



**University of Saskatchewan  
Graduate Students' Association  
Council Meeting Minutes**

**Tuesday, September 21, 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*

*\*Zoom Meeting: The September 21, 2021, Council Meeting took place via Zoom due to the global pandemic of COVID-19, where the Government of Saskatchewan made directives to practice physical 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 Zoom meeting link with the meeting number and password to participate online. The Chair of the Graduate Students' Association Council, Mr. Devin Cherneski, officially called the meeting to order at 5:02 PM after the quorum for the meeting had been met. Ms. Mery Mendoza compiled the meeting minutes for this Council meeting.

### **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. (Proulx-Cullen/Kamal)*

**Carried**

### **3. Approval of Minutes from August 24, 2021**

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

*Motion to approve the minutes from August 24, 2021, minutes. (Gannon/Proulx-Cullen).*

**Carried**

#### 4. Information to be received

- a. August 19, 2021 Executive meeting minutes

*Motion to receive item 4a (Dube/Rose)*

**Carried**

#### 5. GSA Executive Reports

##### a. President Report

President Zahan welcomed all academic councils (new and returning) and looks forward to working with them to support graduate student initiatives. She also thanks outgoing councillors for their hard work and support in the past academic year with initiatives and activities. The President summarized the initiatives that she looks forward to working on this year:

- Resources to support mental health: enhancing these and working with StudentCare to continue Empower Me, which even though less than 1 % of the students accessed this service last year, the GSA will continue to offer this service and will continue promoting it to graduate students.
- Student Supervisor Agreement: for the last few years, the GSA has been working hard to implement this agreement. We are continuing our efforts to encouraging students and faculty to implement this at the beginning of the students graduate journey. As of 2020, this agreement is mandatory for all new students and must be implemented within 1 year.
- We look forward to joining the library and CGPS to implement Conflict resolution sessions.
- Diversity and inclusion: advocating for support programs for graduate students to increase awareness.

*Question: Are there any initiatives underway for increasing awareness for diversity and inclusion?*

The GSA received a seat in the Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression (ARAO) committee. As for initiatives, we've had informal discussions with the Dean, CGPS to increase the availability of awards for marginalized populations. There will be updates coming in the next few weeks.

##### b. Vice-President Finance and Operation Report

VP Moradi is currently preparing the fall bursary. The President is communicating with CGPS so that we can get more money for bursaries to serve more students. The applications will open next week. With the Bursary Committee, they've worked on improving the application process, using lessons learned and best practices from previous years.

We are currently waiting for feedback from senior leadership to see if we can open the GSA Commons for our students to use.

With the President, they executed a successful GSA Orientation swag bag pick-up.

President Moradi recognizes that with the resignation of two of the Executive members, the President has been doing a lot of the work and thanks her for her diligence.

*Question: Is the number of bursaries for the fall term going to increase?*

We have applied for an increase to the bursary amount from CGPS and are currently waiting for their response. Once we hear back, we will be able to determine how many bursaries we can allocate for the fall term. In our request to CGPS, we were sure to acknowledge that this year has been stressful for students and so a greater number of students are in need of greater financial security.

**c. Vice-President Academic and Student Affairs Report**

The report has been submitted; however, the individual has resigned from their position. President Zahan is continuing work on organizing the Conflict resolution sessions and will continue this work with the new candidate.

The by-election is currently in process.

**d. Vice-President External Affairs Report**

Although this individual has resigned, the Executives have continued their work.

The by-election is currently in process.

**e. Vice-President Indigenous Engagement Report**

No report.

**6. Ratification of Social Clubs for 2021/2022**

**a. Nepalese Students' Association**

Representative Abinash Subedi indicated this is a small group of undergraduate and graduate students.

**b. Tox on Tap**

Representative Jensen Cherewyk indicated this is a graduate student run group that brings together scientific and general public communities to discuss science. The venues are usually pubs where various speakers talk about toxicology related topics. With the pandemic, the group has shifted towards virtual talks and although it's a bit more challenging, they're hoping to have another talk in the fall.

**c. Bangladeshi Students' Association**

No representative.

**d. Let's Talk Science**

Representative Alivia Mukherjee indicated that they are working on a green initiative project this term. The group will be hosting an orientation this Friday. The groups main purpose is to create awareness about science and enjoying it through different activities.

