



Graduate Students' Association - University of
Saskatchewan
Council Meeting Agenda
Tuesday June 22, 2021 - WebEx
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	Decision
3	Approval of the minutes from April 6, 2021	2-9	Decision
4	Information to be received	10-25	Decision
	A. April 8, 2021 Elections Referenda Committee		
	B. April 28, 2021 Executive Retreat Meeting minutes		
	C. May 20, 2021 Executive Meeting minutes		
5	Executive reports	26-32	Information
	A. Report of the President		
	B. Report of the VP Finance and Operations		
	C. Report of the VP Academic and Student Affairs		
	D. Report of the VP External Affairs		
	E. Report of the VP Indigenous Engagement		
6	Other Business/Announcements		Information
7	Adjournment		Information

Next Meeting: August 24, 2021.



**University of Saskatchewan
Graduate Students' Association
Council Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, April 6, 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 April 6, 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 Chair of the Graduate Student Council officially welcomed the 2020/2021 Members of Councilors to the meeting and called the meeting to order at 5:07 PM after the quorum for the meeting had been met. Ms. Asiyah Suchak, the Secretary of Council compiled the meeting minutes.

2. Approval of Agenda

The Chair asked about any amendments to the Agenda as circulated via email. No amendments were put forward.

Motion to approve the agenda. (Kumayon/Harris)

Carried

3. Approval of Minutes from March 16, 2021

The Chair asked if there were any suggested changes before the minutes were approved.

Motion to approve the March 16, 2020 minutes. (Harris/Gill).

Carried

4. Information to be received

- a. February 17, 2021 – Sustainability Committee Minutes
Motion to receive agenda item 4a (Gill/Harris)

Carried

- b. February 18, 2021 – Diversity Committee Minutes
Motion to receive agenda item 4b (Gill/Harris)

Carried

- c. February 25, 2021 Executive Meeting Minutes
Motion to receive agenda item 4c (Gill/Harris)

Carried

- d. March 1 & 8, 2021 – Bursary Selection Committee Minutes
Motion to receive agenda item 4d (Gill/Harris)

Carried

- e. March 11, 2021 – Executive Meeting Minutes
Motion to receive agenda item 4e (Gill/Harris)

Carried

- f. March 12 & 26, 2021 – Budget and Finance Committee Minutes
Motion to receive agenda item 4f (Gill/Harris)

Carried

5. Motion: Operational Budget 2021/2022 (Details Attached)

The Chair called the VP of Finance and Operation to speak on behalf of the Budget and Finance committee. VP Mendoza explained briefly the attached budget notes. The Chair opened the floor to questions

Motion to approve the GSA 2021 – 2022 fiscal year budget and operational budget notes (Gill/Inam)

Carried

6. GSA Executives Report

a. President's Report

The President presented her report to the council. There were no questions for President Inam. There was a comment from Elyse, she thanked President Inam and congratulated her on all the work she did over her time.

b. Vice President Finance and Operation Report

The Vice President of Finance and Operations presented her report to council. There were no questions for VP Mendoza. Mostafa had a question for VP Mendoza; "Are we planning to organize any online taxes events for students?". She responded, not at this time but they do plan to post a video pending approval from last year that can be used as a reference on the GSA website. She also mentioned that the CRA have representatives that can also be of help and if the students have concerns or questions, they can contact the VP Finance and Operations directly. Mostafa also volunteered his time to help guide the students in a session. She thanked him and asked that they follow up via email. He thanked her as well and agreed he will email her.

c. Vice President Academic and Student Affairs Report

The Vice President Academic and Student Affairs sent her regrets. Her report was attached to the agenda and circulated to the Council. President Inam spoke on her behalf and gave a brief overview of VP Mellidezs' report. An email was provided for any questions to be forwarded.

d. Vice President External Affairs Report

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

e. Vice President Indigenous Engagement (Verbal Report)

The Vice President Indigenous Engagement presented her report to council. There were no questions for VP Alexis. Mostafa thanked VP Alexis for organizing a workshop regarding land acknowledgements that he found very helpful.

7. Other Business/Announcement

The chair thanked the council executive members for all their hard work, service, leadership and commitment to the GSA and wished them the best. He opened the floor for other comments.

Mostafa also had a question; he had three absences under his council, but he has not in fact been absent. The Chair thanked him for his question and asked if he could email the question to him then he could look into it with the secretary. Mostafa thanked the chair and vice versa.

