



**University of Saskatchewan
Graduate Students' Association
Council Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, October 26, 2021. Zoom 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

**Zoom Meeting: The October 26, 2021 Council Meeting took place via Zoom due to the global health pandemic of COVID-19, where the Government of Saskatchewan along with University Administration has put social guidelines in to curb the spread of the virus.*

Chair: Alivia Mukherjee

Recording Secretary: Nicole Pasloski

1. Call to Order

Council Members were emailed the agenda package, as well as the Zoom meeting link with the meeting number and password to participate online. The Chair of the Graduate Student Council officially welcomed the 2021/2022 Members of Council, and newly elected representatives following the by-election to the meeting and called the meeting to order at 1701 Saskatoon time after the quorum for the meeting had been met. Ms. Nicole Pasloski, 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 as circulated. (Gannon/Dube)

Carried

3. Council Orientation (information)

The Council Chair presented on the Council Orientation, which was originally prepared by past Council Chair, Dr. Ziad Ghaith

1. University of Saskatchewan Graduates' Students' Association

The Graduate Students' Association (GSA) is a not-for-profit organization that represents all graduate students at the University of Saskatchewan. The GSA provides professional, academic, and social activities and services, and promotes awareness of issues relevant to graduate students. All graduate students at the University of Saskatchewan are members of the GSA and thus have the right to vote in elections, referenda and at general meetings. The general membership is the highest decision-making body of the GSA.

1.1 GSA Mission

The mission of the Graduate Students' Association is:

- To cultivate a positive experience for graduate students
- To advocate for unique needs and concerns of graduate students
- To foster a cohesive graduate student community
- To build positive relationships with other organizations

1.2 GSA Membership

There are three classes of membership for the association:

- **Regular members:** All graduate students registered in the College of the College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (CGPS) are automatically members of GSA.
- **Associate members:** Postdoctoral fellows at the University who have paid all Association fees in full.
- **Honorary Lifetime Member:** Symbolic membership with no Regular Membership rights or privileges. The title shall be awarded by a majority vote at a General Meeting.

1.3 GSA Members' Rights

The rights and privileges of Regular Members are:

- To vote and participate in all Association Elections, By-Elections and Referenda;
- To hold office within the Association;
- To attend meetings of the Association subject to the Bylaws and Policies of the Association;
- To move or second motions at such meetings;
- To speak for or against motions at such meetings;
- To vote in Annual General Meetings or Special General Meetings;
- To access any services provided by the Association; and,

- To gain admission to and/or actively participate in any Association sponsored event and/or program, subject to the restrictions of that particular event and / or program. The rights and privileges of Associate Members are:
- To access any services provided by the Association; and,
- To gain admission to and / or actively participate in any Association sponsored event and / or program, subject to the restrictions of that particular event and / or program

2. Governing Documents

These governing documents contain all information pertinent to the Association, such as its purpose(s), its structure and its governance.

2.1. GSA Constitution

- The GSA Constitution includes the fundamental principles and how it is governed.
- The Constitution may **ONLY** be amended at a General Meeting **by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of Members present.**

2.2 GSA Bylaws

- The GSA Bylaws include the rules that govern the Association to govern and regulate its affairs and actions.
- Bylaws may **ONLY** be amended at a General Meeting **by a majority vote of Members present.**

2.3 GSA Policies

- The GSA policies define the operations of the Association, such as GSA communication, volunteers and employees' policies etc.
- Policies may be amended by a majority vote of **Council or at a General meeting.**

3. GSA Structure

3.1 Executive Committee

- The Executive is a sub-committee of the Association and those in positions should be registered graduate students with the College of Graduate and Post doctoral Studies at the University;
- The Executive shall be responsible for the day to day activities of the Association, as specified by the Bylaws and Policies of the Association;

- The Executive shall be comprised of:
 - The President
 - The Vice-President Finance and Operations;
 - The Vice-President Academic and Student Affairs;
 - The Vice-President External Affairs
 - The Vice-President Indigenous Engagement

