



**University of Saskatchewan
Graduate Students' Association
Annual General Meeting
Tuesday, April 14, 2020. Email Meeting***

As GSA members gather, 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.

***The April 14th, 2020 Annual General Meeting took place over email format due to the global health pandemic of COVID-19, where the Government of Saskatchewan made directives to practice social distancing in order to curb the spread of the virus.**

Attendance: Alana Weber, Aimee Schryer, Alana G. Demkiw, Ahmad Zalehi, Aisha Sajid, Ajay Muthukumar, Alexander Mueller, Alireza Razmavar, Asanka Godakanda, Arash Mollahosseini, Arash Yahyazadeh, Breanne Murray, Cameron Choquette, Carmen Marquez Mellidez (Incoming VP Academic & Student Affairs), Dylan, Chand, Derek Perrin, Edgar Martinez, Ehsan Moradi, Erin Leeder, Farshad Shafiei, Girish Kamath, Hadi Ramin, (Incoming VP Finance & Operations) Hongxiu Wang, Harini Aiyer, Humaira Inam (Incoming President), Iyanu Kumayon, Indra Prasad Dahal Itoro, Oku George, Jesus Corona-Gomez, Jeveria Rehman, Jason Ho, José Alvim Berkenbrock, Jonayed Nafis Hemel, James Schulte, Julia Koop, Karim Shahbazi, Khaled Zoroufchi Benis, Kingsley Mokube Ekumi, Katherine Ottley, Kimberlee Dube, Kezia Fourie, Kushagra Parolia, Lindsay Church, Linxiang Ji, Linda Vogt, Lynette Epp, Luigui Alban, Laura Larsen, Lindsay Tarnowetzki, Azza Mohammadiazar, Mostofa Kamal, Md Nadim, Mercy Harris, Manreet Kaur Nehal, Muhammad Kaleem Sarwar, Michele Monroy-Valle, Mohie Al Dine Chaaban, Natalie Houser, Natasha Boyes, Nitin Sharma, Naheda Sahtout, Onyebuchi Onumonu, Kanmi-Obembe Olakorede, Peyman Alizadeh, Peggy Anderson, Purbasha Mistry, Qasim Shahzad Gill (Incoming VP External Affairs), Raquel Lunardi Baccetto, Riel Castro-Zunti, Rebecca Smith, Rifat Zahan, Seth Appiah, Shashank Sekhar Kumar, Shahab Minaei, Sam Netzke, Selena Schut, Swapna Padmanabha, Trevor Batters, Travis Gray, Tina Elliott, Thomas Story, Tumpa Sarker, Prashani Dilushika, Gravel Wang.

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

Organization of the meeting:

Mr. Osai Clarke acted as Recording Secretary and compiled the minutes based on responses received through the online form.

1. Call to Order

All Regular Members were emailed a link to the Agenda, as well as a link for voting on agenda items in order to participate over email. Councilors had from 5 PM (Tuesday, April 14, 2020) to 5 PM (Friday, April 17, 2020) to participate. The Call to Order commenced as soon as Regular Members received the link.

2. Announcements

a. Quorum

The quorum for the meeting was reached, as there were 89 Regular Members who participated in the meeting. There was no issue in maintaining quorum as all members could go through the entire agenda over the course of a few days at their convenience.

b. PSAC Representative Address

PSAC did not present a message to be shared.

3. Approval of Agenda

Motion to approve the agenda. (Mellidez/Smith)

Carried

79 in favour. 7 abstentions. 3 opposed

4. Approval of Minutes

Motion to approve April 16th, 2019 AGM minutes. (Mellidez/Smith)

Carried

77 in favour. 10 abstentions. 2 opposed

5. GSA Executives Report

a. Vice President Finance & Operations Report

The report was made available in the agenda package.

b. Vice President Student Affairs Report

The report was made available in the agenda package.

c. Vice President External Report

The report was made available in the agenda package.

d. President's Report

The report was made available in the agenda package.

e. Questions & Answers

There were several comments/questions from Regular Members requesting further information about the following:

- Graduate students and COVID-19
 - What is the University currently doing to reduce the financial barriers to graduate students?
 - How are we addressing tuition, when graduate students are unable to access research facilities, services and resources on campus?
 - How will graduate students be supported knowing that program lengths will be extended?
 - Will there be any refunds to the transit pass?

Due to COVID-19, the GSA is continuously advocating for graduate support. You can find the April 5, 2020 letter which was released here (<https://gsa.usask.ca/documents/statements/2020covid19.pdf>). We have had several meetings with senior leaders to address our students' concerns. Since all of our graduate students are facing the same pandemic, we look for universal solutions. The university is having discussions on how to move forward with respect to each of those concerns, including tuition adjustments for the spring/summer. The GSA will release another letter, to further emphasize the need for tuition relief. We will continue to address these concerns with the University administration.