Information

8. Adjournment

Motion to Adjourn at 5:41 pm. (Gill/Proulx-Cullen)

Carried

Academic Council	Name of Councillors and (alternates)	Sep.2 2 202 0	Oct.2 0 202 0	Nov. 10 2020	Dec.8 2020	Jan.2 6 2021	Feb.2 3 2021	Mar.1 6 2021	Apr. 6 202 1	Jun . 202 1	Aug . 202 1
Physical and Engineering Physics - PEGASUS	Kimberlee Dube (Nicholas Simonson)	N/A	N/A	N/ A	P	P	P	P	A		
Pharmacy & Nutrition Graduate Students' Council	Sukanya Pati (Ayat Zagzoog)	N/A	N/A	P	R	P	P	P	A		
Plant Science	Dylan Sjolie (Matthew Wengler)	N/A	N/A	N/ A	N/A	A	P	P	P		
Physical Therapy Student Society (PTSS)	Matthew Reichert Cherise Schlekewy	N/A	N/A	P	P	P	P	P	R		
SENSA	Mostofa Kamal Mariana Campos (Jaclyn Porter) (Rory Wheat)	N/A	P	A	A	P	A	P	P		
SPHSA	Aisha Sajid Maha Khan (Maggie Coupland) (Daniel Medina)	N /A	P	P	P	A	P	P	A		
Sociology GSA	Connor Morrison Maria Cruz (Alana Demkiw)	P	P	A	P	P	A	A	A		
Soil Science Graduate Student Association	Amy Jimmo (Aimée Schryer)	N/A	P	A	P	A	P	P	P		
Toxicology Graduate Students' Association	Alana Weber (Jensen Cherewyk)	A	R	P	P	P	P	P	P		
Western College of Veterinary Medicine (WCVM) GSA	Miranda Zwiefelhofer Michelle Tucker Jennifer Abi Younes	P	P	A	P	P	P	P	A		

Academic Council	Name of Councillors and (alternates)	Sep.2 2020	Oct.2 2020	Nov. 10 2020	Dec.8 2020	Jan.2 6 2021	Feb.2 3 2021	Mar.1 6 2021	Apr. 6 2021	Jun . 2021	Aug . 2021
Exec. President	Humaira Inam	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P		
Exec. VP Finance and Operations	Mery Mendoza	P	P	P	P	N/A	P	P	P		
Exec. VP Academic and Student Affairs	Carmen Marquez Mellidez	R	P	R	P	P	P	P	R		
Exec. VP External Affairs	Qasim Shahzad Gill	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P		
Exec. VP Indigenous Engagement	Tina Alexis	N/A	N/A	N/A	P	P	R	R	P		



University of Saskatchewan Graduate Students' Association

Elections and Referenda Committee Minutes

Friday 8th April 2021

E-mail Meeting

Present:

- Council Chair/Chief Electoral Office (CEO)
- Aisha Sajid (Council member)
- Khaled Zoroufchi Benis (Council member)
- Rosmary Martinez (General/regular member)
- Nicole Pasloski (General/regular member)
- Zoher Rafid-Hamed (General/regular member)

Absent:

- n/a

1. Complaints

- The Council Chair/CEO called the meeting to order through e-mailing members after 12:00 p.m. At this time there was no complaints.

2. Results

- The Council/Chair and CEO shared results through e-mail to the committee members. The results showed the following:

Total number of voters 417 [Election Quorum: 356]

President

Rifat Zahan	204
Mostofa Kamal	159
Abstain	54

Vice-President Finance and Operations

Do you have confidence in **Ehsan Moradi** fulfilling the roles and responsibilities of Vice-President Finance and Operations?

Ehsan Moradi – Yes 319

Ehsan Moradi – No 19

Abstain 79

Vice-President Academic and Student Affairs

Do you have confidence in **Olusola Akintola** fulfilling the roles and responsibilities of Vice-President Academic and Student Affairs?

Olusola Akintola – Yes 310

Olusola Akintola – No 22

Abstain 85

Vice-President External Affairs

Do you have confidence in **Leslie Tetteh** fulfilling the roles and responsibilities of Vice-President External Affairs?

Leslie Tetteh – Yes 319

Leslie Tetteh – No 20

Abstain 78

Total number of voters 27 [Election Quorum: 17]

Vice-President Indigenous Engagement

Do you have confidence in **Tina Alexis** fulfilling the roles and responsibilities of Vice-President Indigenous Engagement?

