



**Graduate Students' Association - University of Saskatchewan**  
**Council Meeting Agenda**  
**Tuesday June 18, 2019 - GSA Commons**  
**17:00 – 19:00**

The GSA operates on Treaty 6 Territory and the Homeland of the Métis Nation.  
 We pay our respect to the First Nations and Métis ancestors of our gathering place and reaffirm  
 our relationship with one another.

#	Item	Page	Action
1	Call to Order		
2	Approval of the agenda	1-2	<i>Decision</i>
4	Approval of the minutes from April 9, 2019	3-13	<i>Decision</i>
5	Information to be received	14-36	<i>Decision</i>
	A. May 4, 2019 Executive Retreat Minutes		
	B. May 15, 2019 Executive Minutes		
6	Executive reports	37-44	<i>Information</i>
	A. Report of the President		
	B. Report of the VP Finance and Operations		
	C. Report of the VP Student Affairs		
	D. Report of the VP External Affairs		
7	Items for Information/Discussion		<i>Information</i>
	A. GSA Newsletter		

8 Other business/Announcements

*Information*

9 Adjournment

*Decision*

*Next meeting: August 13, 2019.*



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 analyzing 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 councilors that the award gala was a resounding success. City councilors, 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 councilors 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 organized 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 councilors as well, for their work this academic year.

## **9. Adjournment**

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

**Carried**

***Next meeting: To Be Communicated.***



Academic Council	Name of Councilors and (alternates)	Sep.25 2018	Oct.16 2018	Nov.20 2018	Dec.11 2018	Jan.22 2019	Feb.26 2019	Mar.19 2019	Apr.9 2019	Jun.18 2019	Aug.13 2019
Master of Business Admin Representative Council (MBARC)	Tyler Gray (Alli Sparling)	NA	NA	P	R	A	P	A	A		
Psychology Graduate Student Assoc.	Sarah Mohammed (Farron Wielinga)	P	P	A	R	P	P	A	P		
AREC	Yerebakia Choro (Ran Sun)	NA	P	P	P	A	A	A	P		
SENSSA (1)	Peter Friedrichsen (Belizario Carballo)	P	R	P	P	P	P	P	P		
SENSSA (2)	Laila Balkhi (Belizario Carballo)	NA	P	P	A	P	P	A	P		
Pharmacy & Nutrition Graduate Students' Council P&N-GSC	Lina Kharabsheh (Riley Devine)	P	P	A	P	P	P	A	P		
School of Public Health Students' Assoc (SPHSA) (1)	Britanie Thomas (NA)	NA	P	P	P	P	P	P	P		
School of Public Health Students' Assoc. (SPHSA) (2)	Chiamaka Ezekwesili (Alejandra Fonseca)	NA	P	P	R	P	P	P	P		
Physical Therapy Student Society (PTSS)	Kyla Collins (Katrin Ritchie)	P	P	P	R	P	P	P	R		
Engineering, Chemical	Khaled Zoroufchi Benis (NA)	P	P	P	A	P	P	A	A		
Engineering, Mechanical	Bicheng Xing (Stephen Owuamanam)	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P		
Engineering, Electrical	Ozan Gunes (Jose Berkenbrock)	P	P	P	A	P	P	A	P		
Engineering, Biomedical	Saman Naghieh (Ejalonibu Hammed)	P	P	P	A	P	P	A	A		
Biochemistry, Microbiology & Immunology	Kusum Sharma (Mamata Panigrahi)	P	A	P	P	P	P	A	P		
Anatomy, Physiology & Pharmacology	Kushagra Parolia (Sarah Martin)	P	P	P	P	P	P	A	A		
Community Health & Epidemiology	Jacob Alhassan (Liliana Rodriguez)	NA	P	P	R	P	P	R	R		





**University of Saskatchewan Graduate Students' Association**

**Retreat Agenda, Executive committee**

**May 4, 2019 from 9 AM to 5 PM**

**Present:** Mery Mendoza (President), Mohammad Wajih Alam (VP Finance and Operations), Alejandra Fonseca (VP Student Affairs), Chiamaka Ezekwesili (VP External), Naheda Sahtout (Guest)

**Regrets:** none

**Absent:** none

**SESSION ONE: 9 AM – 12:30 PM**

**1. Call to Order / Opening Remarks**

The meeting was called to order on Saturday, May 4th at 9:21 AM by the President, Mery Mendoza.

She thanked everyone for committing to the GSA and representing graduate students at the University, community and across Canada. "It is exciting to see dedicated individuals on this year's Executive team and I am looking forward to working with this amazing team" she stated. The GSA is governed by the four executive offices of President, VP of finance and Operations, VP of Student affairs, and VP external, and is supported by its staff members which consists of the Office Manager and coordinators. Everyone is committed to working towards the GSA mission. The president explained that executives participate on this retreat with the purpose of setting goals for the year ahead. It was stated that all executives should be engaged and involved in the discussions and ask questions in an appropriate manner.

## 2. Signing of Confidentiality Agreement

In consistency with the GSA Bylaws, it is required that each Executive signs a confidentiality agreement within the first month of their term. Mery indicates that in our position as Executives, we will have access to information that must remain confidential. Not only include confidentiality of others' information but also confidentiality of discussions that occur within the Executive meetings. All executives signed the confidentiality agreement.

## 3. Executive Introductions / Structure of the GSA

The president asked each retreat attendee to introduce themselves. Each attendee shared their background, motivations for standing for election in the GSA, and motivations for representing graduate students. Mery then explained the structure of the GSA and urged the Executives to look through the Constitution, Bylaws, and Policies.

- ✓ The Executive committee consists of the President and Vice-Presidents. The Executive is accountable to Council and Regular Membership.
- ✓ The President and Vice-Presidents sit on the Board of Directors. It is necessary to have a Board so as to maintain Not-for-Profit status. Since all executives of this year are international students, there are two representatives, with Canadian citizenship, that were added to the board to ensure our Non-Profit status.
- ✓ There exists a Council, which consists of;
  - The Executive
  - A representative from each Academic Council
- ✓ Executive meetings occur once / month from May to August and twice / month from September to April.
- ✓ Council meetings occur once / bi-monthly from May to August and once / month from September to April.
- ✓ There is an Annual General meeting sometime between the months of September to April.
- ✓ The Office staffs consist of the Office Manager and the Commons Coordinators.

