



University of Saskatchewan  
Graduate Students' Association  
Council Meeting Minutes  
Tuesday January 26, 2021. WebEx Meeting\*

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*

*\*WebEx Meeting: The January 26<sup>th</sup>, 2021 Council Meeting took place via WebEx 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.*

### 1. Call to Order

All Council Members were emailed the Agenda package, as well as the WebEx meeting link with the meeting number and password to participate online. The GSA President acting as Chair of Council per GSA Bylaws due to the resignation of the 2020-2021 Chair of Council; officially welcomed Members of Council to the meeting and called the meeting to order at 5:22 PM after quorum for the meeting had been met. Ms. Harini Aiyer, acting as Secretary of Council compiled the meeting minutes.

### 2. Guest: Robyn Paches, Program Manager, Studentcare

Guest speaker Robyn Paches assisted by Ali Versi presented the health and dental plan offered to students through the GSA. Robyn Paches presented an overview of plan, plan basics, annual claims 2019-2020, the new service called "Empower Me" offered in response to Covid-19, and recommendations for moving forward. Robyn Paches shared the following as well:

- They have extended psychology coverage up to 80% per visit.
- The role of the GSA is to spread awareness of the health and dental plan, gather feedback from constituents, review the Executive and Studentcare recommendations, setting plans fees and benefits.
- Annual health claims last year (Sept 2019-Aug 2020) were \$359,964 and dental was \$259,685. Projection for this year remains fairly stable.
- "Empower Me" allows students internationally to access mental health support online (including nutritional and financial support). It has saved over \$10,000 for students since it was implemented in Spring 2020.

**Councilor:** Is there a new phone number to call? I know some students have been trying to reach Studentcare recently and the phone number on your website does not seem to be working. Is this due to covid? I know a few students who have been on hold every time they call and there was never an answer. What should they do?

**Ali Versi:** Thanks for raising this issue. The phone number remains the same, however, it is possible that COVID-19 has caused service disruptions. We will forward this concern to the member services department. In the meantime, I encourage members to use the alternative methods of reaching us such as online live chat, support form or by email: [service@studentcare.net](mailto:service@studentcare.net)

Please see this link for alternative methods of contacting us: <https://studentcare.ca/plan/en-CA/UniversityofSaskatchewangraduatestudentsGSA/assistance-centre>

**Councilor:** If someone needs to take a sick leave can they still opt into the dental and health plan? if so, are they able to pay for just one semester rather than the full year?

Ali Versi: Normally, full-time students who begin their studies in the Fall are covered for a full year.

**Councilor:** Have more students opted-out of the health and dental plan this year (due to the transition to online program delivery), and how did you work with the insurance company to address that?

Robyn Paches: The GSA received a refund from premiums because students weren't able to access these services at the beginning of the pandemic. That being said, we haven't observed a massive increase in opt-out.

### **3. Appointment of Temporary Alternate Council Chair**

Due to the recent resignation of the 2020-2021 Council Chair, per the GSA Bylaws the GSA President was to chair the meeting until a Temporary Alternate Council Chair was appointed by Council. The 2019-2020 GSA Council Chair Reggie was nominated and appointed as a Temporary Alternate Council Chair for the January 26<sup>th</sup> 2021 meeting alone.

*Motion to appoint Reggie as the Temporary Alternate Council Chair. (Gill/ Alexis)*

Carried

### **4. Approval of Agenda**

The Chair asked if there were any amendments to the Agenda as circulated. No amendments were put forward.

*Motion to approve the agenda. (Mellidez/Gill)*

Carried

### **5. Approval of Minutes from December 8, 2020**

There were no amendments.

*Motion to approve the December 8, 2020 minutes. (Kamal/ Kumayon)*

Carried

### **6. Information to be received**

- a. Executive meeting minutes from December 3, 2020
- b. Executive meeting minutes from January 14, 2021

*Motion to receive agenda items 6a and 6b. (Mellidez/ Simonot)*

Carried

### **7. GSA Executives Report**

- a. President's Report

The President presented her report to Council. There were no questions for President Inam.

- b. Vice President Academic and Student Affairs Report

The Vice President Academic and Student Affairs presented her report to Council. There were no questions for VP Mellidez.

- c. Vice President External Affairs Report

The Vice President External Affairs presented his report to Council. There were no questions for VP Gill.

- d. Vice President Indigenous Engagement Report

The Vice President Indigenous Engagement presented her report to Council. There were no questions for VP

Alexis.

## **8. Appointment of GSA VP Finance and Operations**

Three nominations were received for this position: Mery Mendoza, Ossama Mohamed and Sukanya Pati. All three nominees presented on their suitability for the position and answered questions from Members of Council.

Mery Mendoza received majority vote and was elected as the GSA VP Finance and Operations for the remaining winter 2021 term.

President Inam requested for an extension of the meeting by 10 minutes

*Motion to approve the extension of the meeting by 10 minutes to elect the GSA Chair and Chief and Electoral Officer. (Gannon/ Proulx-Cullen).*

**Carried**

## **9. Elections of GSA Chair and Chief and Electoral Officer**

Two nominations were received: Devin Cherneski and Cameron Choquette.

