



**Graduate Students' Association –
University of Saskatchewan
Council Meeting Agenda
Tuesday, March 15, 2022 - Zoom
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		
	Approval of the Agenda	1-2	<i>Decision</i>
	Approval of Minutes from Feb. 15, 2022	3-12	<i>Decision</i>
2	Information to be received	13-23	<i>Decision</i>
	Executive Meeting Minutes – Feb. 14, 2022		
	Executive Meeting Minutes – Mar. 1, 2022		
	Awards Committee Meeting Minutes – Jan. 28, 2022		<i>Information</i>
3	2021-2022 Standing Committee Members (approval via email)		
4	Amendment: UPass Motion (approval via email)		<i>Information</i>
5	Update: VP-Indigenous Engagement		<i>Information</i>
6	Update: GSA 2022/23 Executive Elections		<i>Information</i>
7	Executive Reports	24-29	
	A. Report of the President		<i>Information</i>
	B. Report of the VP Finance & Operations		<i>Information</i>
	C. Report of the VP Academic & Student Affairs <i>(presented verbally)</i>		<i>Information</i>
	D. Report of the VP External Affairs		
8	Election of GSA Council Chair & Chief Electoral		<i>Decision</i>

Officer

9 Other Business/Announcements

Information

Adjournment

Decision

Next Meeting: April 13, 2022.



**University of Saskatchewan
Graduate Students' Association
Council Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, February 15, 2022. 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 February 15, 2022, 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 place to curb the spread of the virus.*

Chair: Rifat Zahan**

Recording Secretary: Nicole Pasloski

***The previous Chair stepped down from their position two days prior to this Council meeting taking place and the Vice-Chair, who is supposed to serve as the Interim Council Chair was away. There was no name put forward from the council members to serve as the temporary Council Chair. Therefore, In accordance with GSA bylaw 1.9.9. the meeting was temporarily chaired by the President of the GSA.*

1. Call to Order/Opening remarks

The agenda package was emailed with the Zoom meeting link for online participation. The temporary Chair, Zahan welcomed members of council and called the meeting to order at 1701 CST. Ms. Nicole Pasloski, the Recording Secretary of Council compiled the meeting minutes.

2. Approval of the Agenda

The temporary Chair asked about any amendments to the agenda as circulated via email.

The President noted a change to the item#4, that the guest speaker sent his regret. The temporary Chair and Recording Secretary noted the change.

Motion to approve the amendments and agenda. (Proulx-Cullen/Gannon)

Carried

3. Approval of Council Meeting Minutes – January 18, 2022

The temporary Chair asked if there were any suggested changes before the minutes were called for approval.

Motion to approve the January 18, 2022, meeting minutes. (Kamal/Chandran)

Carried

4. Guest Speaker

The guest speaker, Robyn Paches, Program Manager; Studentcare was not able to join the council meeting but sent their presentation to the executives to be circulated among the council members.

5. Update: By-Election VP Indigenous Engagement

This falls under the portfolio of the Council Chair/Vice-Chair, which we do not have at the time of the meeting. The President (i.e., temporary Chair) asked if there is anyone from Elections and Referenda Committee who can speak to this. There was no one present.

6. Update: Upcoming Executives' Election

This falls under the portfolio of the Council Chair/Vice-Chair, which we do not have at the time of the meeting. The President (i.e., temporary Chair) asked if there is anyone from Elections and Referenda Committee who can speak to this. There was no one present.

7. A. Standing Committees Membership

This falls under the portfolio of the Council Chair/Vice-Chair, which we do not have at the time of the meeting. The President (i.e., temporary Chair) mentioned to table this discussion until a new Chair or Vice-Chair is available.

B. Appoint Council Member to Election and Referenda Committee

There were two names put forward to the outgoing Chair to serve in the Election and Referenda Committee: Fabrice Njotu and Khaled Zoroufchi Benis.

Motion to appoint Fabrice Njotu and Khaled Zoroufchi Benis to the Election and Referenda Committee. (Moradi/Kamal)

Carried**8. Information to be Received***Executive Meeting Minutes from January 25, 2022*

The council members were asked if there was any question about the Executive meeting minutes as circulated. There was none.