Tina Alexis – Yes	26
Tina Alexis – No	0
Abstain	1

3. Ratification of Results

- The Election Committee ratified the results to have the following five candidates as the 2021/2022 Executives of the GSA.
 1. President: **Rifat Zahan**
 2. VP Finance and Operations: **Ehsan Moradi**
 3. VP Academic and Student Affairs: **Olusola Akintola**
 4. VP External Affairs: **Leslie Tetteh**
 5. VP Indigenous Engagement: **Tina Alexis**

4. Recommendations:

- The Election Committee made the following recommendations for consideration to the Governance Committee and to *future* Elections and Referenda Committee.
 - Recommending a review to allow candidates to campaign up to the end of the voting period

5. Other Business

- The Council Chair/CEO confirmed that this was the last meeting of the Committee.

6. Adjournment

- Meeting was adjourned same day by e-mail. The Council Chair/CEO thanked the members for all their contributions as it was challenging under the circumstances.



University of Saskatchewan - Graduate Students' Association

Executive Committee Retreat Agenda (9 AM – 5 PM)

April 28, 2021

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.

Present (Executives):

- Rifat Zahan (Incoming President),
- Ehsan Moradi (Incoming VP Finance and Operations),
- Olusola Akintola (Incoming VP Academic and Student Affairs),
- Leslie Tetteh (Incoming VP External Affairs),
- Tina Alexis (Incoming Vice-President Indigenous Engagement).

Guests:

- Humairar Inam (Outgoing President),
- Mery Mendoza (Outgoing VP Finance and Operations),
- Naheda Sahtout (Past President)

Regrets: None

Absent: None

SESSION ONE: 9 AM – 12 PM

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

The meeting was called to order on Wednesday, April 28th, 2021 at 9:09 am by the outgoing President, Humaira Inam.

Merry Mendoza (outgoing VP Finance and Operation) and Humaira Inam (Outgoing President) were present at the meeting to facilitate the transition. Naheda Sahtout (past President of the GSA) joined the meeting later. The meeting was held online due to COVID-19. Humaira and Mery thanked everyone for being part of the GSA to advocate for all graduate students at the University of Saskatchewan, the local community, and the whole country. Past executives were happy to see dedicated people in the executive team this year, and they are looking forward to a remarkable year ahead.

2. **Signing of Confidentiality Agreement**

Mery indicated that we would have access to information that must remain confidential in our position as executives. This includes confidentiality of others' information and the confidentiality of discussions that occur within the executives during meetings. Each executive signed this confidentiality agreement.

3. **Executive Introductions / Structure of the GSA**

Mery asked each participant in the retreat to introduce themselves. Each participant shared their ideas about how they can serve the students while working at GSA.

4. **Approval of the Agenda**

Humaira asked whether there were any amendments to the agenda. There were none. The agenda was approved with a majority of the vote.

5. **University Governing Bodies**

Mery briefly discussed the governance structure of the University of Saskatchewan, which includes the Senate, Board of Governors, and the University Council. Mery explained the GSA representatives in these Bodies and who can speak and ask questions. She then had a brief introduction of individuals in governance around the university. Mery then explained that she would introduce individuals to Rifat. Mery explained to Rifat that it is important to study the university's website and understand the rules of University individuals in governance since working with them needs to have enough knowledge about their responsibilities.

Mery continued her presentations with an introduction for the Provost's Advisory Committee (PAC). Mery introduced PAC individuals and how GSA interacts with them. At the end of this section, Mery asked incoming executives to study university services and policies very well. Rifat asked for Mery's presentation slides, and Mery mentioned that she would send the slides to the incoming executives.

6. GSA Structure

Mery went through the structure of the GSA and urged the executives to look through the constitution, bylaws, and policies. She starts with this fact that GSA is a non-profit organization, and explained the structure as below:

- Regular Membership. Executives should send their reports to the council.
- The Executive committee consists of the President and Vice-Presidents.
- The President and Vice-Presidents act as Board of Directors in council. It is necessary to have a board to maintain not-for-profit status.
- There exists a Council, which consists of;
 - The Executives
 - A representative from each Academic Council
- Executive meetings occur once a month from May to August and twice a month from September to April.
- Council meetings occur once / bi-monthly from May to August and once a month from September to April.
- Committees of councils.
- Social Clubs.
- There is an Annual General meeting in April.
- The office staff consist of the Office Manager and the Commons Coordinators. It was explained, following the reference of the GSA Bylaws, that executives must not miss more than 3 executive meetings in total, and 2 consecutive meetings. Due to COVID-19, executives are expected to continue their meetings through online platforms.