*Motion to ratify the above social clubs for 2021/2022 (Rose/Pasloski)*

**Carried**

## **7. Appointment of 2 Representatives to the University of Saskatchewan Student Form**

President Zahan indicated that they were looking for representatives for the Student Forum. This group discusses important issues and provides student perspectives with university administration and governing bodies. The representatives act as student leaders to discuss best practices, etc. The GSA has 4 members on this Forum, 2 are GSA Executives and 2 are GSA Council members.

*Question: Can we have more information about the Student Forum, what it is and what is required in terms of participation?*

There will be 4-5 meetings per year, and there will be discussions around different topics. Student representatives have the option to provide input and thoughts on the topic of discussion.

Council member Kamal indicated that he had the opportunity to represent the GSA last year on the Student Forum. This is the body where the university community meets and discusses different issues, like the importance of mandating the student-supervisor agreement, EDI training among different stakeholders. It is a great opportunity to share your views as a graduate student.

President Zahan will share the document to Council members who are interested in serving on this committee.

## **8. Election of GSA Chair and Chief Electoral Officer**

There was 1 nomination received from candidate Alivia Mukherjee.

Mukherjee is a PhD candidate in the College of Engineering, in her 3<sup>rd</sup> year. She was the Chair of the GSA Sustainability Committee and has volunteered her time with the GSA as well as attended initiatives hosted by the GSA. Her hope is that she will be able to contribute to the position with her knowledge and leadership skills that she has gained. She was previously the Vice-President of ECCC and thus has knowledge of student governance. She believes she has good communication and leadership skills and believes because of this she would be able to contribute successfully as Chair.

*Motion to appoint Alivia Mukherjee as GSA Chair and CEO (Kamal/Rose)*

**Carried**

## **9. Election of GSA Vice-Chair and Vice-Chief Electoral Officer**

There was 1 nomination received from candidate Jovita Dias.

Dias is a second-year student in the online MPA program in JSGS of public policy, and currently lives in Calgary. She is passionate about women empowerment and child literacy, and in her downtime, she volunteers for Girl Guides of Canada, the Shoebox Project for Women and Calgary Reads. Additionally, she also serves as a director-at-large on her condo board and has recently accepted the position of a Policy Analyst with BC Public Service's Ministry of Health.

Her professional career and volunteer experiences have provided her with several opportunities to draft and review Business Plans, Strategic Governance Frameworks, take meeting minutes, offer advice to leadership, participate on committees etc..., Last year, she got involved with the GSA's Governance Committee. She is working towards a Leadership Intensive Certificate from

the Banff Centre of Arts and Creativity and has completed courses on design thinking, contextual intelligence, and establishing indigenous institutions of governance that have helped me immensely in understanding different governance processes and building leadership capabilities.

*Motion to appoint Jovita Dias as GSA Vice-Chair and Vice-CEO (Cherewyk/Kamal)*

**Carried**

## **10. Election/Appointment of GSA Recording Secretary**

There was 1 nomination received from candidate Nicole Pasloski.

Pasloski is a second year Masters of Sociology student who enjoys being involved in the student association. Last year, due to course commitments, she took a smaller role in the GSA and this year hopes to play a bigger role. She has acted as secretary for the sociology undergrad student society, note taker for the Access and Equity services, and a columnist for the Sheaf and thus has a lot of experience taking notes for herself and for others. She was also part of the GSA Elections and Referenda Committee last year.

*Motion to appoint Nicole Pasloski as GSA Recording Secretary (Proulx-Cullen/Rose)*

**Carried**

## **11. Other Business/Announcements**

- a. The GSA Health and Dental Plan change of coverage period will end soon. There has been announcements through social media and emails. If you have an alternative health care coverage, you will have the option to opt out from the GSA Health and Dental plan, and the deadline to submit this request is September 30 – any requests after this date will not be accepted.
- b. Call for volunteers for the National Day of Truth and Reconciliation by Wanuskewin Community, who is organising a series of events. They have different events where they need dedicated volunteers to help them. We've already received a list of volunteers, but always looking for more. Please get in touch with President Zahan who will connect you with the Wanuskewin Community. If we have enough volunteers, they will arrange a bus from the GSA to the Heritage Park. Please indicate your interest early as it will help us to plan how many students are volunteering.

## **12. Adjournment**

*Motion to adjourn at 6:05 PM (Proulx-Cullen/ Cherewyk)*

**Carried**