*Motion to approve the January 25, 2022, Executive Meeting Minutes. (Moradi/Gannon)***Carried****9. Motion to Approve Auto-enrolment of Graduate students in winter term GSA Health and Dental Plan**

The VP Finance & Operations and the VP Academic and Student Affairs explained the details of this motion. Many students are not auto enrolled in GSA Health and Dental Plan in the Winter term. As a result, those students do not start getting service right away and sometimes miss the deadlines for self-enrolment. There were several questions involving specifics of opting-out and whether an announcement is forthcoming. There will be an announcement and reminders when cut-off days for opting out of Health and Dental plans are approaching.

*Motion to approve the auto-enrolment of graduate students in GSA Health and Dental Plan. (Moradi/Cherewyk)***Carried****10. Motion to Approve Canadian Federation of Students (CFS) fees increase by \$0.34 (from \$12.88 to \$13.22) according to Consumer Price Index (CPI)**

The full details of this item were circulated. According to the bylaws of CFS, every year, they change the student fees based on the CPI for the previous year. The VP Finance & Operations and the VP Academic and Student Affairs addressed questions related to the necessity of belonging to the CFS and how the service helps graduate students at federal-level advocacy.

*Motion to approve the fee increase. (Gerbrandt/Proulx-Cullen)***Carried****11. Motion to Approve U-Pass fees increase between \$1.68 - \$3.37 (from \$115.38 to \$118.06-\$119.31) according to Saskatchewan January 2022 Consumer Price Index (CPI)**

According to the contract that we have with Saskatoon Transit, the U-Pass fees change annually based on the CPI of Saskatchewan in January of the current year. This year, the CPI

of January 2022 has not been released yet. Based on the percentage increase, the exact amount will be calculated.

There were questions about the U-Pass and fees, which were answered by the Executives who directed Council Members to the most recent Executive meeting minutes: item 4.2, where there is a summary of what is planned for Graduate students and the U-Pass, including an upcoming survey for recommendations to the incoming Executives.

Motion to approve the fee increase. (Sands/Moradi)

Noted Abstentions: Rachel Carey, Amy Jimmo, Sandhya Chandran, Natasha Boyes

Carried

12. Executive Reports

A. President's Report:

The report was presented to council members and was available in the agenda package. Questions for the President for this month should be emailed to the President.

B. Vice President Finance & Operations Report:

The report was presented to council members and was available in the agenda package. Questions for VP Finance & Operations for this month should be emailed to the VP.

C. Vice President Academic & Students Affairs Report:

The report was presented to council members and was available in the agenda package. Questions for VP Academic & Student Affairs for this month should be emailed to the VP.

D. Vice President External Affairs Report:

The report was presented to council members and was available in the agenda package. Questions for VP External Affairs for this month should be emailed to the VP.

13. Other Business/Announcements

Question: The Councillor from Soil Science GSA asked when the survey regarding the U-Pass should be expected.

Answer VP Finance & Operations: The survey should be approved by the Executives and deployed after the approval.

Reminder: Although on-campus activity is almost at full capacity, the GSA commons remains closed.

14. Adjournment

The Chair moved to adjourn at 1809 CST. (*Gerbrandt/Suchak*)

Carried

Next Meeting: March 15, 2022.

Appendix A – February Council Meeting Attendance

Academic Council	Name of Councillors and (alternates)	Sep. 2021	Oct. 26 20 21	Nov. 23 202 1	Dec. 14 2021	Jan. 18 2022	Feb. 15 2022	Mar. 15 2022	Apr. 202 2	Jun . 202 2	Aug . 202 2
Agricultural and Resources Economics (ARE) Graduate Student Association	Amy Carruthers – Councillor Michelle Ross - Alternate	N/A	P	P	P	P	P				
Animal and Poultry Science	Rachel Carey – Councillor Megan Wasden - Alternate			P	P	P	P				
ARCHAIA	Angela Burant - Councillor Bailey Pelletier - Alternate	N/A		P	P	A	P				
Biology Graduate Student Association	Jory Litt-Jukes – Councillor Mercy Harris – Alternate		P	P	P	P	P				
Chemistry Course Council	Iyanu Kumayon - Councillor Srikant Singh - Alternate	N/A	P		A	P	P				
College of Medicine Graduate Students Society – Anatomy, Physiology & Pharmacology	Kundanika Mukherjee – Councillor Arshdeep Jagait – Alternate	N/A		P	A	A	P				
College of Medicine Graduate Students Society –Biochemistry, Microbiology & Immunology	Maddie Stewart – Councillor Rachel Harris- Alternate	N/A	P	P	A	A	P				
College of Medicine Graduate Students Society – Community Health & Epidemiology	Amanda Gannon – Councillor Emilia Gillies - Alternate	N/A	P	P	P	P	P				
College of Medicine Graduate Students Society – Health Sciences	Elyse Proulx-Cullen – Councillor Fabrice N. Njotu – Alternate	N/A	P	P	P	A	P				
Computer Science Graduate Council (CSGC)	Fidelia Orji – Councillor Naz Zarreen Oishie – Councillor Keyhan Najafian – Alternate		P	P	P	P	P				