- The President and Vice-Presidents shall act as the Board of Directors;
- The composition of the Board shall adhere to those outlined in section 92 of the Saskatchewan Non-Profit Corporations Act, 1995. If section 92(4) is not fulfilled, the GSA delegates to Council the authority to take the necessary steps to ensure compliance;
- Council, by recommendation from the Elections and Referenda Committee, may choose to appoint the Indigenous Liaison and one other member of Council to the Board, both of whom shall be resident Canadians as defined by the Saskatchewan Non-Profit Corporations Act, 1995;
- If not applicable, appoint two members of Council to the Board, both of whom shall be resident Canadians as defined by the Saskatchewan Non-Profit Corporations Act, 1995;
- The Board shall meet at least once (1) per Fiscal Year, and in accordance with the Saskatchewan Non-Profit Corporations Act, 1995;
- With the exception of the Indigenous Liaison, the Executive shall be elected in a general election of the Membership to be held before the end of the current fiscal year;
- The term for the Executive is from May 1 to April 30.

3.2 GSA Council

- There shall be a Council of the GSA which shall serve as the policy, political and advocacy body of the organization;
- Members of Council are:
 - The Executive;
 - Regular Members who are:
 - The designated graduate student representatives of Academic Councils;
 - The designated graduate student representatives of the Indigenous Graduate Students' Council

4. GSA Council Role

4.1 Council members' duties

The duties of a Councillor shall include, but are not limited to:

- Representing their Academic Council;
- Attending all Council Meetings;
- Serving on Association Committees;

- Ensuring the well-being of the Association; and,
- Being familiar with all governing documents including the Saskatchewan Non-Profit Corporation Act, 1995

Voting Councillor allocation for each academic council:

- One (1) for an Academic Council containing less than one hundred (100) Regular Members;
- Two (2) for an Academic Council containing one hundred (100) or more Regular Members

4.2 Removal of a Councillor

- A Councillor will be suspended if the allocated voting seat for their Academic Council is vacant for two (2) or more consecutive, or three (3) per academic year, duly called Council meetings regardless of whether regrets were sent. The Councillor shall be suspended for the next two (2) Council meetings, at the discretion of Council Chair;
- If a Councillor is absent for one (1) duly called Council meeting, the Council Chair shall warn that any further vacancy will result in their suspension;
- The Council Chair shall notify an Academic Council if their Councillor has been suspended;
- Any Councillor may be deemed ineligible to sit on Council by a two-thirds(2/3) vote of Council, usually on recommendation from the Code of Ethics and Discipline Committee;
- Should a Councillor be removed, the Chair will inform their Academic Council;
- A Councillor's eligibility is removed when they are no longer a Regular Member;
- The Council Chair is charged with notifying both Council and the appropriate Academic Council when a Councillor is removed.

4.3 Council Meetings

Council will meet regularly as follows:

- Once in the spring term (May–June);
- Once in the summer term (July–August);
- Monthly over the fall and winter terms (September–April)
- Regular Council meetings must occur on a business day
- The meeting schedules are posted on the Association website

4.4 Council Rule of Orders

All business of the Association shall be conducted using Robert's Rules of Order unless a motion has been approved by a majority of voting members, as put forward by those required to attend the meeting.

5. Roberts' Rules of Order

Robert's Rules of Order are set of rules for conduct at meetings that allows everyone to be heard and to make decisions without confusion. Robert's Rules of Order originally published by Henry Martyn Robert in 1876, ten subsequent editions with some revisions have been published since then.

5.1 Motions

A motion is a formal step to introduce a matter for consideration by a group. Motions can be oral or written.

