



University of Saskatchewan
Graduate Students' Association
GSA Council Meeting Minutes
Tuesday April 9 2019. 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

The Chair of Council called the meeting to order at 5:03PM.

Mr. Osai Clarke acted as the recording secretary for the meeting.

2. Guest Speakers: Associate Dean, University Library Electronic Resources Librarian

Rachel Sargeant-Jenkins and Jaclyn McLean, Associate Dean for university library and the Electronic Resources Librarian respectively addressed council briefly on the collections budget for the library. This budget provides all the resources to faculty as researchers and students as researchers and learners. The collections budget as with lots of other university libraries around the country and some globally, is being dramatically impacted by the current academic publishing models.

The budget is approximately \$14 million dollars/year and the vast majority of it goes towards journal packages like Elsevier and databases like web of science which together account for 74% of the budget. The journals, which make up 14% of the budget are individual titles and mostly electronic but they are not part of any publishing package.

Services like the library's catalogue that are on the budget are systems to support the library's collections and represent the smallest portion of the budget at 4%. The remaining 8% of the budget is allocated to books: both e-books and printed books. Roughly 91% of the entire budget is already committed to ongoing subscriptions and services. 87% of that already committed budget is billed or originated in USD.

The 2018/2019 budget suffered a shortfall that was covered by some reserved funds. However, the 2019/2020 budget for the next fiscal year starting in May has more of a shortfall which ranges from \$750,000- \$1.2 million. The shortfall is based on a few assumptions:

- 1) The library will be given a flat budget allocation.
- 2) We're assuming that the typical inflation from the publishers of 3-5%/year will be the case next year.
- 3) The exchange rate between CAD and USD to be about 1 USD = 0.74 CAD. If this drops to 62 cents as David Wolf from the bank of Canada has projected, the actual shortfall will be closer to \$2 million dollars.

The current academic publishing model is largely facilitated by researchers providing their manuscripts and often reviewing those of others as well as providing editorial direction, all free of charge to the journals. The publishers provide support for the peer review and publishing infrastructure, they package the content and distribute that content which is sold back to libraries at an increasing non-competitive price. This model for many reasons is not sustainable, as the libraries shouldn't have to pay those exorbitant rates that increase from 3-5% annually to acquire the work published or peer reviewed by the university population. For every penny the CAD drops with respect to the USD that amounts to an extra \$130,000 to the collections budget. Buying access to a lot of the journals currently happens through what is called the "big deal" and all that entails is the journal publishers packaging all the journals and offering them to the library for one price. Analogous to a cable package, the big deal contains several journals that the researchers often have no interest in.

There are 5 publishing companies that have monopolized the scholarly publications and as a result they've maintained profit margins comparable to the big technology companies making it less sustainable to keep all existing subscriptions. A package that would have cost \$600,000 15 years ago, now cost \$1.4 million.

Plan going forward:

Very likely not going to be renewing the licenses for 1, maybe 2 of these publisher packages and instead reduce this to a smaller subset of more valued journals. Additionally, will not be renewing a subscription for one of the databases like Web of Science. We will continue to cooperate with other academic libraries across the country to negotiate for better deals.

The principles employed:

Want to maintain course resources, need to figure out how often certain journals are used. Additionally, would like to maintain appropriate balance across the disciplines as well as access to old content. All of this will involve consultation with the students and faculty to see what the major journals of interest are.

Next steps:

Prepare - sharing this information and at the same time the libraries are analysing their collections to try to gather that data.

Survey - between June and August we would like to survey faculty and grad students.

Decide - opportunity for further consultation in the fall, determining titles for subscription updates on campus.

Implement - notify publishers/ negotiate with publishers to set up new subscriptions. The library will also be providing ways to access journals they no longer subscribe to that can be found in the following link.

<http://library.usask.ca/collectionsbudget>

Q & A

Sahtout: What kind of strategies are other research-intensive universities using, are they allocating more money to their libraries or are more of them like those in Quebec that are dropping some other their subscriptions?