Academic Council	Name of Councillors and (alternates)	Sep. 2021	Oct. 2021	Nov. 2021	Dec. 2021	Jan. 2022	Feb. 2022	Mar. 2022	Apr. 2022	Jun. 2022	Aug. 2022
Engineering Graduate Community Council (EGCC) – Biological	Ninu Kallingal Mohandas – Councillor	N /A	P	A	A	P	P				
Engineering Graduate Community Council (EGCC) – Biomedical	Abbas Fazel - Councillor Tochukwu Ezechukwu - Alternate	N /A	P	A	A	P	P				
Engineering Graduate Community Council (EGCC) – Chemical	Shahab Minaei – Councillor Khaled Zoroufchi Benis - Alternate	N /A	P	P	A	P	P				
Engineering Graduate Community Council (EGCC) – Civil, Geological & Environmental	Fatima Abed Al Sater – Councillor Behdad Saed - Alternate	N /A	A	A	A	P	P				
Engineering Graduate Community Council (EGCC) – Electrical & Computer	Simin Keykhosravi – Councillor Sandhya Chandran - Alternate	N /A	A	A	P	P	P				
Engineering Graduate Community Council (EGCC) – Mechanical	Justin Tricsli – Councillor Tonye Jack – Alternate	N /A	A	P	P	P	P				
English Course Council	Dara Gerbrandt – Councillor Challen Gladman - Councillor Amanda Burrows - Alternate	N/A	P	P	P	P	P				
Johnson-Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy Students' Association	Fati Zahra Mubarak – Councillor Shehreen Fatima - Alternate	N /A	P	A	A	A	A				
Kinesiology Graduate Student Council		P	P	P	P	P	P				

Academic Council	Name of Councillors and (alternates)	Sep. 202 1	Oct.2 6 202 1	Nov. 23 2021	Dec.1 4 2021	Jan. 18 2022	Feb. 15 2022	Mar. 15 2022	Apr. 202 2	Jun · 202 2	Aug · 202 2
Physical and Engineering Physics - PEGASUS	Kimberlee Dube – Councillor Nicholas Simonson - Alternate	N/A	P	P	P	P	P				
Pharmacy & Nutrition Graduate Students' Council	Jennifer Chami - Councillor Asiyah Suchak - Alternate	N/A	A	A	P	A	P				
Plant Science	Sandesh Neupane – Councillor Adam Carter - Alternate	N/A		P	P	P	A				
Physical Therapy Student Society (PTSS)	Michael Tweten - Councillor Devin Wittow – Alternate	N/A	P	P	P	P	P				
SENSA	Tatiana Corello - Councillor Jaclyn Porter - Councillor Rory Wheat - Alternate	N/A	P	A	A	A	P				
SPHSA		N /A	A	A	P	P					
Sociology GSA	Kayla Arisman – Councillor Ayla Zehtab-Jadid – Councillor Shayla Batty – Councillor Iyesogie Iyiewuare – Alternate Grace Rath -Alternate Kamal Abu-Hena – Alternate	N /A	P	P	A	A	P				
Soil Science Graduate Student Association	Amy Jimmo Councillor Eric Neil – Alternate	N/A	P	A	P	P	P				
Toxicology Graduate Students' Association	Jensen Cherewyk – Councillor Hannah Mahoney - Alternate	N/A	P	P	P	P	P				

Western College of Veterinary Medicine (WCVM) GSA	Jennifer Abi Younes - Councillor Jade Sands – Alternate Christopher Zinck - Alternate	N/A	A	A	P	A	P				
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Academic Council	Name of Councillors and (alternates)	Sep. 2021	Oct. 6 2021	Nov. 23 2021	Dec. 14 2021	Jan. 18 2022	Feb. 15 2022	Mar. 15 2022	Apr. 2022	Jun. 2022	Aug. 2022
Exec. President	Rifat Zahan	P	P	P	P	P	P				
Exec. VP Finance and Operations	Ehsan Moradi	P	P	P	P	A	P				
Exec. VP Academic and Student Affairs	Mostafa Kamal	R	P	P	P	P	P				
Exec. VP External Affairs	Devin Cherneski	P	P	P	A	P	P				
Exec. VP Indigenous Engagement	Vacant	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A				



University of Saskatchewan - Graduate Students' Association

Executive Meeting Minutes - Zoom

February 14, 2022

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 (Vice-President Finance and Operations), Mostofa Kamal (Vice-President Academic and Student Affairs), Devin Cherneski (Vice-President External Affairs).