Any GSA Council or Alternate member can:

- Move motions
- Second motions
- Debate motions
- Vote on motions

Making a motion:

- Written motion can be sent to the Council chair upon email notification of calling for agenda items to be added to the agenda
- Oral motion. The process of oral motion should be as following:
 - Obtain the floor and wait until the Council Chair recognizes you
 - Make your motion, speak clearly by saying "I move that..."
 - Another member of the Council should second your motion to be open for debate and discussion. If no one second the motion after the Chair calls, the motion is lost and will not be debated.
 - Once the motion is moved and seconded, the Chair will state your motion and place it before the members of the Council for consideration or action.
 - Note: Once the motion is presented by the Council Chair, it cannot be changed without a consent of the members.
 - Once the motion is stated, the mover and any other member can speak to it (not at the point of moving it). Mover has right to speak first.
 - Any comments or debate must be directed to the Chair not to the members.

Example¹:

Member rises and addresses the chair: Mr./Madam

Chair.

Chair recognizes member (by title or name). Member makes the motion.

I move that...

Another member seconds the motion.

I second the motion.

The chair states the motion and opens debate.

It is moved and seconded that...

Is there any debate? Or Are you ready for the question? Chair recognizes members wishing to speak.

After debate concludes. Chair restates the motion and puts the question to a vote.

The question is on the motion to...

Those in favor of the motion. Those opposed. Those abstaining. Chair announces the result of the vote and what action will be taken.

the motion is adopted. We will ...

Amending a motion:

Amendment is a motion to change the wording of a main motion before voting on it. Usually this happens if new insights or information arise as a result of discussing or debating a motion.

Any amendments need a mover and seconder. Once the amendment is moved and seconded, discussion on amendment should happen and then a vote take place only on the amendment. This vote will ONLY determine whether the motion is amended or not. It does not determine if

the main motion is approved. After all the amendments are voted on, the debate on the main motion is resumed in its amended form.

¹This example was adopted from www.pta.org

There are two types of amendments:

- Primary amendment: applies to the main motion
- Secondary amendment: applies only to the primary amendments.

Amendment to the third degree is not allowed.

Methods of Amending

- Striking: I move to amend the motion by striking out the word "GSA."
- Inserting: I move to amend the motion by inserting the word "Saskatchewan" after the word "University"
- Striking and inserting: I move to amend the motion by striking out the word "GSA" and inserting the word "Association"

Important: amendments should not change the essence of the main motion, if the chair determines that the amendments strikes to the heart of the motion, a new motion would need to be moved.

Important Terminology:

- Calling the question: is asking to stop the debate on the motion or amendment and vote. This requires 2/3 majority of the assembly.
- Point of order: every member is obligated to ensure that all rules are followed. If any member feels that the rules are not followed, any member can raise it immediately. Once the point of order is raised the Chair is obligated to turn to you and ask you to state your point, then the Chair will clearly state that your point is well taken or not, based on whether your point is valid or not.

5.2 Council Minutes

- The recording secretary of the GSA takes minutes of every Council meeting. These minutes are unofficial until they are approved by the Council.
- Draft minutes will be posted on the Association website within one (1) week of a Council, General or Executive committee meeting.
- Approved minutes will be posted on the Association website within forty-eight(48) hours of approval.
- The Council Attendance Record shall be included in the minutes of a Council meeting.
- Minutes are recorded as following:
 - Open session: minutes are recorded and posted on the GSA website.
 - Confidential session: minutes are recorded but not posted on the website.
 - In Camera session: no minutes are recorded.

-Some attendees indicated they did not receive a copy of the meeting package and were asked to place their email in the Zoom chat or otherwise forward it to the Chair via email at gsa.chair@usask.ca so that they may be included on the email list for future meetings.

-Jovita Dias placed the PDF of the emailed meeting agenda package in the Zoom Chat for attendees to download and view

-there was confusion about members of council and why some members did not receive the agenda package. It was ascertained that the council member list may need to be updated due to the transition of the Chair into their position only days before the council meeting combined with the switching of positions within Graduate student councils.

4. Approval of the minutes from September 21, 2021.

The Chair asked if there were any suggested changes before the minutes were approved. There were none.

Motion to approve the minutes from September 21, 2021, minutes. (Proulx-Cullen/Dias).