7. CGPS Committees:

- CGPS Committee council: All executives and two graduate students from candidates (Fahimeh Esmi, Elizabeth Ogunniyi, Mostofa Kamal, Khaled C., Christy Anderson, Nathan Oakes, Uliana Morozovskaia, and Naz Zarreen Oishie) will be invited to sit on this committee. Rifat will contact them to select two people for this committee.
- Faculty Council: All executives and two graduate students from candidates (Fahimeh Esmi, Elizabeth Ogunniyi, Mostofa Kamal, Khaled C., Christy Anderson, Nathan Oakes, Uliana Morozovskaia and Naz Zarreen Oishie) will sit on this committee. Rifat will contact them to select two people for this committee.
- CGPS Executive Committee: All Executives. Mery mentioned that all executives should stand for students without any conflict.
- Interdisciplinary Committee: VP External Affairs will sit on this committee, and VP Indigenous Engagement will act as a supporting person.
- Awards Committee: VP Finance and Operations will sit on this committee.
- Earned D.Litt / D.Sc: VP Finance and Operations will sit on this committee.
- Graduate Academic Affairs Committee: VP Academic and Student Affairs will sit on this committee.
- Graduate Programs Committee: The President will sit on this committee.
- Equity and International Committee: VP External Affairs will sit on this committee.

8. Team Building

Mery indicated that it is important for everyone to know the roles and responsibilities of executives so that each individual can plan for the year ahead.

8.1. *Executive Duties and Responsibilities*

Mery explained about the duties and responsibilities of the executives. As per the GSA bylaws, Executives must;

- Be familiar with the governing documents, the Non-Profit Corporations Act, the U of S Act, Robert's Rules of Orders, and other documents;
- Determine which individual will go to Canadian Federation of Students (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 they do and when presenting themselves.
- Ensure continuity of roles and seek assistance from other executives when feeling overburdened.

There were discussions about teamwork. Rifat, The President, The VP External Affairs, and the Office Manager take care of Facebook posts / messages, Twitter, Instagram.. Social media content should be related to services / events provided by the GSA or Academic Council / Social Clubs or opportunities that are useful to graduate students, such as scholarships or workshop opportunities. It was agreed that email newsletters would be sent to GSA members once a month.

8.2. *Executive / Council Meetings*

Mery asked incoming executives to choose specific dates for meetings. As per our bylaws, executives must meet at least once a month in May-August and twice a month from September – April. Mery proposed that executive meetings occur on Thursdays from 5 – 7 PM. Executives agreed that Thursdays are suitable.

Dates for Executive Meetings for May-December are;

- May 20, 2021
- June 17, 2021
- July 15, 2021
- August 19, 2021
- September 2, 2021
- September 16, 2021
- October 7, 2021
- October 21, 2021
- November 4, 2021
- November 18, 2021
- December 9, 2021

Executives decide on 2022 meeting dates in the next executive meeting. Winter Executive meetings can be decided in the August executive meeting. Executives were in agreement with the scheduled meeting times.

As per our bylaws, the Council must meet at least once from May-June and once from July-August. Mery proposed that Council meetings continue occurring on Tuesdays from 5 – 7 PM.

Proposed dates for Council meetings are;

- June 22, 2021
- August 24, 2021
- September 21, 2021
- October 26, 2021
- November 23, 2021
- December 14, 2021
- January 18, 2022
- February 15, 2022
- March 15, 2022
- April – TBD, 2022
- April 13, 2022 (AGM)

8.3. *Executive Communication*

Incoming and outgoing executives exchanged their phone numbers and created a group on WhatsApp. Mery indicated that generally, emails are official communication and should be responded to within 48 hours.

Mery proposed 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/WhatsApp group chat
 - Just as important for bonding between executives
 - For informal questions or discussions that do not require decisions to be made

Executives were in favor of the email communication.

8.4. *Executive Decision Making*

Mery indicated that the executives will follow Roberts Rules of Orders for all meetings. 60% (2/3) attendance is needed to attend for a quorum. The decision-making process is a vital component of any decisions that come to the executives' attention. Executives need to decide on the following items:

- There are 5 executive members; quorum is a majority, so 3 members at least.
- Majority vote (4 yes, 1 no / abstentions) will be required to carry a decision.
- 3 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.