Regrets/Absent: None

Guests: N/A

1. Call to Order / Opening Remarks

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM by GSA *President Zahan*.

2. Approval of the Agenda

President Zahan asked whether there were any amendments to the agenda as circulated. There was no amendment.

Motion: To approve the agenda as circulated

Moved: VP Academic and Student Affairs

Seconded: VP Finance and Operations

***Vote: All in Favour,
Motion Carried.***

3. Approval of the last Executive Meeting Minutes from January 25, 2022.

President Zahan asked whether there were any amendments to the last meeting minutes as circulated.

Motion: To approve executive meeting minutes from January 25th, 2022.

Moved: VP Academic and Student Affairs

Seconded: VP External Affairs

***Vote: All in Favour,
Motion Carried.***

4. Items for action

4.1 Approve the Canadian Federation of Students (CFS) fees increase by \$0.34 (from \$12.88 to \$13.22) according to Consumer Price Index (CPI). According to the bylaws of CFS, every year, they change the student fees based on CPI for the previous year.

Motion: To approve the CFS increase by \$0.34

Moved: VP Academic and Student Affairs

Seconded: VP Finance & Operations

***Vote: All in Favour,
Motion Carried.***

4.2 Approve U-Pass fees increase between \$1.68 - \$3.37 (from \$115.38 to between \$118.06 - \$119.31) according to Saskatchewan January 2022 Consumer Price Index (CPI).

According to the contract that GSA has with Saskatoon Transit, the U-Pass fees change annually based on the CPI of Saskatchewan based on January of the current year. This year, the CPI of January 2022 has not been released yet. Based on the percentage increase, the exact amount will

be calculated. The Executives proposed a suggestion to increase between a range instead. Following an approval from the council members, the exact amount will be submitted to the Fee Review Committee.

Motion: To approve the U-Pass fee increase between \$1.68 - \$3.37 (from \$115.38 to between \$118.06 - \$119.31).

Moved: VP Academic and Student Affairs

Seconded: VP External Affairs

Vote: All in Favour,

Motion Carried.

4.3 Approve auto-enrolment of graduate students in Winter term GSA Health and Dental Plan.

In the Winter term, many graduate students are not automatically enrolled in the GSA Health and Dental Plan. As a result, many students miss to self-enroll themselves for this extended health coverage by the deadline set by Studentcare. To better serve our graduate students, GSA is bringing a motion to approve the auto-enrolment of all full-time graduate students in Studentcare in the Winter term.

Motion: To approve auto-enrolment of grad students in the Winter term for GSA health and dental plans.

Moved: VP Finance & Operations

Seconded: VP External Affairs

Vote: All in Favour,

Motion Carried.

4.4 Appoint VP Academic and Student Affairs to be signing officer at GSA without the existing signing officers.

The President may not work in person at GSA commons due to urgent health reasons during March and April 2022. Therefore, Executives discussed VP Academic and Student Affairs, Mostofa Kamal, to serve as a signing officer in the absence of the President.

Motion: To authorize signing authority/officer to VP Academic and Student Affairs.

Moved: VP External Affairs

Seconded: VP Finance and Operations

Vote: All in Favour,

Motion Carried.

5. Items for Discussion

5.1 GSA seat in the Board of Governors – GSA has been requesting a seat in the Board of Governors for many years. Usask is the only U15 university that does not have a seat the Board of Governors. To advance GSA’s goals, the current Executives will keep advocating for a seat in the Board of Governors. The GSA President will bring this forward in the meetings with senior leaders to advocate for a seat of GSA in the Board of Governors. If this is something that is not feasible soon, the GSA President will ask university senior leaders for possible avenues to deliver messages of graduate students’ needs to the Board of Governors.

5.2 Monthly budget update – VP Finance and Operations shared updated budget and expenditures on an excel spreadsheet with all Executives.