Carried

5. Information to Be Received

A. 22nd October 2021, Elections Referenda Committee

The Chair mentioned that we reached our quorum and the results of the elections were ratified quickly by the Elections and Referenda Committee by email. There was good voter participation and congratulations were extended to the new Executive VP Academic and Student Affairs: Mostafa Kamal, and congratulations were also extended to the new Executive VP External Affairs: Devin Cherneski.

-the Elections and Referenda Committee also made a recommendation to allow for campaigning to continue up until the end of the voting period.
-this recommendation was put to the council by the Chair and moved by Dias; seconded by Litt-Jukes. The Chair will forward this recommendation to the Governance Committee.

6. Executive Reports

6a. Report of the President

-President Zahan welcomed everyone, congratulated to new council members and welcome to returning council members.

-President Zahan has been working closely with the VP Finance and Operations re: more money for Fall bursaries as well as applications for the bursaries. Applicants will be contacted in the near future by the VP Moradi.

-September 30th was the first National Day of Truth and Reconciliation, and the GSA partnered with Wanuskewin to provide volunteer support for events leading to National Day of Truth and Reconciliation.

-Empower Me – free counselling services available 24/7/365. Surveys have shown very few students are utilizing this service. About less than 1%. There is a very short wait time for Empower Me services. President recommended for people to use it for counselling or crisis moments, and to share the information about this service with colleagues and other students. There was a consideration to remove the service but it is important to those who *do use* it, so after consultation with the Studentcare, it will be kept throughout this academic year on a test basis. If uptake is not higher this year, it will be discontinued for next year.

--GSA joined with USSU to rally against sexual violence on campus. President Zahan spoke at the rally by mentioning available resources to students on campus

-GSA is actively engaging in conversation with administration about ways to make campus a safer place – any ideas can be shared in meeting or directly to President Zahan

-Events being organized:

- Yoga philosophy in collaboration with faculty member from Community Health and Epidemiology
- Event that will lead toward Academic, professional and leadership skills – workshop on Academic Honesty, Integrity, and Misconduct, this will be in collaboration with faculty member in Department of Computer Science

-Student/Supervisor Agreement (SSA) – it is important for students to protect themselves, as well as for supervisors to protect themselves. If the GSA is going to be asked to advocate for a Grad student, it makes a significant difference if they have the SSA in place. CGPS and GSA have worked together to make the SSA a reality. President Zahan brings this up at Administration meetings as well to bring Faculty on board.

-The President asked “what obstacles do you face while having this agreement in place? What needs to change?” Then the GSA can follow up with the CGPS.

-The President thanked everyone and requested for students to reach out if there is anything the GSA can do to support them during their studies.

Questions?

Natasha: From my students in my college – in terms of thesis time and completion, the onus seems to be mostly on the student and the time onus does not seem to be on the faculty member and many students experience delays eg. faculty take a long time to get documents back to students, or else purposefully delay the student in order to keep them around longer to help with their own research or something similar. Can we add language to address this?

Response: Madame President spoke with CGPS about this, but she will speak with them again perhaps to add a clause or something in regard to the timeline.

Amanda Gannon says this is something she has heard as well.

Response: there does need to be a balance, faculty are very busy, but the President understands this concern and will speak with CGPS again.

6b. Report of the VP Finance and Operations

-Ehsan Moradi

-GSA commons remains closed; the GSA is hoping to be able to get it open again, at least for Grad students to use for studying

-tuition installment plans: past two months the GSA Executives have been communicating with University Admin about removal of holds on accounts of students who are paying tuition by installments. Many holds remain although a number have been removed. No longer full holds but rather only on course registration for those who cannot pay full tuition at once.

-Fall Bursaries – communication with CGPS – received more money for bursaries – 28 bursaries are available for fall term – so far have received 116 applications, 92 of which are completed. Following Bursary Selection Committee, the committee will start approving applicants.

-Due to COVID, students are in more need perhaps than previous years so VP Moradi has started communicating with private companies – many positive reactions so far – no confirmed money yet but he is optimistic the GSA will receive more bursary money for winter.