- 2 yes's and 3 abstentions – indicates a failed vote
- Majority abstention (1 yes, 4 abstentions) indicates a failed vote.

Mery explained that if an executive misses many meetings, other executives can waive his/her honorarium. Urgent matters requiring an executive decision may need to be made before an executive meeting, at which case it will be made via email. The 48-hour rule shall apply.

8.5. *Communication to Graduate Students*

Communication to the graduate students should take place through email newsletter, PAWS, GSA website, and social media.

SESSION TWO: 1 PM – 4PM

Humaira, the outgoing President, started the second session of the meeting. She continued with a brief introduction to graduate students and GSA's mission. Humaira offered her help to the incoming executive. The outgoing President stated that we advocate for students in different ways.

9. *GSA Services*

Executives will be responsible to ensure the following services are continuously offered and maintained through GSA.

9.1. *GSA Commons*

The outgoing President discussed the use and operations of GSA Commons. The VP Finance and Operations and the Office Manager are responsible for the proper maintenance of the Commons. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Commons is closed and will remain closed until further discussion with the Pandemic Response Team (PRT).

9.2. *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 email and social media.

9.3. *UPASS*

The UPASS offers significant 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 eligibility.

9.4. *Health and Dental Plan*

The executives will generally participate in an orientation session with Studentcare to get familiarized about the benefits and services provided to our members.

9.5. *Ratified Social Groups*

The executives were familiarized with the ratified social group and how GSA has worked in the past with the social groups.

9.6. *Other Discussions*

There were discussions about Academic Councils, GSA need-based bursary. Incoming executives asked general questions, which were answered by the two outgoing executives.

10. GSA Initiatives for the 2021 / 2022 Academic Year

While these initiatives fall under the portfolio of VP Student Affairs and VP External, they will require all executives to pitch in and offer their assistance. The following events were planned tentatively for the 2021-2022 academic year:

- September 2021: Fall Orientation
- October 2021: Halloween Social
- November 2021: Multicultural Night
- December 2021: Holiday Hangout
- January 2022: Winter Orientation
- February 2022: Graduate Student Research Conference
- March 2022: Three Minute Thesis Competition
- April 2022: Annual Awards Gala

Other events and initiatives will be discussed in future executive meetings.

10.1. *Workshops / Health Chats*

The VP Academic and Student Affairs will coordinate a series of workshops on health and wellness for graduate students.

Humaira mentioned some of the Chats that held in their term:

- Yoga nidra
- Sleep workshop
- Financial literacy seminar.
- Academic integrity and plagiarism,
- Ace the interview workshop,
- LinkedIn and networking workshop
- Financial literacy seminar
- Land acknowledgment seminar
- Scholarly publishing workshop

10.2. *Graduate Student Research Conference*

VP Finance and Operations will be responsible for organizing this event (**February 15-17, 2022**). 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.

10.3. *Three-Minute Thesis Competition*

The 3MT Thesis Competition (*March 25, 2022*) is a popular event that the GSA hosts in collaboration with CGPS. VP Academic and Student Affairs is responsible for the organization of this competition.

10.4. *Annual Awards Gala*

This event (*April 9, 2022*) honors students and faculty for their commitment and dedication to research, scholarly and artistic pursuits, leadership and community engagement. This year, the Gala will be planned according to the evolving situation due to COVID-19. VP External Affairs is responsible for organizing the Gala in its entirety. The date should not coincide with the University Council Meeting.

10.5. *Tax Filing*

The VP Finance and Operations is responsible for hosting the "Tax Filing Clinic" for the graduate students during the month of April. The outgoing President encouraged VP Finance to continue last year's program and invite CRA tax experts for tax season.

10.6. *Conferences*

As part of our affiliations with CFS and ThinkGrad, we attend many external conferences or meetings. The VP External usually attends such meetings, as per their role. If the VP External is unavailable, then another executive can choose to go to the meeting instead.

10.7. Due to COVID-19, conferences and travel may not be taking place this year.

10.8. *Understanding of the GSA fees*

The outgoing VP Finance and Operations went over the approved fees in brief but asked executives to direct any questions they may have to the VP Finance and Operations.