It was explained as stated in the GSA Bylaws that Executives must not miss more than 3 Executive meetings in total, and 2 consecutive meetings. It is acceptable if Executives need to teleconference / phone-in to meetings in order to ensure their attendance.

#### 4. Committee Appointments

Mery indicates that a graduate student representative sits on University Council committees, CGPS (College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies) committees as well as other committees that are directly related to the student experience or academic life at the University of Saskatchewan. As stated in the GSA Bylaws, the Executives must identify and determine who will sit on these committees.

There was an in-depth discussion about the Governance Committee and the representative graduate student that would sit on this Committee. Mery wanted for all the executives to get familiar with the University's policies and encouraged to participate in the discussions. There was a general consensus that it was important that the individual for this Committee should have a strong understanding to University policies to be of benefit to graduate students.

It was agreed that it is crucial to commit to the committees that we will be appointed to and attend all meetings. This supports the credibility of the GSA and indicates that graduate students are involved and are valuable members of the University community. Most University Council committees meet once a month, as do most CGPS committees. Some of the other committees do not meet as often or meet only during certain parts of the year. Committee terms of reference can be found on the University website. It is important to discuss with the chair of your committee whether a delegation system is possible. For example, if you were unable to attend, could another Executive attend in your place? Some committees may not permit this, so it is important to verify this at the beginning of September.

***Motion: To approve the committee assignments. Moved by Chiamaka. Seconded by Alejandra. Motion carried.***

Mery will communicate these assignments to the necessary administration and individuals will be notified of meeting dates and meeting documents once they are added to the committee.

Mery also indicates that as per our Policies, Executives sit on certain GSA Standing committees by virtue of their position. These will reconvene starting in the fall term and so further discussions on this will occur at a later time.

It was agreed the following executives will sit on the following committee:



- ✓ *University Council Committee*: It happens once per month. Alejandra will sit on this committee. This is the umbrella of the University. Naheda mentioned that the Vice-President of Student Affairs usually sits on this committee. The President, Mery Mendoza report to council every month, but in absence of the President, the VP of Student Affairs Alejandra will attend. In absence of Alejandra, Wajih or Chiamaka will make the report.
- ✓ *Planning and Priorities Committee*: Mery will sit on this committee. Financials are discussed. The discussions are confidential and it occurs twice per month. The usual timeline is between 11:30 AM to 1:00 PM.
- ✓ *Academic Programs Committee*: The discussion is related to program changes for both undergraduate and graduate. Chiamaka will sit on this committee.
- ✓ *Research Scholarly and Artistic Meeting*: Wajih will sit on this committee.
- ✓ *Teaching, learning and research committee of council*: Teaching methods are discussed. Alejandra will sit on this committee.
- ✓ *Scholarships and Awards*: Wajih will sit on this committee. Naheda mentioned International activity committee will not meet anymore.
- ✓ *Governance committee*: Naheda mentioned her interest to sit on this committee. She also added that she will be away till August. In her absence, Mery will sit on this committee. From September, Naheda will sit on this committee.
- ✓ *Parking and Services committee*: Alejandra will sit on this committee.
- ✓ *Recreational and athletic committee*: Mery will sit on this committee.
- ✓ *Copyright Advisory Committee*: Wajih will sit on this committee.
- ✓ *CCR committee*: Mery will sit on this committee.
- ✓ *Faith Leaders Council*: Chiamaka will sit on this committee. Next meeting is on May 30<sup>th</sup> at 7pm.
- ✓ *University Senate*: All executives were encouraged to attend. This occurs twice a year. Usually in October and April.
- ✓ *CGPS committee*: Graduate and postdoctoral council and faculty council: all of the executive will sit on this.
- ✓ *CGPS council* happens twice a year. *Faculty council* once a year. It was mentioned that we have total 7 votes from Graduate students. So, we can add 3 from general members. Reggie, Naheda and Britany were contacted and all of them showed interest to be on this committee. These meetings are generally one and half hour long.

- ✓ *Interdisciplinary committee*: This committee meets once per month. Wajih showed interest to sit on this committee.
- ✓ *Equity and international*: This committee meets once per month. Chiamaka will sit on this committee.
- ✓ *CGPS Executive Committee*: Mery will sit on this committee.
- ✓ *Awards Committee*: Wajih will sit on this committee. This committee discusses things related to scholarships and awards.
- ✓ *Earned D.Litt/D.Sc*: This committee sits once a year and Chiamaka will sit on this committee.
- ✓ *Graduate academic awards*: Alejandra will sit on this committee. Once per month or more than once depending on need.
- ✓ *Graduate programs committee*: Mery will sit on this committee.
- ✓ *Library*: Alejandra will sit on this committee.
- ✓ *Alumni*: Mery will sit on this committee.
- ✓ *Breakfast meeting with President*: All four executives are encouraged to attend. Once per month.
- ✓ *Fee review committee*: Wajih or Mery will attend this committee.
- ✓ *Sexual Diversity*: Chiamaka will sit on this committee.
- ✓ *Student forum executive*: This happens 5 times a year. Chiamaka or Alejandra will attend this meeting.

It was brought to attention by Mery that next University Council meeting is on May 23<sup>rd</sup> and everyone is encouraged to attend. The other meeting is on June 20<sup>th</sup>. It was also noted that Alejandra must attend this meeting.

## 5. 2019 Convocation Attendance

Mery has received an invitation for the GSA Executives to participate as members of the Chancellor's Platform Party at the 2019 spring convocations. This is a standing tradition for student leaders, and as members of the Platform Party, we sit on stage during convocations. The dates for the ceremonies are as follows. Mery noted that there are fall convocation ceremonies as well, so in the end, the number of times each of us participates will balance out. Sometimes it is easier that individuals participate in the ceremonies of one day. Mery mentioned that she will be away

during the week, so she requested the remaining executive to fill for her. All ceremonies are held at TCU place.

June 3 @ 9 AM: No event	June 3 @ 2 PM: Chiamaka
June 4 @ 9 AM: Alejandra	June 4 @ 2 PM: Wajih
June 5 @ 9 AM: Alejandra	June 5 @ 2 PM: Alejandra
June 6 @ 9 AM: Wajih	June 6 @ 2 PM: Wajih
June 7 @ 9AM: Chiamaka	June 7 @ 2 PM : No event

Mery will forward the email invitation to the Executives so that they can RSVP.

## 6. Approval of the Agenda

Mery asked whether there were any amendments to the agenda.

