the efforts of the previous GSA Executive and will hopefully progress further this year, as graduate students are one of the major stakeholders at the University of Saskatchewan.
2. Student Supervisor Agreement was adopted by CGPS Faculty Council. While the template is encouraged, it is not mandatory. The GSA wants the agreement to be used by more departments and students to provide guidance at the early stages of the student/supervisor relationship. Knowing expectations put forth by the agreement helps prevent stress as much as possible and helps each party to better understand what is needed to make the duration of study go as smoothly as possible. This plays greatly into the wellness of both faculty and students. Last year, the agreement was piloted in Pharmacy and Nutrition and Computer Science and was generally well received. As part of the presidential action plan, the President wants to broaden its use amongst other departments and Colleges in the hopes that others are willing to partake in a pilot project like the ones previously stated. It is also worth noting that CGPS and other members of administration see value in this agreement and want to see its continued use.
3. Finally, the President wants there to be other/further opportunities for graduate students to improve academic experiences such as skills workshops and networking events that better enable graduate students to find a job. The GSA is currently in communication with CGPS and the Gwenna Moss Centre to try and build such resources that would enhance supervisory skills and student support.

Report of the Vice-President Finance and Operations (Item 8)

1. With the help of the previous VP Finance and Operations, was able to assist a student needing help with their taxes. This event will most likely be held again next year during tax time to help students fill out their taxes.
2. Bookkeeping services will be used to track finances as well as make copies for continuity purposes and for auditing assistance.
3. Outstanding balance for last year's (2017 / 2018) UPASS was paid in full to the City of Saskatoon and thus we are up to date for the upcoming fall semester.
4. GSA bursary applications are due June 22, 2018. Winners will be selected the following week after the application deadline.
5. The GSA purchased a new projector screen for the GSA Commons with the help of funding support from CGPS. If there are any other items that Council members think are needed for the space, they are encouraged to email the VP Finance and Operations.

Clarification needed about the number of students for UPASS and if the payment was for the next term or previous term.

The bill was for the outstanding balance from the 2017 / 2018 academic year.

Report of the Vice-President Student Affairs (Item 9)

1. As the President mentioned, we are working on enhancing the relationship between academic and industry and bridging the gap between academia research and industry. Most graduates go into industry related jobs but are not properly prepared for it. GSA needs to highlight the research done at U of S to industry. Students should have the ability to pitch their research to industry and graduate students should have the ability to network more with industry. The GSA wants to increase the recognition of research being completed by U of S graduate students to the wider community. Through one of the previous 3MT Judges, we had the opportunity to connect with the Saskatoon Chamber of Commerce, Health Opportunities Committee and Innovation Place. We hope that these connections will be the initial starting stages of providing a network to our students and to providing opportunities for success.
2. The GSA is a part of Saskatchewan Student Coalition, which plans to make it known that post-secondary education is important.
3. Preparations for the fall orientation, which is to occur on September 5, are underway.

Who sits on the Health Opportunities Committee?

This committee is external to the University and is part of the Greater Saskatoon Chamber of Commerce. It consists of CEO / other industry folk. This also applies to those in Innovation Place.

Is there a lack of communication between industry and academia?

Not a lot of industry knows what students are doing and that is something we are working on.

In future do you have any plans for approaching other industry jobs (life sciences and other fields)?

Yes, we will aim to expand into other sectors in the future.

Report of the Vice-President External (Item 10)

1. The VP External attended the Canadian Federation of Students National General Meeting in Quebec.
2. Also attended a Saskatchewan Student Coalition meeting, which hasn't been productive previously, so this year we hope to focus on 3 areas:
 - a. Tuition
 - b. Improved support for international students.
 - c. Increased investment in Northern Saskatchewan
3. Starting in the fall, the GSA will be hosting monthly health chat sessions such as provide opportunities to take part in self-defense and CPR/first aid classes.
4. GSA Guppies: To help promote healthy lifestyles, the GSA hosts a campus rec team every semester; currently we have a Soccer team.

Changing the tuition is a touchy subject, how are you going to approach that?

The plans for SSC haven't been fully developed and as we continue to meet to address this issue; more information can be provided at a later date. There have only been two meetings and hopefully as the year progresses we can determine what the best way to advocate for students

would be. The VP Student Affairs also added that there are ways to target tuition increases indirectly, like bringing back the tuition tax credit.

I can see that it's helpful for SSC to focus on three primary objectives, though are they going to be expanding from those three things in the future?

Yes, things will be expanded on but currently will focus on broader areas. The President added that in past years, there was a lack of commitment from people and thus it's better to focus on a few things first to see the level of involvement before trying to expand to other important areas of concerns for students.

Report of the Indigenous Liaison (Item 11)

1. This is an interim position through the Indigenous Graduate Students' Council (IGSC). Ms. Presber noted that she will hopefully be elected in September by IGSC.
2. She attended the Circle of First Nation, Metis and Inuit Conference, hosted by the Canadian Federation of Students, in Winnipeg. Discussed discrimination against Indigenous students on campus across Canada and how this is occurring on campuses and how people's voices can be heard.
3. Wants to add a Treaty 6 plaque on the wall but doesn't want it to be an empty gesture and looks forward to strengthening the relationship between IGSC and the GSA.
4. Looks forward to working with the VP Student Affairs to address the needs of Indigenous graduate students.

Maternity Leave Benefits – Western College of Veterinary Medicine (Item 12)

The WCVM Academic Councilor indicated that paid maternity leave was cancelled by in the Western College of Veterinary Medicine in the winter term without the students/faculty/staff knowing. This scholarship was available to a specific group of students for many years. The Councilor invited Sarah Greenwood to discuss the timeline of events from this cancellation until now.