5.3 Black History Month - Registration is still open for event of Black History Month where Robyn Maynard will speak Thursday, February 17, starting at 7:00 p.m. She is a well-known author and book writer.

[Uju Asiodu - University Library | University of Saskatchewan \(usask.ca\)](#) profile added to the library website. VP External Affairs completed two videos and received two write-ups from graduate students. The videos were recorded on Friday, February 11, at the GSA Commons.

5.4 GSA Winter Orientation: Curbside Pickup – Executives will attend both sessions on February 17th (swag bag preparation) and 18th (the swag bag distribution). The GSA Executives and volunteers will meet and pre-fill swag bags to prepare for February 18th. The goal is to have 500 bags ready.

5.5 Graduate Student Research Conference – The VP of Finance and Operations discussed the event and upcoming deadline. VP Moradi also indicated that the poster had been updated for the February 28th deadline. Applications are slowly coming in. At this time, five participants have

submitted—more information to follow next executive meeting.

5.6 GSA Winter Bursary – The VP of Finance and Operations indicated forty-five applications have come in so far, with 11 being approved for the subsequent evaluation. The Bursary Committee will continue to work through the procedures.

5.7 GSA Tax Event – The VP of Finance and Operations indicated that he has communicated with the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) for possible event to be organized by GSA. Two tax information sessions will be set up for March 1st and 14th via online Zoom meetings. More details to come along with communication through GSA social media and newsletter.

5.8 GSA Annual Awards Gala – The VP of External Affairs indicated that there had been no applications thus far, only questions about the nomination process, letterhead style, and references. VP Chreneski stated that another advertisement would be going out to all graduate students on Monday, February 14, 2022 (by email). The next Awards Committee meeting is slated for February 18th. Committee members received confidentiality agreements and rubric grading templates for review.

5.9 CFS Lobbying week (February 22 to 25th) – The VP of External Affairs, in collaboration with President Zahan and Erin Calvary, who is the Public Affairs Officer for the Canadian Federation of Students (CFS), will be setting up a meeting with a Member of Parliament (MP) Corey Tochor from the Conservative Party of Canada (Saskatoon - University riding). President Zahan will also have meetings with MPs from British Columbia, Manitoba, and Ontario with conjunction with Canadian Federation of Students. Plans are in place to discuss improving affordability of education (tuition, cost of living, debt) and eliminate financial barriers, housing accessibility and affordability, increased mental health support, fairness for international graduate students, Indigenous learner's rights to education.

5.10 3MT Thesis Competition – The VP of Academic and Student Affairs indicated that an event is already planned for March 25th, 2022, as per the Executive Retreat 2021. VP Kamal also mentioned that GSA is looking at having an in-person event at the GSA commons. President Zahan indicated that this would be a challenge with students not going to school and working remotely throughout Saskatchewan and all around the world. The VP of Academic and Student Affairs said GSA might request students to come to GSA Commons if available and see how many responses

he gets. Based on the responses GSA Executives can decide for the event venue. VP Kamal also indicated that plans would be in place soon with advertising, including posters that will go out around February 28th, 2022.

6. Closed Session

7 Adjournment of Meeting – President Zahan made a motion to adjourn February 14 executive meeting.

Motion: To adjourn the meeting at 7:44 PM

Moved: VP Academic and Student Affairs

Seconded: VP External Affairs

***Vote: All in Favour,
Motion Carried.***

The meeting was adjourned at 7:44 PM.



University of Saskatchewan - Graduate Students' Association
GSA Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
March 1, 2022 - Zoom

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 (Vice-President Finance and Operations), Mostofa Kamal (Vice-President Academic and Student Affairs), Devin Cherneski (Vice-President External Affairs).

Regrets/Absent: None

Guests: N/A

1. Call to Order / Opening Remarks

The meeting was called to order at 6:09 PM by GSA *President Zahan*.

2. Approval of the Agenda

President Zahan asked whether there were any amendments to the agenda as circulated. There was no amendment.

Motion: To approve the current agenda

Moved: VP Academic and Student Affairs

Seconded: VP External Affairs

***Vote: All in Favour,
Motion Carried.***

3. Approval of the last Executive Meeting Minutes

President Zahan asked whether there were any amendments to the last executive meeting minutes as circulated. VP External Affairs indicated draft minutes were distributed to the executive for proofreading. Minutes were from February 14, 2022.

Motion: To approve executive meeting minutes from February 14th, 2022.