***Motion: To approve the agenda. Moved by Alejandra. Seconded by Wajih. Motion carried.***

## 7. Team Building

Mery indicates that it is important to outline the roles and responsibilities of Executives at this retreat so that each individual can plan for the year ahead.

### 7.1. Executive Duties and Responsibilities

Each Executive has two types of duties; those governed by our Bylaws and those we chose to pursue during our tenure.

Mery explains that if any individual is not able to attend Council meetings, due to conference travel, they should let the President know. We are accountable to council. Each executive should prepare a written report and should take no more than 3-minute verbal report. They should also inform the Chair of their absence.

As per our Bylaws, Executives must;

- ✓ Be familiar with the governing documents, the Non-Profit Corporations Act, the U of S Act, Roberts Rules of Orders and other documents;
- ✓ Determine which individual will go to CFS and ThinkGrad conferences;
- ✓ Act as ambassadors of the Association within the University and in the community;
- ✓ Assist each other to ensure that the well-being of the Association is maintained.

- ✓ Be professional, respectful, courteous and responsible in everything that you do and when presenting yourself.
- ✓ Ensure continuity of roles and seek assistance from other Executives when feeling overburdened.

It is crucial to foster a culture of teamwork. It is also important to acknowledge mistakes as soon as they happen so that the Executive team can learn and mitigate through these mistakes appropriately. Mery indicates the importance for each of us to accept positive and constructive feedback from each other as this allows us to learn and grow as individuals. Wajih adds that it is important to help each other during tough times we can contribute positively towards the betterment of the Association.

Any communication with the members will be facilitated by Mery through Office Manager (Candace). Mery and the executives will look after Facebook posts while office manager will look after Twitter. For facebook / twitter, content should be related to the services / events offered by the GSA or Academic Councils / Social Clubs or opportunities that would benefit graduate students, such as scholarships or workshop opportunities. Any Executive is welcome to email Mery with content to post on Facebook.

It was agreed that the emails will be sent to GSA members once per month during summer and twice per month in winter terms. Except for bursaries announcement, which can be sent as deemed necessary. The usual procedure would be to send the information that needs to be circulated to Graduate students to Mery and she will send it to Office Manager who can forward it to the members. Office Manager has access to list serve and the President and the office manager will go through the training on how to efficiently manage it.

Mery also encouraged all executives to be at the GSA office at some parts of the day so that the GSA student members can ask questions or give comments when necessary.

## ***7.2. Executive / Council Meetings***

As per our Bylaws, Executives must meet at least once / month in May – August and twice / month in September – April and once a month in December. Executives agreed that Wednesdays from 6 PM to 8 PM are suitable to have the meetings. Dates for Executive Meetings for May – August are;

- ✓ May 15
- ✓ June 12

- ✓ July 17
- ✓ August 21

Fall Executive meetings can be decided in the August Executive meeting. Executives were in agreement with the scheduled meeting times.

As per our Bylaws, Council must meet at least once from May-June, once from July-August. Mery proposes that Council meetings continue occurring on Tuesday from 5 – 7 PM. Proposed dates for Council meetings are;

- June 18
- August 13

Mery will communicate with the Chair with regards to the June and August Council meetings and Executives agreed that the fall/winter meetings can be confirmed at the August Executive meeting. It was also mentioned that the Annual general meeting will be held in April 2020.

### ***7.3. Executive Communication***

Mery indicates that emails to the GSA executives should be responded within 48 hours.

Mery proposes two methods of communication between Executives;

- Formal: through emails
  - ✓ Emails should generally be replied within 48 hours
  - ✓ If an opinion or decision needs to be made, if no response is received within 48 hours then that implies consensus with the decision
  - ✓ If an urgent decision needs to be made, then the subject of the email should indicate the timeline and URGENT.
- Informal: through the Facebook group chat
  - ✓ Just as important for bonding between Executives
  - ✓ For informal questions or discussions that do not require decisions to be made
  - ✓ Mery Proposed to use WhatsApp as well for informal communications, to which all executives agreed.

Mery indicates that it is important for Executives to visit the Commons to;

- ✓ Socialize with Members
- ✓ Get to know the Executive and Office Staff

Executives were in favour of the email communication and understood the need to visit the Commons.

#### **7.4. Executive Decision Making**

Mery indicates that the Executives will follow Roberts Rules of Orders for all meetings. The decision-making process is a vital component of financial decisions, Executive decisions and unique instances that come to the Executives attention. Executives need to make a decision on the following items:

- ✓ There are 4 Executive members; quorum is majority, so 3 members at least. **All agreed.**
- ✓ Majority vote (3 yes, 1 no / abstentions) will be required to carry a decision. **All agreed.**
- ✓ 2 yes's and 2 abstentions – this decision should carry as there will be circumstances when individuals must abstain due to conflict of interest. **Agreed unless abstention is not due to conflict of interest and that further information is required by the Executives for a decision to be made**
- ✓ Majority abstention (1 yes, 3 abstentions) indicates a failed vote. **All agreed.**
- ✓ 2 yes, 2 no, indicates **further discussion**. Mery asked if after discussion, what would happen if we can't reach conclusion. It was agreed that **President** would step forward in making the decision on behalf of the executives.

Urgent matters requiring an Executive decision may need to be made prior to an Executive meeting, at which case it will be made via email. The 48-hour rule shall apply. Email voting will take place and the VP Finance and Operations will include these motions and votes to the upcoming minutes to ensure transparency for members. Mery indicates that any emails requiring a decision via the Executive should include a 'Reply All' in the subject so that all decisions are apparent to everyone.

Mery indicates that your Executive portfolio, as per the Bylaws and Policies, will dictate what communication is forwarded to you. For example, any financial issues will be forwarded to the VP Finance and Operations, any academic issues to the VP Student Affairs, etc. If the Executive seeks input from another Executive, they can choose to forward the communication as they see appropriate.

## SESSION TWO: 1:30 PM – 2:30 PM

### **8. GSA Services**

Executives will be responsible to ensuring the following services are continuously offered and maintained.