The GSA Executive and Office Staff are active over email and will continue to serve our members and their needs. We recently added a new service, Empower Me, which is available to ALL graduate students, at no cost.

The transit pass for the winter term will not be refunded for April. The transit service that students paid for has never stopped being accessible to them in the allotted period, and so our current contract has been fully honoured and thus doesn't warrant a refund.

- Communication between the GSA and the Regular Membership could be improved - are there ways in which we can address this?

In the winter of 2019, the GSA finally had the ability to access a listserv of all graduate students, so that the GSA can directly communicate with you. We try to minimize the number of emails sent by the GSA to ensure we are effectively communicating with you, without excessive emailing. The GSA also uses social media, PAWS posts and updates the website as needed.

- Concern was raised about the recent Graduate Student Assistant job posting and it was recommended that clear guidelines should be laid out for students. It seems that the

number of positions available was not enough and there was concern that the graduate students would be spread too thin. How will graduate students be properly informed of their rights?

Thank you for sharing your concerns. We have brought this forward to PSAC Local 40004 to address, and we will work with them to ensure the academic success of our graduate students is not hindered in this period of uncertainty.

6. Motions

6.1. Motion: Approval of the GSA Auditor for the 2020-2021 Financial Year.

WHEREAS Section 8.1.2.2 of the GSA Constitution and Section 149(1) of the Saskatchewan Non-Profits Corporation Act govern the appointment of an auditor.

BE IT RESOLVED THAT Buckberger Baerg and Partners LLP be appointed as auditors for the 2020-2021 Financial Year.

(Alam/Mendoza)

There were several comments requesting further information about the choice of the accounting firm and the rationale for its appointment.

Since 2015/2016, the GSA Executives have worked hard to ensure financial transparency. A lot of this work required proper financial recordkeeping and a bookkeeper and auditor who understood the way the Association conducted work. Buckberger Baerg & Partners LLP has been the auditor for the GSA for several years now, and with perseverance from the GSA Executives and collaboration, they have been able to bring up to date the audits. This was helped when individuals continued as an Executive for several years in a row.

While this company is slightly more expensive than other auditing companies because GSA Executives rotate are very transient, it would be extremely difficult and risky to transition to another auditing firm. As the Budget is created each year, we ensure that the costs of audits are budgeted for, without compromising student support.

Carried

77 in favour. 8 abstentions. 4 opposed

6.2. Motion: Approval of the GSA Financial Statements for the year ended April 30, 2018.

WHEREAS Section 8.1.2.1 of the GSA Constitution governs the presentation of Financial Statements to the Membership.

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the reviewed financial statements of the University of Saskatchewan Graduate Students' Association Inc. be received for the year ended April 30, 2018, as presented.

(Alam/Mendoza)

A question was raised about why the April 30, 2019 audit was not included for approval in the AGM.

The GSA Executives have worked extremely hard over the past few years to bring the audits up to date. The 2019 audit was completed the week of the AGM, and therefore was not ready in time for inclusion into the agenda package. It would not be appropriate to ask the Regular Members to amend the agenda to include the audit, when there would not have been enough time for Regular Members to view the audit in its entirety.

Carried

76 in favour. 12 abstentions. 1 opposed

6.3. Motion: Honorary Lifetime Membership

WHEREAS Section 5.1.4 of the GSA Constitution permits the naming of an Honorary Lifetime Member which is purely symbolic. Such a position shall be awarded by a majority vote at a General Meeting.

BE IT RESOLVED THAT Naheda Sahtout be made an honorary lifetime member in recognition of her diligence, dedication, and years of service to the GSA that served to enhance the image, reputation, and standing of the Association.

(Fonseca/Alam)

Carried

72 in favour. 13 abstentions. 4 opposed

6.4. Motion: Governance Documents

WHEREAS Section 8.6 of the Constitution of the University of Saskatchewan Graduate Student Association Inc. (GSA) allows a General Meeting of the membership to amend the GSA Constitution, Bylaws, and Policies.

BE IT RESOLVED that the Constitution, Bylaws and Policies be so amended as recommended by the GSA Governance Committee, as set forth in the following supporting documents (Revised Constitution, Revised Bylaws, Revised Policies) and take effect May 1, 2020.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the membership consents to the correction of the governing documents to ensure gender neutrality throughout.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the membership consents to the correction of non substantive corrections, such as numbering, section order and typographical errors, which may arise following these amendments.

(Sahtout/ Mendoza)

Carried

75 in favour. 10 abstentions. 4 opposed

7. Introduction of New Executive

The Elections and Referenda Committee ratified the election results, which saw 630 voters. The following are the incoming GSA Executives:

President- Humaira Inam

VP Finance and Operation- Hadi Ramin

VP Academic and Student Affairs- Carmen Marquez Mellidez

VP External Affairs- Qasim Shahzad Gill

8. Other Business

None.

9. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn (Mellidez/Smith).

Carried
77 in favour. 9 abstentions. 3 opposed