10.9. *Understanding of the Budget*

The outgoing VP Finance and Operations went over the approved budget in brief but asked executives to direct any questions they may have to the current VP Finance and Operations. The outgoing VP Finance and Operations went over the discussion about signing officers of the GSA. She mentioned that she needs to have a meeting with the incoming President and VP Finance and Operations about the tuition so they can plan for discussion with the graduate students.

Mery also mentioned discretionary funding and how it should be used to support the interests of graduate students.

Humaira and Mery added some points for more guidance for incoming executives:

- They explained the GSA Crisis financial aid budget line and that the President and VP finance should contact the student finance and awards office and write the check and send it to the award office.
- Humaira mentioned the Travel Award budget line and explained that the fund provides financial assistance to full-time students who are participating in a conference. She proposed to incoming executives to contact ISSAC for use of this fund for students. Then Mery explained that for moving a budget we have to go through council. For such a decision we need to prepare rational documentation and reasons.
- Humaira explained the GSA orientation financial details that it needs to approve for the financial budget for items in swag bags and how we want to hold the orientation. She stated that VP academics can suggest gifts in the bag. Olusola is in charge of finding the prices for the gift and all executives should prepare bags and decide the distribution process of the bags. Humaira proposed two methods for bags distribution, Curbside pick-up and Pick-up by appointment only. As last point humaira explained how important student-supervisor agreement is and GSA should send reminders to students for signing this contract.

11. Closing Remarks

Naheda Sahtout, the past GSA President during the 2019-2020 academic year attended the meeting and gave important advice on duties and responsibilities to incoming executives. She adds that it is really important to avoid conflict by transparency and respect for each other through effective communication. In continuation of Naheda's words, the outgoing President advised the incoming executives on avoiding conflicts, and to have effective resolutions, if conflict arises. The outgoing VP Finance and Operations, Mery asked the incoming executives to reach out for help to the outgoing executives.

The incoming President, Rifat was pleased to hear the discussions that took place today and thanked Naheda, Mery and Humaira for attending the retreat and for their guidance.

12. Adjournment of Meeting

Meeting adjourned at 4:12 PM



University of Saskatchewan - Graduate Students' Association

Executive Meeting Minutes

May 20, 2021 – Microsoft Teams

5:30 PM – 6:30 PM

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.

Present:

- Rifat Zahan (President)
- Ehsan Moradi (VP Finance and Operations)
- Olusola Akintola (VP Academic and Student Affairs)
- Leslie Tetteh (VP External Affairs)
- Tina Alexis (VP Indigenous Engagement)

Regrets: None

Absent: None

1. Call to Order/Opening Remarks

The President called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM.

The President thanked all Executives for attending the meeting and their commitments towards the GSA. She also mentioned how important it is to keep the spirit and continue advocating for graduate students.

2. Approval of the Agenda

The President asked if there were any additions or amendments to the agenda as circulated. Seeing none, the President asked for a motion.

Motion: To approve the agenda as circulated

Moved: VP Academic and Student Affairs

Seconded: VP External Affairs.

Vote: 5 in favour,

Motion Carried.

3. Items for Action

3.1 Cheque Remittance

The VP Finance and Operations mentioned that due to the delay in registering the new signing officers for the GSA bank account, there would be a delay in cheque remittance .

Motion: To approve the delay in cheque remittance due to signatory authorization changes.

Moved: VP Finance and Operations

Seconded: President.

Vote: 5 in favour,

Motion Carried.

4. Items for Information / Discussion

4.1 GSA Council Meeting

President Zahan explained about the upcoming GSA Council Meeting. The Executives discussed about the council meeting and what are the priorities for the upcoming month.

4.2 GSA Newsletter

President Zahan explained about the GSA newsletter that would be published each month. She asked the Executive team to send their inputs since a newsletter is a way for communicating with graduate students. The President explained that we should add resources and important updates that could help graduate students. President Zahan asked

if anyone had a question about the newsletter publication. The VP External and the President discussed the newsletter publishing process.

4.3 Future Initiatives

The President asked the Executive to provide their plans and activities that they will be working on during their tenure.

The VP Finance mentioned that he would try to set a high standard for the GSA Research Conference for next year.

The VP Academic plans to communicate with students to give them clear access to the resources and will be working on the 3-minute thesis presentation, as well as the fall and winter orientations.

The VP External mentioned that he would work on the GSA Awards Gala, cover letter, LinkedIn and networking workshops for graduate students. The VP External explained that he would try to have more social media interaction to increase communication with graduate students. The VP External also mentioned that he is trying to create a better platform to advocate for graduate students.