#### ***8.1. GSA Commons***

The VP Finance and Operations and the Office Manager are responsible to ensuring the proper maintenance of the Commons. The Commons is now equipped with a projector system. Coffee / Tea / Hot Chocolate are available for graduate students during office hours, and not during events. Wajih asked if the coffee is available during the events that happen after office hours. Mery clarified that Coffee is available at an extra cost for events. The GSA do not offer tea or coffee unless it is GSA's event. Also, as per the recommendations of the Sustainability Committee, the Commons is now equipped with reusable cups and plates that will be used for GSA events and meetings. The Commons also has a single stream-lined recycling bin. The students are also welcome to put posters on the notice-board but they have to adhere to the University policies. Moreover, the students can request to have their artwork displayed on the walls of the commons. For this, Wajih or Candace needs to be contacted.

Mery indicates that rental of the GSA Commons is a source of revenue that the Association relies on and allocates budgeting for every year. Mery encourages Executives to look at the website so that they are aware of the rules and regulations to bookings.

- ✓ Free for GSA ratified groups during office hours
- ✓ \$50 / hour for GSA ratified groups after office hours, during weekends and holidays
- ✓ \$75 / hour for GSA non-ratified groups
- ✓ Other costs include coffee, BBQ's and tables (once they are purchased). They can't take these outside of GSA premises.

Mery describes personal use of the GSA Commons. Based on previous years, Executives could use the space twice (2) year for no charge, for their department or social group or for a personal event ONLY if usage does not require a coordinator. This promotes appreciation for the Executives work and as long as no Coordinators are required, would not add an extra cost to the Association.

*Executives approve that Executives are able to use the Commons for 2 events at no cost, only if no Coordinator is required.*

Mery indicates the importance of a balance between having events in the Commons and leaving the space event-free. The space is intended for graduate students and therefore it is important that events are not constantly hindering students from using the space as space for studying, using the computers or socializing.

### **8.2. ISIC Cards**

As part of our affiliation with the Canadian Federation of Students, our members are eligible to obtain an ISIC card for free. These can be obtained online and members will receive occasional reminders about this through Emails and social media. Wajih mentions that it is still free to order e-copy of the card but need to pay shipping fee if the students want to have hard-copy.

### **8.3. UPASS**

The UPASS offers huge savings for our members as it is a discounted price for the use of Saskatoon Transit. The pass is currently only offered in the fall and winter terms. Our agreement with Saskatoon transit dictates the opt-out eligibilities. USSU currently administers the UPASS for our members at a cost of \$1.50 / sticker, as per an agreement. This is ideal for the GSA as we do not have the staff / resources to administer the UPASS to our members.

In 2014, a referendum did not pass and this eliminated the spring / summer UPASS. Surveys and discussions have indicated a split vote regarding the want for the spring / summer UPASS. The executives decided that they would look for other alternatives by discussing with Saskatoon Transit that better describes the opt-out options.

### **8.4. Health and Dental Plan**

Students pay about \$459 for health and dental, through Studentcare. Mery indicates that the VP External, also as the chair of the Health and Dental Committee, acts as the Liaison between the Association and Studentcare. Colten Yamagishi and Kristen Foster are the Studentcare representatives and have been very engaged and communicative with the GSA. The Executives will generally participate in an orientation session with them and Studentcare generally attends one of the earlier Council meetings to present on the services provided under the plan. Studentcare has also been a strong supporter of many of our events and their generosity is



appreciated. One of the important change is the participation of Postdocs in the Health and Dental Plan. They negotiated with the University and has comprehensive coverage of health and dental plan. Postdocs can opt-in to the Plan, if they want.

### ***8.5. Social Groups***

Any group of graduate students who wish to be ratified under the GSA may do so under the guidelines provided in our Policies. The VP Student Affairs is responsible for processing Social Club ratification forms. These can be academic, cultural or social clubs that follow specific guidelines, as outlined in our Policies. Ratification is required every September and is approved by Council. Groups must fill out the forms found on the website and once ratified are able to use the Commons as ratified groups and apply for funding. Social club funding is budgeted for and groups can apply for a maximum of \$500 / academic year. Once the application regarding the interest in being ratified from a social group is received, a member from the social group is invited to one of the executive meetings. The agenda is circulated among the executives prior to the meetings. The executives would ask questions to know more about the group and if deemed eligible, they would take it forward to the council.

### ***8.6. GSA Council***

The Council is a compilation of representatives from each Academic Unit, a single department or a College. Each Unit reapplies to be part of the Council before the September Council meeting. Ratification forms are directed towards the President. Depending on the number of graduate students within the Unit, one or two representatives may be present on the Council. The forms are available online and a call for Academic Councilors will be sent out early September through the Chair and through Email notifications to all graduate students. It is important to try and reach departments / colleges that have not been involved.

### ***8.7. Human Resources and Commons Operations***

The Vice-President Finance and Operations and the Office Manager are responsible for this. Certain policies have been developed last year to ensure transparency and accountability. We might need to hire 3 Coordinator in the near-future and the positions will be advertised through SECC and recruiting will likely take place in late August or September.

### ***8.8. GSA Social Media, App and Website***

The GSA has Facebook and Twitter. These are used as a means of communicating with our members. This generally falls under the VP External portfolio. It was agreed that while it is important to post on social media, we must not over-post and we must post only content relevant to the GSA and its initiatives as well as initiatives that will benefit graduate students.

It was mentioned that the GSA used to have an app but it is now discontinued.

### ***8.9. GSA Bursaries***

These are needs-based bursaries whereby applications are offered 3 times a year; June / October / February. This falls under the VP Finance and Operation's portfolio with the VP Student Affairs assisting in the Selections Committee. It was indicated that hard-copy applications have been effective prior years, in ensuring that documents are complete and there is no missing information. In summer 2019, \$10,000 will be distributed (so 10 bursary applications). Calls for applications will be made through social media/PAWS/emails. A call should be made on June 1<sup>st</sup>. \$26,000 in fall and \$26,000 for winter will be distributed in 2019/2020.

Call for applications will be done through social media, paws and email announcements. The general timeline: 3 weeks for applications. 2 weeks for decision-making.

Mery will email funding request to CGPS for events. From October, Chiamaka will email to schools for funding related to gala events.

### ***8.10. GSA Guppies***

This service is under the VP External's portfolio and allows for graduate students to participate in campus rec programs during the year. This is budgeted for and it is an opportunity for the GSA to promote health and wellbeing for graduate students. The budget allows for a maximum of two teams each term.

It was indicated that the majority should be graduate students but that others can join. The GSA pays for the cost of the team but not any other costs.