Both nominees presented on their suitability to Council.

Devin Cherneski received majority vote and was elected as the Chair and Chief Electoral Officer.

## **10. Announcements**

President Inam requested that academic councils who had a pending cheque from the GSA, should email the GSA Office Manager [gsa.admn@usask.ca](mailto:gsa.admn@usask.ca) to arrange a pick up as it was time sensitive.

## **11. Adjournment**

*Motion to adjourn at 7:14 pm. (Gill/Dube)*

**Carried**

Appendix A

Academic Council	Name of Councillors and (alternates)	Sep.2 2020	Oct.1 2019	Nov.1 2020	Dec.8 2020	Jan.2 6 2021	Feb.2 3 2021	Mar.1 6 2021	Apr. 6 2021	Jun. 2021	Aug. 2021
Agricultural and Resources Economics (ARE) Graduate Student Association	Darnell Holt (Chloe Smith Lopez)	N /A	N/A	P	P	P					
ARCHAIA	Taylor Eagle (Angela Burant)	N/A	N/A	N/A	P	A					
Biology Graduate Student Association	Mercy Harris (Dylan Baloun) (Joseph Abrams)	P	P	P	P	P					
Chemistry Course Council	Iyanu Kumayon Doug Fansher	N/A	P	P	A	P					
College of Medicine Graduate Students Society – Anatomy, Physiology & Pharmacology	Kayla J. Cropper (Kushagra Parolia)	N /A	P	P	P	A					
College of Medicine Graduate Students Society – Biochemistry, Microbiology & Immunology	Gabrielle Mercier (Ashley Sutherland)	N /A	P	P	P	P					
College of Medicine Graduate Students Society – Community Health & Epidemiology	Amanda Gannon (Azadeh Nazeran)	N /A	P	P	P	P					
College of Medicine Graduate Students Society – Health Sciences	Elyse Proulx-Cullen (Una Goncin)	N /A	P	P	P	P					
Computer Science Graduate Council (CSGC)	Fidelia Orji Saikat Mondal (Sristy Sumana Nath)	A	P	P	P	P					

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Engineering Graduate Community Council (EGCC) – Biological	Ninu Kallingal Mohandas (Tahereh Najib)	N /A	P	P	P	A					
Engineering Graduate Community Council (EGCC) – Biomedical	Arman Haghanifar (Alizadeh Sardroud)	N /A	P	P	P	A					
Engineering Graduate Community Council (EGCC) – Chemical	Fahimeh Esmi (Khaled, Zoroufchi Benis)	N /A	P	P	P	P					
Engineering Graduate Community Council (EGCC) – Civil, Geological & Environmental	Ajay Shrinivas Muthukumar (Hamed Beiranvand Mohammad)	N /A	P	P	P	A					
Engineering Graduate Community Council (EGCC) – Electrical & Computer	Karim Shahbazi (Mahdiyar Molahasani)	N /A	P	P	P	A					
Engineering Graduate Community Council (EGCC) – Mechanical	Tonye Jack (Alireza Razmavar)	N /A	P	P	P	A					
English Course Council	Tricia Monsour (Darius Simonot) (Amanda Burrows)	N/A	P	R	P	P					
Johnson-Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy Students' Association	Brady Kroeker (Ahmed Abunada)	N /A	A	P	P	A					
Kinesiology Graduate Student Council	Natalie Houser (KC Hall)	P	P	P	P	P					

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Physical and Engineering Physics - PEGASUS	Kimberlee Dube (Nicholas Simonson)	N/A	N/A	N/A	P	P					
Pharmacy & Nutrition Graduate Students' Council	Sukanya Pati (Ayat Zagzoog)	N/A	N/A	P	R	P					
Plant Science	Dylan Sjolie (Matthew Wengler)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	A					
Physical Therapy Student Society (PTSS)	Matthew Reichert Cherise Schlekewy	N/A	N/A	P	P	P					
SENSA	Mostofa Kamal Mariana Campos (Jaclyn Porter) (Rory Wheat)	N/A	P	A	A	P					
SPHSA	Aisha Sajid Maha Khan (Maggie Coupland) (Daniel Medina)	N/A	P	P	P	A					
Sociology GSA	Connor Morrison Maria Cruz (Alana Demkiw)	P	P	A	P	P					
Soil Science Graduate Student Association	Amy Jimmo (Aimée Schryer)	N/A	P	A	P	A					
Toxicology Graduate Students' Association	Alana Weber (Jensen Cherewyk)	A	R	P	P	P					
Western College of Veterinary Medicine (WCVM) GSA	Miranda Zwiefelhofer Michelle Tucker Jennifer Abi Younes	P	P	A	P	P					

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Exec. President	Humaira Inam	P	P	P	P	P					
Exec. VP Finance and Operations	Hadi Ramin	P	P	P	P	N/A					
Exec. VP Academic and Student Affairs	Carmen Marquez Mellidez	R	P	R	P	P					
Exec. VP External Affairs	Qasim Shahzad Gill	P	P	P	P	P					
Exec. VP Indigenous Engagement	Tina Alexis	N/A	N/A	N/A	P	P					