The VP Indigenous Engagement provided her plans throughout the year. She mentioned that she would organize seminars similar to last year's, for e.g., the land acknowledgment seminar, which was a very well-attended event. The VP Indigenous Engagement plans to work on Indigenous methodologies, Indigenous people in Canada, the model of colonization, racism, residential schools, missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls (MMIWG), and the celebration of Indigenous academics and scholarly contributions per month.

The President requested that the VP Indigenous Engagement prepare an activity in the fall orientation and send the VP Finance her proposed dates, as well as the list of people she wants to invite for the planned events.

The following are the tentative events proposed by the VP Indigenous Engagement:

- September 2021 – Dr. Vine Deloria Jr. (Colonization)
- October 2021 – Harold Cardinal & George Manuel (Red Paper)
- November 2021 – Dr. Marie Battiste (Decolonizing Education) & James (Sakej) Henderson (Law & Justice)
- December 2021 – Leroy Little Bear (Native Science)
- January 2021 – Dr. Maggie Kovach (Indigenous Methodologies) & Dr. Jaris Swidrovich (TBD)

- February 2022 – Dr. Winona Wheeler & Dr. Simon Lambert (TBD)
- March 2022 – Dr. Michelle & Dr. Derek Johnson - Jennings (TBD)
- April 2022 – TBD

4.4 Fall Orientation

The President asked the Executive to be ready for the fall orientation and suggested some plans for the event.

5 Other Business

The President asked if there was any other business arising. The Executive approved to change the meeting hours from 5:30 pm to 6:30 pm.

6 Confidential Session

7 Adjournment of Meeting

The President asked the meeting to be adjourned at 7:00 PM.

Motion to adjourn the meeting.

Moved: Vice-President Indigenous Engagement

Seconded: Vice-President Finance and Operations

Vote: 5 in favour,

Motion Carried.



University of Saskatchewan Graduate Students' Association

President's Report - GSA Council Meeting, June 2021

Dear Councilors,

We are honoured to be provided this opportunity to represent graduate students and advocate on their behalf for the 2021-2022 academic year. We look forward to working with our university community throughout the year. We will continue to advance the Graduate Students' Association mandate and provide the necessary services and resources required by our graduate students. The GSA has worked closely with students, staff, and faculty across campus to support graduate students in various ways, and we want to continue this working relationship while expanding our scope.

For the 2021-2022 academic year, the Graduate Students' Association Executive will focus on the following initiatives:

1. Requesting student representation on the Board of Governors

We want to advance the request initiated by our predecessors to amend *The University of Saskatchewan Act, 1995* and include a graduate student representative on the Board of Governors. Graduate students represent more than 17% of the overall student population at the University of Saskatchewan. We will continue our efforts to ensure that graduate students are represented on the Board of Governors.

2. Increase awareness on diversity and inclusion

We will work towards increasing awareness on diversity and inclusion, and advocate for establishing benefits and support programs for marginalized student populations.

3. Work towards enhancing resources to support mental health and well-being

This past year has been very hard on students, staff, and faculty due to the pandemic. We have seen many students struggle financially, mentally, physically, and spiritually. Therefore, we need to recognize and address mental health and help students connect to support at the university and community. We will continue to work towards eliminating stigma around mental health, promote wellness, and work towards increasing available resources to support graduate students' mental health and well-being.

4. Enhancing support for academic, professional, and leadership success

We will work towards enhancing support for graduate students to improve their academic, professional, and leadership skills through organized events for the upcoming academic year.

5. Student-Supervisor Agreement

We will continue to promote the Student-Supervisor Agreement to strengthen the relationship between graduate students and supervisors across campus. We also encourage councilors to promote the Student-Supervisor Agreement to new incoming graduating students and continuing students.

The GSA Executives look forward to working with members of the university community to contribute to future initiatives and support graduate students throughout the academic year.

Rifat Zahan

President, Graduate Students' Association



Report from the VP Finance and Operations (May 2021)

Hello GSA Councilors,

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

1) New GSA executives' term

We want to acknowledge the past executives to help us with the smooth transition to our new roles. During this month, most of my time was filled with meetings to know people around university and prepare to work with them to support graduate students during this uncertain time. Additionally, I have actively participated in the retreat meeting, executive meetings and other meetings within my portfolio as the VP of finance and operations.