## **SESSION THREE: 2:53 PM – 4:51 PM**

### **9. GSA Initiatives for the 2019 / 2020 Academic Year**

While these initiatives fall under the portfolio of VP Student Affairs / VP External, they will require all Executives to pitch in and offer their assistance.

### ***9.1. Fall / Winter Orientation***

Orientations are key events and are organized by the VP Student Affairs. Alejandra will reach out to Edgar to learn from his prior experience and to learn more about borrowing tent and hosting event in bowl.

The date that has been set aside for the Fall Orientation is September 5, 2019. There will be swag at the Orientation as well as handbooks. Alejandra will work with Candace for the swag. The handbook is usually done by the Canadian Federation of Students. Advertisements will be handled by Candace.

Mery reminds the Executives that the Orientation will require everyone to be there in attendance. The Winter Orientation will be scheduled in the first executive meeting. This Orientation targets students who start in the winter term.

### ***9.2. Social Events***

As part of ensuring that we build a cohesive graduate student community, a series of social events will be organized throughout the year. There are budgetary constraints and it is important to ensure that these events are inclusive to all members. All Executives should be present at the socials and help the VP Student Affairs. The events to follow this year are:

- ✓ Fall Wine and Cheese Social: Will be determined in the first executive meeting
- ✓ Halloween Party: Will be determined in the first executive meeting
- ✓ Holiday Party: Will be determined in the first executive meeting
- ✓ Winter Wine and Cheese Social: Will be determined in the first executive meeting
- ✓ Popcorn and movie night: Will be determined later in the year, closer to September.

All Executives agreed that such initiatives would be inclusive for graduate students across campus and would promote the Commons.

### ***9.3. Workshops / Health Chats***

The VP Student Affairs will coordinate a series of workshops for graduate students on topics that are of importance to graduate students.

Health Chats was an initiative that was started three years ago by Executives as a means of promoting personal wellness for graduate students. The VP External is responsible for coordinating a series of Health Chats. Last few years, those that were organized were well

attended. These events are open to the general University community. This has been budgeted for as the intention is to continue these initiatives to provide an avenue for graduate students' alternative means of personal wellness.

#### ***9.4. Graduate Student Research Conference***

Alejandra hopes to host the conference this year in February (Exact date to be decided in the first executive meeting). The executives agree that with planning graduate students would participate in the conference as it is an excellent opportunity for them to participate in communicating their research.

#### ***9.5 Three-Minute Thesis Competition***

The 3MT Competition is a popular event that the GSA hosts in collaboration with CGPS. This year, the competition has been scheduled for late March (The exact date will be determined in the first executive meeting). Alejandra is responsible for the organization of this competition.

#### ***9.6 Annual Awards Gala***

This event honours students and faculty for their commitment and dedication to research, scholarly and artistic pursuits, leadership and community engagement. This year, the Gala has been scheduled for first week of April (exact date will be determined in first executive meeting). Call for application will be sent in first week of February. Chiamaka is responsible for organizing the Gala in its entirety. The date should not coincide with the University Council Meeting.

#### ***9.7. Tax Filing***

Being part of CFS, our members are entitled to use the free tax filing system called UFILE. This is a popular service that allows our members to save money. Three years ago, the Executives first offered to assist our members with using this service and it has since then been popular. The VP Finance and Operations is responsible for hosting the "Tax Filing Clinic" during the April month for our members.

#### ***9.8. Conferences***

As part of our affiliations with CFS and ThinkGrad, we attend conferences. For the 2019/2020 academic year, these include the following;

- ✓ Canadian Federation of Students, Semi-General Meeting
- ✓ Studentcare Meeting
- ✓ ThinkGRAD August Meeting
- ✓ National-General Meeting, CFS
- ✓ National Graduate Caucus, CFS
- ✓ ThinkGRAD April Meeting

The VP External usually attends these meetings, as per their role and unless otherwise indicated, and because of budgetary constraints Mery recommends that only one individual be sent to these meetings so that we can ensure maximum participation. If the VP External is unavailable, then another Executive can choose to go to the meeting instead. There may be other conferences that are advertised through CFS; however, these will be contingent on fundraising efforts. Mery indicated that Executives will discuss at Executive meetings each of the conferences as they arise and delegate an individual to attend.

#### **10. Understanding of the Budget**

Mery went over the approved Budget in brief but asks Executives to direct any questions to the VP Finance and Operations. Mery also went briefly over the policies.

*Executives agreed that discretionary funds are to be used for circumstances that are for the betterment of graduate students and the GSA and NOT be used for personal expenditures.*

#### **11. Closing Remarks**

Mery is pleased to hear the discussions that took place today and acknowledges the diplomatic nature and respect that was prevalent. She looks forward to the year ahead and encourages Executives to seek input from each other. Ultimately, our goal is to enhance the experience of graduate students at the University of Saskatchewan. The executives thanked Naheda for attending the retreat and for her guidance.

#### **12. Adjournment of Meeting**

Meeting adjourned at 4:51 PM.



University of Saskatchewan - Graduate Students' Association  
Executive Meeting Minutes  
May 15, 2019

**Present:** Mery Mendoza (President), Mohammad Wajih Alam (VP Finance and Operations), Alejandra Fonseca (VP Student Affairs), Chiamaka Ezekwesili (VP External).

**Regrets/Absent:** None

**Guests:** Nirajan Niroula

### 1. Call to Order / Opening Remarks

The president called the meeting to order at 6:03pm.

The president mentioned that this was the first executive meeting for the year and asked about how each officer's experience had been during the first 15 days as executives of the GSA. Chiamaka mentioned that she was busy between taking classes and attending meetings. Wajih and Alejandra mentioned that it has been busy but that they have learned a lot. Mery congratulated each executive for standing for this position and she hopes that each executive maintains high levels of enthusiasm and dedication throughout the year. She mentioned that the Robert's Rules of Order will be followed in the meetings and requested everyone to be familiar with it. She also added that she welcomes everyone to come forward with any questions/concerns.

### 2. Approval of the Agenda

The president asked if there were any additions or amendments to the agenda as circulated. The president requested to add item 5.5: Meeting with ISAAC and the VP Finance and Operations asked to add item 5.6: Use of discretionary fund to agenda.

*Motion to approve the agenda as amended moved by the president and seconded by the VP Finance and Operations.*

***Motion carried.***

### 3. Approval of the May 04, 2019 Executive Retreat Meeting Minutes

The president asked whether there were any further amendments to the executive retreat meeting minutes held on May 4<sup>th</sup>, 2019. None were mentioned.