-Studentcare Insurance – many students faced problems when trying to use insurance – Studentcare sent some names too late to insurance company

-VP Moradi thanked attendees. He has high hopes for the upcoming academic year.

Questions?

1.

Jovita: Is there sufficient representation from all grad schools for the bursaries (within the pool of applicants)?

Mostafa Kamal: bursary committee blindly evaluate all applications, so there is no bias.

Response VP Moradi: we have applications from different colleges

2.

Natasha: When are cheques coming to colleges?

Response VP Ehsan: Bursary cheques or GSA Funding for college council cheques?

Natasha: Academic Council Cheques.

Response VP Ehsan: Everything is ready and they will be coming out shortly if people have not received them already

7. Committees of Council

- a. Motion to approve nomination for Budget and Finance Committee
- b. Motion to approve nomination for Bursary Selection Committee
- c. Motion to approve nomination for Governance Committee
- d. Motion to approve nomination for Code of Ethics and Discipline Committee
- e. Motion to approve nomination for Awards Selection Committee
- f. Motion to approve nomination for Diversity Committee
- g. Motion to approve nomination for Sustainability Committee
- h. Motion to approve nomination for Elections and Referenda Committee

-the Chair asked for names for each committee, whereby multiple people volunteered their names, but were unable to sit on a committee due to membership status (e.g., being council member or regular member).

-there was confusion around why some people had responded to a previously sent email about wanting to partake in a committee and their names did not appear on the spreadsheet that the Chair was in possession of.

Question: Proulx-Cullen: thought names were put forward by councillors but now people need to reapply as there seem to be names absent from the document? The document seems to be incomplete as some of those who expressed interest via email were not included in the updated list.

Response President Zahan: it seems as though there have been names of those interested lost in the transition from the previous Chair to the new Chair, as well as multiple IT-related technical issues that have arisen in recent days at GSA. Moving forward, the Chair will create a google form to ratify the names Chair put forward. If people have interest in a committee, they were asked to forward their names to the Chair; names should be received by this Friday, October 29th, 2021. Voting will follow.

GSA aim for transparency. The president thanked Counsellor Proulx-Cullen to bring this forward. The President promised to collaborate with the Chair to rectify this for next time. Therefore, the Chair will check her email inbox as early as August to find those names, which were put forward first for standing committees. Then the Chair will send ratification request to the Council members to ratify the GSA standing committees.

President Zahan made a motion to follow these steps to populate the committees in a fair way so that everyone interested can put their names forward.

(Kamal/Dannhauser)

Carried

8. Other Business/Announcements

8a. President Zahan indicated that the GSA is still looking for members for the Committee for the Student Forum. She requested to send interested council members' names to President Zahan.

8b. VP Indigenous Engagement By-Election-GSA 2021

There will be a by-election soon to fill the position of VP Indigenous Engagement. There will be two information sessions and then interested Indigenous students will be asked for nomination packages and what the position entails.

Questions?

None brought forward.

9. Adjournment

information

move to adjourn (Proulx-Cullen/Dias)

Carried

Adjourned at 1807 Saskatoon time

Next meeting November 23rd, 2021

Appendix A. Attendance

Attendees not listed or councils are not on attendance list:

Bailey Pelletier – Dept of Archaeology and Anthropology

Dara Gerbrandt – English

Anèl Dannhauser – AgBio – Sustainability

Yasaman Yousefi Sigari – Physics and Engineering Physics

Jung-Min Kim – Anatomy, Physiology and Pharmacology

Lauren Aubrey – School of Public Health

Joshua Shitta – Community Health and Epidemiology

Hannah Mahoney – Toxicology Graduate Students Association

Rafael De Souza Cavassani – Soil Science Department

Nabeela Kanwal – Biochemistry, Immunology and Microbiology

At the beginning of the meeting there were 46 attendees, but in total we only gathered 35 names including those on this list and on the attendance list.