A: We've seen Quebec go this way because a few years ago there was a provincial budget cut forcing them to approach the publishers about the unsustainable packages and as a result canceling some of their subscriptions. They have also started to promote browser extensions that allow one to find open access versions of articles if you are unable to find them in our library. Right now, the university library gives you access to over 40,000 online journals and a proposed change will mean a difference of about 3000 journals. It is our intention to make those decisions based on dialogue and the data compiled in the next few months.

University of California has just taken a philosophical stand against Elsevier and ScienceDirect and cancelled both. This is not unique to North American institutions, Germany and Norway no longer subscribe to ScienceDirect.

Laing: For the consultations during the summer there are a few disciplines that are out, doing field work.

A: The first set of consultations will go out electronically as surveys and in the fall when all the disciplines are on campus, we may apply a mixture of meetings and electronic surveys.

Laing: Are you bargaining collectively and if so what does that look like?

A: Currently we are in talks with other Canadian universities but to give you an idea to our sphere of influence, the number of dollars the Canadian academic market has to buy published materials is the same as the state of California. We understand how small we are so we all support a central organisation that negotiates on our behalf.

Ufondu: Is the university a big publisher of research as are other Canadian universities. The reason I ask, is because I see a business opportunity for you to present at your next joint university libraries meeting for us to collectively start our own Canadian research publishing company.

A: There is a group in Canada called the public help project that are starting to do just that, they've started with French journals. It has also been proposed that Canadian Universities buy the shares in the 5 big academic research publishing companies so collectively we can put an end to those enormous increases in subscription prices. There is a big project by the Max Planck society called "Own in 2020" which is also looking ahead with similar proposals.

Chair thanked the two guest speakers for addressing the council.

3. Approval of the Agenda

Motion to approve agenda. (Fansher/Zahan)

Carried

4. Approval of minutes from March 19th, 2019

Motion to approve March 19th minutes. (Murray/Zahan)

Carried

5. Information to be received

- A. *Awards Committee Minutes from March 9-16, 2019*
- B. *Bursary Selection Committee Minutes from March 15th, 2019*
- C. *Elections and Referenda Committee Minutes from March 18th, 2019*
- D. *Elections and Referenda Committee Minutes from March 25th, 2019*
- E. *Governance Committee Summary*
- F. *March 14, 2019 Board Minutes*
- G. *March 14, 2019 Executive Minutes*

H. *March 28, 2019 Executive Minutes*

I. *Appreciative Inquiry Discussion Outcomes*

Motion to receive agenda items 5A-I. (Ufondu/Laing)

Carried

6. Executive reports

A. Report of the President – Verbal Report

President Sahtout told the gathering that she wanted to engage council members on the appreciative enquiry concerning the student-supervisor relationship, so she would hold off on her communication till item 7 on the agenda.

B. Report of the VP Finance and Operations

VP Gomez reminded the gathering of tax clinic sessions. Last month we held 2 clinics. Tomorrow the 10th and Friday 12th will be the last of such sessions. The CRA are sending some of their volunteers to assist in the last sessions since many of the current volunteers dropped out at the last minute.

There were no questions for the VP Finance and Operations.

C. Report of the VP Student Affairs

VP Martinez-Soberanes updated the gathering about the 3MT competition last month. There were 30 participants and 5 judges, the winner will go to the regional competition in Northern British Columbia and the winner from that will go on to the national competition in Quebec.

There were no questions for the VP Student Affairs.

D. Report of the VP External

VP Ufondu shared with councillors that the award gala was a resounding success. City councillors, the MLA and lot of senior administrative staff were in attendance. He ended by thanking the team of volunteers that helped him put this year's gala together.

There were no questions for the VP External.

7. Items for Information/Discussion

A. Student-Supervisory Relationship (Appreciative Inquiry/Faculty Manual)

President Sahtout told the councillors that on February the 14th the GSA Executives hosted an appreciative inquiry session on the student-supervisor relationship. A professor from the department of education (Dr. Keith Walker) led the discussion on: What are some of the characteristics the professors and the students should have in order to foster a good relationship?