*Motion to approve the retreat minutes moved by the VP Student Affairs and seconded by the VP External.*

***Motion carried.***

#### 4. Items for Action

##### *4.1 Funding Request NepaliNite-2019*

The VP Finance and Operations indicated that he received a funding request from the Nepalese Student's Association for NepaliNite-2019 with a thorough description and budget requirement. The president welcomed Nirajan to the executive meeting and asked him to briefly describe the event.

Nirajan mentioned that the Nepalese Student's Association has been doing this event every year and it fosters the relationship between different communities. Although the name is NepaliNite, people from all other organizations will be invited. This event will help promote co-operation between different student organizations on-campus. The Nepalese Student's Association also has a plan to invite alumni from different student organization/social groups to further build the relationship. He also mentioned that it will be a free-entry program this year which will foster maximum participation. There will also be a donation box and the money raised will be donated to the people affected by recent tragedy in Srilanka.

The president asked if other executives had any questions. The VP Finance and Operations asked if they have any other financial sources to fund the program. They mentioned they do not have any other approved funding as of yet. President asked if they have applied for other funding. They have asked alumni and other organization but they have not heard back yet. The VP Finance and Operations explained that the GSA can support up to \$500 per academic year depending upon the program. The VP Student Affairs asked if there will be alcohol in the program. Nirajan replied that this is a child-friendly program and alcohol will not be served. The VP External mentioned that she is happy that Nepalese Student's Association is organizing a program where most graduate students can take part in a program outside of the school academics. She asked how many graduate student association are going to get involved and if other students who are not part of Nepalese Students Association have been invited or not. Nirajan mentioned that there will be a cultural program as well where performers from other social groups are invited. He also mentioned that they are expecting more than 100 attendees for the program.

The President mentioned that when the GSA sponsors an event, the GSA logo is expected to be on the posters and an announcement should be made at the event. Nirajan agrees to add GSA logo (found on the website) on posters and advertising material. The president indicated that we would like to support all the activities but the decision is based on the budget and not on the event. The President thanked Nirajan for providing the proposal and further information. The decision will be made and it will be communicated via email.

*The VP External moved to approve funding in the amount of \$500 for this event. This motion was seconded by the VP Student Affairs.*

***3 in favour, 1 abstention for conflict of interest (VP Finance and Operations)  
Motion carried.***

#### *4.2 72<sup>nd</sup> Semi-Annual National General Meeting in June, Canadian Federation of Students*

The president mentioned that we are members of the Canadian Federation of Students, as such we participate on meetings such as the 72<sup>nd</sup> Semi-Annual General Meeting of the Canadian Federation of Students and Canadian Federation of Students-Services that will be held on Kanata, Ontario, on June 8 –11, 2019. The president mentioned that this is an excellent opportunity to interact and network with other students and it is important to engage in discussions of motions that are brought in this meeting, and usually the VP External represents the GSA in these type of activities. The president suggested that the VP external should attend the meeting. Alejandra asked if we need to wait for council approval at the council meeting to either approve or not the participation of the VP external in the 72 semi-annual national meeting, to which the President replied that the participation of one executive to this event will be approved by GSA executives and does not need approval from the council.

*B. Motion to approve that the VP External participates in the 72<sup>nd</sup> Semi-Annual National General Meeting held in June, Canadian Federation of Students. Moved by the VP Student Affairs, seconded by the VP Finance and Operations.*

***4 in favour  
Motion carried***

#### *4.3 Cheque remittance*

The president indicated that the VP Finance and Operations will bring this item forward at every Executive Meeting, or as the need arises.

*Whereas GSA bylaws 5.4.3 restricts expenditure amounts above \$500, of any budget line, with the exception of salaries and Executive honorariums, without a majority vote of the Executive.*

*BIRT that the following expenditures be authorized:*

- Payment to USSU in the amount of \$4597.42 on May 13, 2019 for administrative fees relating to winter 2019 UPASS stickers.
- Payment to Canadian Federation of Students in the amount of \$1909.36 on May 13, 2019, for 2019/2020 membership.
- Payment to the Crisis Aid program for graduate student assistance in the amount of \$7250 on May 13, 2019, for membership dues for 2019 / 2020 academic year.
- Payment to the University of Saskatchewan in the amount of \$8250 on May 13, 2019, for the GSA Student Travel Award contribution for 2019 / 2010 academic year.
- Payment to City of Saskatoon in the amount of \$ 4968.46 on May 13, 2019 for remaining remittance of UPASS Fees for the 2018/2019 Fall and Winter terms.



*The VP Finance and Operations moved to approve the above expenditures. Seconded by the VP Student Affairs.*

***Motion carried***

## **5. Items for Information / Discussion**

### *5.1 Residence Issues*

VP Student Affairs, Alejandra brought forward some issues that students are having in regards to the university residence and the services provided by their staff. She mentioned that she has been receiving complaints related to the residence fees. The students living in the residence are required to pay in advance rent for September, meaning in early May, even if they are old residents, and because of this, some of these students are mentally stressed and financially anxious, therefore it is affecting their academic achievement. Alejandra also added that she had already spoken with the previous VP Student Affairs, Edgar Martinez-Soberanes, who advised her to take action talking directly to the University Administration instead of talking to the University Residence Office. It was also mentioned that the residence has been dealing with these type of issues case-by-case until now. Therefore, Alejandra asked the president if this can be added as an item to be discussed with the Vice Provost on the next meeting to which Mery agreed.

Mery further added that a meeting with the Director of Student Affairs and Services at University of Saskatchewan, Peter Hedley and with the Vice-Provost, Teaching, Learning and Student Experience, Patti McDougall, will be requested and these issues will be discussed with them. Wajih added that in those meetings we can also ask about justification, rationality behind the increase on fees as well.

Mery thanked Alejandra for bringing this up and encouraged all executives to attend these meetings.

### *5.2 Ideas for Orientation Event*

This year fall orientation is scheduled to be on September 05, 2019. The VP Student Affairs asked all the executives if they had any ideas/suggestions to make for the fall orientation to be successful. All executives brainstormed ideas related to the orientation. Some of the ideas were to:

- Try to bring external sponsorship. The executives need to make a shortlist of potential person/organization to contact.
- Chiamaka added that the orientation can be more diverse, inviting social groups to participate.
- Wajih added that cultural programs can be arranged which would help new and existing students know about different services that occurs on campus.