2) GSA Summer Bursary Update

We started working on the GSA Spring/Summer bursary application. We are going to open our application portal on June 7th. Further details on the application process and deadline will be sent out via email and posted on our social media platforms.

3) Closure of GSA Commons

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the GSA Commons is closed. Communication with the GSA Main Office is being conducted via Office Manager's email address (gsa.admn@usask.ca). We have also been maintaining our monthly newsletters and social media to keep grad students updated about scholarships, bursaries, grants, financial aids, along with other relevant updates that interest graduate students. We encourage all the graduate students to check our newsletters and social media pages on a regular basis for any further updates. The GSA Executives remain available and reachable through emails at this critical time.

Additionally, I continue to sit on various committees to improve the graduate students' experiences both on and off campus. Some of the meetings that I attended as part of my responsibilities are listed below:

Meetings

Executive Retreat Meeting
PRT/PEC/USSU/GSA Meeting
Student care
GSA-PSAC
Student Affairs and Services
ISSAC-GSA
Mental Health First Aid
Meeting with the City of Saskatoon

GSA Executive Meeting
Multiple meetings with outgoing VP Finance

Please feel free to contact me at gsa.fin@usask.ca should you have any questions or need any further clarification.

Sincerely,

Ehsan Moradi

Vice-President Finance and Operations

Graduate Students' Association

Email: gsa.fin@usask.ca | Web: <https://gsa.usask.ca/>

Facebook: UsaskGSA | Twitter: GSA_USask | Instagram: GSA_Usask

Address: 1337 College Dr, Saskatoon, SK S7N 0W6



Report from the VP Academic and Student Affairs (May 2021)

Dear Council Members,

Please find below my report for the month of May 2021 to the council. Thank you.

SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES AT A GO.

05-May	Meeting with CPGS Principal Officer
05-May	GSA Health and Dental Plan
06-May	GSA-PSAC
07-May	Student Barometer
11-May	CPGS Faculty Meeting
12-May	Grad Program Committee Meeting
13-May	GRAD PROG CMTEE MTG
18-May	Grad Academic Affairs
18-May	Teaching, Learning and Academic Resources Committee
19-May	ISSAC Meeting
20-May	University Council Meeting
20-May	GSA Executive Meeting
25-May	Mental Health First Aid Training
26-May	Virtual Meeting with CGPS Leadership Team and GSA Executives
26-May	Academic Program Committee Meeting
27-May	Mental Health First Aid Course - Day 2
28-May	PRT/USSU/GSA/ University President Meeting
28-May	Meeting with the City of Saskatoon, TLSE, USSU and GSA Executives

UPCOMING EVENTS

1. Fall Orientation

With the Fall Orientation approaching, we have commenced talks on how to go about it considering the Covid-19 pandemic. We are also constrained to come up with a specific plan because the re-opening of GSA is still in discussion. However, we are honing on having it virtually like last year. We will send invitations to graduate students to attend the orientation. This will be done in a few weeks' time.

2. 3MT Competition Event

The 3MT competition will be held on March 25, 2022. We are still having discussion about 3MT event and further information will be provided as we make progress in our discussion.

Olusola Akintola

Vice-President Academic and Student Affairs

June 2021

RE: VP External's Report to Council

Dear Council Members,

Please find below my first report to council:

1) GSA Executive Retreat

I started my role after attending the executive retreat meeting in which I learned about the structure of the GSA in general and my role.

2) Canadian Federation of Students

On invitation from CFS to attend the National Graduate Caucus's virtual meeting, I have registered to attend this meeting on behalf of the GSA.

4) Social media and Interaction with Executives

We continue to update graduate students on social media about GSA initiatives, and I have actively participated in interacting with the executives virtually.

5) Meetings

The following are a list of meetings I have attended since I started my role

Date	Meetings
April 28, 2021	Executive Retreat
May 5, 2021	Student Care Orientation
May 6, 2021	PSAC Meeting
May 11, 2021	CGPS Faculty Council Meeting
May 11, 2021	Governance Committee Meeting
May 12, 2021	CGPS Interdisciplinary Studies Committee Meeting
May 18, 2021	Student Wellness Centre Meeting
May 19, 2021	ISSAC and GSA Meeting
May 20, 2021	GSA Executive Meeting
May 27, 2021	U15 Graduate Students Societies Meeting

Leslie Tetteh

Vice-President External Affairs