We pretty much agreed that the professors should be mentors, knowledgeable of the program and the resources available. Students also have the responsibility to understand the expectations of our programs and how we can succeed. We should also take ownership of our research, work independently so we can move forward. As supervisors and students, communication is key in setting those expectations and seeing through the guidelines for the program. Weekly meetings were the preferred frequency for such communication.

The second part of the talk started to hit the major goal which was to establish the tools necessary for maintaining this relationship, for example supervisor handbooks and professional development workshops. What kind of things can be organised or developed in collaboration with CGPS and the Gwenna Moss centre for both faculty and students? Some suggestions were having an orientation for students and supervisors to discuss things like conflict resolution, program expectation and have faculty mentorship.

The Chair opened the floor for discussion:

Council member: It would be nice if the supervisor would help the students find job opportunities through their networks.

Council member: Workshops teaching supervisors how to give constructive criticism and their students how to accept it.

Council member: My supervisor allows her students to bring their kids to the office after daycare. My supervisor always encourages us to maintain a work/ life balance, so if ways of striking that balance early on in a student's program it will most likely benefit the student's studies and the overall quality of the relationship.

Council member: New faculty may feel the pressure to publish many papers to make a name for themselves, this could translate to them putting added pressure on their students. I think if the supervisor could convey the nature of their work then this understanding can prevent the breakdown

of the student-supervisor relationship.

Council member: Encourage faculty and students to take first aid as it has helped me with my physical and mental health.

Council member: The proposed framework for the student-supervisor relationship should be sent during the recommendation period, if the tentative professor could send this supervisor agreement to the students so it's a part of their acceptance package it would go much further than being faced with a less than ideal situation once both parties have committed to each other. Many international students can't afford to just leave a professor, this is often a decision taken that caused them to move their entire life. I don't want anyone to feel fixed to their supervisor during their tenure in grad school, so allowing them to harsh out expectations prior to the commencement of the program is a great start to a healthy student-supervisor relationship.

Council member: WCVM's Dean thinks they may have some legal implications with the wording of the current student-supervisor agreement, so I was wondering if some of the wording could be changed?

President Sahtout: The agreement is a framework so it can be tailored as a given department would like. The essence of the agreement is more important than the actual wording, so we ask that the changes still reflect the same general idea.

Council member: Doing some of the workshops can be beneficial for the professors as they can gain some invaluable information from their colleagues.

Council member: How do you talk to your supervisor about funding? Prior to starting that document would have been so much more beneficial.

Closing remarks by President Sahtout:

Mandating the student-supervisor agreement will take time and will require a cultural change. As more faculty and students begin to appreciate the importance of this agreement, there will be a shift towards its implementation. In the time being, it is important that we also think about developing other tools and resources that can support this fundamental relationship. As we move forward, the idea is that such tools (ie. Workshops) become mandatory for faculty and students to undertake when they start their graduate programs. We, the U of S, then set the example of ensuring that both our faculty and students are prepared for success. When this happens, we can then shift our focus towards other aspects of the academic journey and even think of how we can prepare our students for the future.

8. Other business/Announcements

The Chair informed council that The Annual General Meeting (AGM) will be held next Tuesday from 5 to 7 pm at the GSA Commons and all graduate students are invited to attend as they can vote at the meeting. The Chair added that an email with the details was sent prior to this council meeting and the agenda for the AGM could be found on the GSA website.

The Chair informed council that new executives had been elected and 599 students voted in the executive elections and quorum was reached. The results were emailed to students and posted on the GSA website.

The Chair informed council that today was the final council meeting for the current GSA Executives. The chair thanked the outgoing Executives for their tremendous contributions to the GSA and thanked councillors as well for their work this academic year.

9. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn (Ufondu/Ezekwesili) at 6:26pm.

Carried