- Wajih also added that it was important to make the event food friendly (Vegetarian, non-vegetarian or halal options can be added).
- It was also mentioned that different vendors can be contacted who might be interested to fund for pizzas or ice-cream. The VP student affairs will work with the GSA Office Manager to contact these vendors.
- The VP Student Affairs will decide on Swags at a later date.

President Mery thanked all executives for all the wonderful ideas that they brought to the table and looks forward to a successful orientation this year.

### *5.3 Dates for the year events*

The VP Student Affairs proposed the following dates for 2019/2020 events:

Fall, Wine and Cheese = September 27<sup>th</sup>, 2019

Halloween Social = October 31<sup>st</sup>, 2019

Holiday Party = November 29<sup>th</sup>, 2019

Winter Orientation = January 16<sup>th</sup>, 2020

Graduate Research Conference = February 13-14, 2020

3MT competition = March 6<sup>th</sup>, 2020

Annual Gala = April 4<sup>th</sup>, 2020

Mery asked if any of the executives had conflicts with those dates and all agreed that they are available to participate on the mentioned events.

### *5.4 June GSA Council Meeting*

The president mentioned that we have regular meetings with GSA council where the GSA chair is in charge of the meeting and that all executives are required to provide a page description about their goals for the upcoming year. The report should be about 200 words and each executive can speak up to 3 minutes. Mery asked everyone to check the deadline and be prepared. If anyone cannot submit the report by the deadline, they should ask the chair for an extension. Mery also emphasized that it is important to attend all the meetings because it enhances the credibility of the GSA. Everyone should try to read the agenda before going to the meetings so that they are well-prepared.

### *5.5 ISSAC Meeting*

We met the executives of International Student and Study Abroad Centre (ISSAC) on May 15<sup>th</sup> at 1 PM. We came to know more about ISSAC's executive team and the president hopes that we can work closely with them in the near future so that the graduate students can enjoy a friendly and

safe environment on campus. ISSAC asked if they can get some low price preference when booking the GSA commons. The executives decided that it would be unfair to other organizations if ISSAC is given special preference. Therefore the executives decided that ISSAC will be treated equally to other GSA collaborative organizations.

### *5.6 Discretionary Fund*

The VP Finance and Operations mentioned that the discretionary funds are to be used for circumstances that are for the betterment of graduate students and not be used for personal expenditures. He further requested all executives to be careful and transparent when using discretionary funds. He also asked the executives to keep the receipts of the expenses to be successful in the reimbursements. The president thanked Wajih for clarifying and reassuring transparency on the use of funds.

## **6. Other Business**

### *6.1 Important Dates*

Mery emphasized that it is important to attend and participate in all the meetings that each executive is assigned to attend because this improves the credibility of the GSA. If unforeseen circumstances arise, the expected executive attendee should not forget to send regrets.

### *6.2 Graduation Powwow 2019*

It was decided that Alejandra and Chiamaka will participate in this event.

### *6.3 Meeting with Provost*

Chiamaka met with the provost and informed the executives about planning a meeting with him in the near future. The president advised that we will need to have clear ideas and goals before scheduling a meeting through his secretary. We need to be structured and organized before going to the meeting and we will contact him soon.

### *6.3 Other Events*

Chiamaka proposed to have a plot event this summer where graduate students will be trained on gardening. The organization provides all the equipment as well as ingredients that will be required for successful planting. The results of the gardening will go to food bank. All executives encouraged Chiamaka to proceed with this idea. She is also planning to organize outdoor soccer activities close to the residential building.

The president thanked everyone for the great discussions and ideas provided in this meeting.

**7. Confidential Session**

**8. In Camera Session**

**9. Adjournment of Meeting**

The President asked whether there was any other business arising.

Since there were none, the meeting was adjourned at 8:12 PM.



University of Saskatchewan Graduate Students' Association

**President report - GSA Council Meeting, June 2019**

Dear Councilors,

On behalf of the GSA executives, we are very happy and excited to be representing our graduate students on the 2019/2020 academic year. We look forward to an outstanding year and we hope to work alongside with each of you to better serve our graduate students at the University of Saskatchewan. We are committed and engaged with our roles and responsibilities and we hope to work as a team, in order to ensure that the GSA continues to advocate for better tools and resources for our graduate students. In this first report, I provide a brief explanation of the major areas of focus for the course of my term, which are as follows:

**1. Improving our resources for mental health**

Many of our graduate students are usually under stress combined with depression and anxiety due to the responsibilities and tasks that they need to complete. Those tasks can vary from teaching, doing research, collecting data, analyzing and processing data, writing reports and theses, having meetings, dealing with visa renewal, paying tuition, family issues, negative experiences, etc. These issues surrounding graduate student wellness have negative impacts on our student's life and academic performance. In order to improve the student experience on campus, we want to focus on both enhance the tools and resources that are available as well as make them more accessible to all our graduate students. We have met with the Director of Student Affairs and Services and members of the Student Wellness and Student Outreach teams to tighten and strengthen the relationship with the GSA executives and discuss future events and activities for our graduate students. We will continue engaging our partners on and around campus in discussions to better understand the needs of our graduate students so that those needs can be best taken into consideration when developing new initiatives.

## **2. Student-Supervisor relationship**

A student-supervisor agreement has been developed over the years by previous executives and has been implemented on some of the faculties and colleges around campus. While this agreement is not mandatory, we ask that students and supervisors to acknowledge this document as a basis for starting a relationship during the tenure of the student program. With the support of the CGPS and other partners around campus, we will continue promoting this agreement across campus as we enact initiatives to enhance the student-supervisor relationship.

## **3. Previous Initiatives**

We want to continue the previous initiatives and activities handed to us by the previous executives. We will continue our efforts to place a graduate student representative on the board of governors. We will continue working on the student manual which will be designed to support and guide our graduate students through their academic career at the University. We will continue promoting networking opportunities for students to engage in industry, research, and government positions. Overall, we will continue to advocate for the best interests of our members.