Sarah indicated that the cancellation led to the creation of a petition in which more than 200 students/faculty/staff/alumni signed. The petition was circulated to the Dean of WCVM, CGPS, Provost and GSA President. The goal of the petition was to raise awareness of maternity leave issues and also seek a formal reply from the University with regards to whether the practice of these maternity leave benefits would continue within the College. A formal reply from the University was provided by the Provost earlier this month indicating that the College is currently reviewing the policy and that "In the interim, and pending the outcome of this review, the College will continue its practice around paid maternity leave for graduate students as it has been provided in the past."

The WCVM Academic Council wants to get feedback on maternity conditions on campus. Sarah asks each Council member to discuss with students in their respective department about what is available so that they can collect information. Sarah encourages students to contact the President if they have anything to add with regards to this topic.

The President encourages graduate students to continue being engaged within their Colleges / Departments to ensure that their perspectives are heard and that we can continue to enhance the academic experience of graduate students at the University.

Summer Bursary Selection Committee Membership (Item 13)

The Chair indicated that there is a need for two Councilors to sit on the Spring / Summer Bursary Selection Committee, in order to constitute the Committee properly since the Councilors who were on the Committee are not available this month. The time commitment is 5-6 hours. The Chair called for nominations. Brittany Laing and Jose Alvin Berkenbrock indicated their interest in being a part of this committee. No other nominations were received.

Motion to nominate Brittany Laing and Jose Alvin Berkenbrock to the Bursary Selection Committee for the Spring / Summer Bursary selection. Moved by Edgar Martinez-Soberanes. Seconded by Jose Alvin Berkenbrock.

Motion Carries.

Permission to Raffle TV Screen (Item 14)

The President indicated that with the funding support from CGPS, the GSA was able to finally install a projector screen. Currently the TV screen that was removed to accommodate the projector installation is not being used. Discussions among the Executives indicated that perhaps it would be nice to raffle the TV screen to the University community and the community at large to collect money for GSA Commons repairs. The idea was to sell raffles starting during the orientation week.

Could we use it for an announcement screen?

Last year, the Executives sought consultations with FMD to see what options were available for this TV screen. The installation of an announcement screen was far too expensive as it required the purchase of a special laptop. The Indigenous Liaison also indicated that because this is a historical heritage site, there are certain regulations that we need to follow. The President followed up because the cost of installing it as an announcement screen, and the minimal traffic towards the GSA commons, would make it an ineffective use of monies.

Motion to allow for the GSA Executives to raffle the TV screen. Moved by Naheda Sahtout. Seconded by Amanda Galas-Wilson.

Motion Carries.

University of Saskatchewan Student Wellness Service Fee (Item 15)

The President asked Councilors to note Page 45 of the agenda-packet, noting that the student service fee is increasing to \$45 per term (fall/winter) and 22.50 spring/summer and is being renamed as the "Student Wellness and Services Fee". Any further questions pertaining to the fees should be directed to Student Central. She requests that Councilors let their student colleagues know so that the fee increase is not a surprise. Fees are to ensure that student services are being kept and that student needs are being met. The fee is directly being used for Student Wellness Services, Student Outreach and Access and Equity Services.

Could we perhaps approach Student Wellness Services and ask how this fee will be used and how it will benefit graduate students?

The President indicated that there were quite a few initiatives that had begun last year that needed funding to continue being sustainable. The idea of this fee is to ensure that these services are offered by the Student Wellness Centre and the needs of students are addressed.

Last Council meeting, the Director of Student Affairs and Services discussed in-part where the money is going and what changes and innovations they have been doing for the Student Wellness Services.

The President indicated that the goal is to be proactive rather than reactive.

Linking Academia and Industry – opportunities for Graduate Students (Item 16)

The President indicated that the VP Student Affairs touched on this; the struggles of how students are going to integrate ourselves into industry. The GSA wants to ensure that students have the proper tools to be able to network with industry professionals so that they can build a network outside academia. The Greater Saskatoon Chamber of Commerce Health Opportunities Committee has encouraged our students to participate in their industry talks to enable students to pitch their research to individuals in industry. In October, we are hoping that we will have a graduate student event where students pitch their research to industry contacts. The GSA will also be working with Innovation Place to allow students to go to their monthly industry talks to connect with industry partners. GSA wants Council members to be more active in this as it allows us to practice to a broader audience.

How are you going to advertise these events?

These events will be advertised via email correspondence and social media.

Other Business / Announcements (Item 16)

1. One of the initiatives of the Sustainability Committee last year was to introduce sustainable practice in the GSA. The hope moving forward is to minimize waste production so that we can encourage our members to be environmentally friendly; therefore the plates and cups that the GSA uses will be reusable and will be washed.
2. Saskatchewan Mentorship Program: opportunity to promote good mentorship between students and supervisor.
3. The Government of Mexico is giving scholarships for Canadians to travel to Mexico. They have 27 scholarships available for students. There is also another scholarship only for Indigenous students to travel for short term to communities in Mexico to do research.
4. Access and Equity Services: it is important to note that no information will be shared. If you register with AES, it will not be deposited into any of your academic records. Better to register in case something happens, makes things easier in the long run. To register, resources are online, go from there. <https://students.usask.ca/health/centres/access-equity-services.php>

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn. Moved by Marie-Eve Presber. Seconded by Jose Alvin Berkenbrock.

Motion Carries.

Meeting adjourned at 6:20 PM.