## **4. Executive Retreat**

The GSA executives met on May 4, 2019 to participate in the annual Executive Retreat. As similar to previous years, the GSA has dedicated itself to creating programs and initiatives that support our graduate students and promote wellness. We will continue providing the previous services, such as the UPASS and the Health and Dental Plan, with potential other activities that will benefit the social life of our graduate students. Some of the services that will be offered are:

- Workshops and activities to address areas of importance for graduate students.
- Health chats that will provide graduate students with an opportunity to practice wellness.
- Orientation and socials that will promote a strong graduate student community and help foster an environment of care and support.
- A celebration of graduate student achievements with the Graduate Student Research Conference, the 3MT Competition, and the Annual Awards Gala.

## 5. Executive Meeting

The GSA executives held their first meeting on May 15, 2019. The second meeting is scheduled for June 12, 2019.

We want our students to leave the University of Saskatchewan having had a great life experience rooted in connections to a diverse community of professionals and scholars. I look forward to working together as a team to continue serving our graduate students.

Thank you,

Mery Mendoza

President, Graduate Students' Association

June 2019

**RE: VP Finance and Operations to Council**

Dear Council Members,

I am happy to report to you an update on my activities as the current Vice-President Finance and Operations.

First of all, I would like to thank the present executives and Office Manager for doing an extraordinary job during the past month. I would also like to thank ex-VP Finance and Operations (Jesus Corona-Gomez) who made the transition period easy by being available and by providing me with an overview of how GSA finances were operated and managed last year. He made sure that all the information were delivered to me in a timely manner.

I have been in touch with our bookkeeper Samantha Nemanishen from Chip Bookkeeping Services Inc. We are following good practices of having third signing authority to ensure that no one will be able to sign a cheque that is payable to themselves, hence ensuring transparency.

I am also pleased to mention that practically the most essential work in this portfolio is up to date. We have placed payments for closing of the academic year 2018/2019 to principal partners including StudentCare (the Health and Dental Provider), The Canadian Federation of Students, along with the City of Saskatoon Transit Division (UPASS provider) are up to date. My main objectives going forward for the next term will be finalization of the GSA coordinator recruitment, working on the organization of the GSA Bursary Spring and Summer/Fall/Winter term, engagement reviews with the auditors and bookkeeper, working gradually on the 2019/20 Budget, and preparation for the upcoming Tax Clinic as it has been successfully done in previous years.

As you already know by now, the call for bursary applications for Spring and Summer term is now open. I have started to receive applications for the bursaries. The last date to submit the applications is June 24<sup>th</sup>. We expect increasing submission of applications as deadline comes closer. The GSA Bursary Selection Committee will meet to review the received applications in the following week after the deadline to select the beneficiaries. We will also continue to support ratified social clubs in this year. As of now, we supported Nepali Nite 2019 event hosted by Nepalese Student Association on Campus.

I also had the honor to represent graduate students on different committees and events.



Date	Meeting/Event
<b>May 4, 2019</b>	GSA executive retreat
<b>May 15, 2019</b>	International Student Study Abroad Centre
<b>May 16, 2019</b>	Student Hearing and Appeal Boards
<b>May 24, 2019</b>	Student Wellness Centre
<b>May 28, 2019</b>	Peer Health USASK
<b>May 28, 2019</b>	Meeting with USSU Executives
<b>June 3, 2019</b>	Competitive Entrance Awards-Special Terms
<b>June 4 and 6, 2019</b>	UofS Convocation
<b>June 6, 2019</b>	Nepalese Nite 2019
<b>June 11, 2019</b>	RBC Account Representative

Last but not least, I would like to thank all the current executives, council members and GSA chair for working closely with each other as we all share a common goal for ensuring quality life for graduate students both on and off campus. I look forward to a productive year ahead.

We have an open-door policy at GSA. As such, please feel free to contact me at [gsa.fin@usask.ca](mailto:gsa.fin@usask.ca) or speak to me anytime at the GSA Commons should you have any questions or need any further clarification.

Sincerely,

**Mohammad Wajih Alam**

**Vice-President Finance and Operations**

Graduate Students' Association

Email: [gsa.fin@usask.ca](mailto:gsa.fin@usask.ca) | Web: <https://gsa.usask.ca/>

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**Graduate Students' Association**  
University of Saskatchewan

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June 2019

**RE: VP Student Affairs Report to Council**

Dear Council Members:

Please find below my May report to council.

**1) Fall Orientation**

The Fall Orientation is coming up very soon. In the first GSA executive meeting, the day of the GSA BBQ was proposed as September 5<sup>th</sup>; however, it has come to our attention that this day the bowl is already booked. Because of this, after an upcoming meeting with the USSU this week the new date for Orientation will be determined. Several quotes for different promotional materials have been requested and obtained. At the end of this month, invitations will be sent to all the social groups registered in the GSA and to U of S faculty to attend orientation. At the moment, we are considering several partners for sponsorship and we will be contacting them in the next couple of weeks.

This year, the GSA and its ratified social groups and clubs will be invited to take part in this event and we will discuss with this groups the possibility of cultural presentations.

**2) GSA Facebook**

This year the GSA Facebook will promote different events on campus that grad students might not be aware of. It would also feature posters and images that can be easily shared and printed in case that promotion is needed to increase the engagement of the students. Additionally, pictures of what the GSA is working on will be posted.

**3) Mental Health**

In addition of the events that GSA has been holding for the last couple of years, this year's focus will be on Mental Health among grad students. We have met with the Student Wellness Centre and we will be meeting with Rita Hanoski to plan the best idea to address this issue among grad students.



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The following is an updated list of meetings I have attended, since May 1<sup>st</sup>.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Meetings</b>
May 4 <sup>th</sup>	GSA Executives Retreat
May 15 <sup>th</sup>	Meeting with ISAAC
May 15 <sup>th</sup>	GSA Executive Meeting
May 17 <sup>th</sup>	New Protocols for Student Hearings and Appeals Meeting
May 23 <sup>rd</sup>	University Council Meeting
May 24 <sup>th</sup>	Student Affairs and Services Leadership Team Meeting
May 27 <sup>th</sup>	TLARC Meeting
May 31 <sup>st</sup>	Graduation Powwow
June 4 <sup>th</sup>	U of S Convocation
June 5 <sup>th</sup>	U of S Convocation
June 10 <sup>th</sup>	Academic Affairs Meeting

## **V.P External affairs**

Since I began my role as the Vice President External on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2019, the following have been my activities:

1. GSA Guppies Soccer tournament
2. Reactivation of GSA Instagram account
3. Ongoing plan for Adopt-a-Plot
4. CFS meeting at Ottawa
5. Attended the convocation ceremony as part of the Chancellors party.