Moved: VP Academic and Student Affairs

Seconded: VP External Affairs

***Vote: All in Favour,
Motion Carried.***

4. Items for action

4.1 To approve and finalize the 2022-23 U-Pass fees increase of **\$4.27** from \$115.38 to \$119.65 through the January 2022 - Saskatchewan Consumer Price Index of 3.8%.

Motion: To approve 2022 GSA U-Pass fees increase of \$4.27 from \$115.38 to \$119.65 through the Consumer Price index of 3.8%.

Moved: VP Finance and Operations

Seconded: VP Academic and Student Affairs

***Vote: All in Favour,
Motion Carried.***

4.2 GSA Office Manager's Salary – There were some discussions about changes in the salary of GSA's Office Manager. According to the contract, GSA Office Manager's salary will be increased through the Saskatchewan Consumer Price Index based on the last month of the employee's contract.

Motion: To approve the GSA's office Managers Salary increase as per the Saskatchewan's CPI-based annual index.

Moved: VP Finance & Operations

Seconded: VP Academic and Student Affairs

***Vote: All in Favour,
Motion Carried.***

5. Items for Discussion

5.1 Monthly budget update – The VP of Finance and Operations forwarded an updated GSA budget spreadsheet for the executive members to review.

5.2 Black History Month – The VP of External Affairs indicated that the Usask Black History Month (BHM) was a success overall. In February, interviews and profiles were conducted with graduate students. They can be found at [Black History Month - University Library | University of Saskatchewan \(usask.ca\)](#).

The GSA President also had an opportunity to moderate questions-answers session, and final remarks during a BHM fireside conversation. The topic of discussion was making inclusive excellence actual. The event was with Dr. Airini (Provost and VP Academic), Dr. Patricia McDougall (Deputy Provost) and Dr. Eriq Lukong (Professor of Biochemistry). There was an urge from Dr. Lukong during the meeting that university should have department-level data to see the percentage of students with Black origin are studying at the USask. The GSA President promised to bring this up in the President's Executive Committee (PEC) meeting and request university to gather such data. A big thanks was provided to all the volunteers, GSA Executives, and graduate students that committed time and effort for making the series of events successful.

5.3 Annual Awards Gala – The VP of External Affairs stated 11 nomination packages were received. The GSA Awards Committee has extended the deadline until Saturday, March 19th. The executive discussed the possibility of having an in-person event for the winners of the Annual Awards at the GSA Commons, with approximately 40-50 people. The Annual Awards Committee will be meeting on Tuesday, March 8th to discuss plans.

5.4 3MT Thesis Competition – The VP of Academic and Student Affairs indicated that an event for the 3MT competition is already planned for March 25, 2022, Friday according to the Executive Retreat meeting and registration will go until March 19. VP Kamal also said that plans would be in place soon with advertising, including posters that will go out on March 2. The executives discussed Flyer designs; the VP of Academic and Student Affairs will design a plan, add a logo, and have it ready to go. He will also invite three or more judges with diverse academic portfolios and experience for the 3MT thesis competition. The VP of Academic and Student Affairs and President quoted a couple of names for prospective judges that were noted

5.5 Graduate Student Research Conference update – The VP of Finance and Operations indicated three submissions for the GSA Graduate Student Research Conference, so far, as the deadline has already passed. The next step is to upload the submission and share them through the GSA website, YouTube channels, and GSA Newsletter.

5.6 CFS Lobbying week – President Zahan, VP External Affairs, and members for the Canadian Federation of Students (CFS), attended a meeting with Member of Parliament (MP) Corey Tochor and his assistance from the Conservative Party of Canada (Saskatoon constituency). Topics of discussion include education affordability, tuition, cost of living, and mental health service increase. The GSA President requested MP Tochor to forward the students' requests to his standing committees and Government critic roles. Unfortunately, MP Tochor did not make any promise regarding such requests. GSA President Zahan has also had the opportunity to attend other Federal

Constituency ridings, including the NDP party of Canada from British Columbia (MP Lisa Marie Baron) and Manitoba (MP Leah Ghazan). These Member of Parliaments were receptive to the GSA and CFS's policy suggestions and supported free education. The Two MPs also promised to take these requests forward to their standing committees, critic roles, want to strongly advocate for students in their caucuses.

5.7 How to use U-File for Graduate Students – VP Moradi and VP Kamal are working on arranging events to help graduate students to file their own income taxes. Demonstration on U-File, which is free for all graduate students at USask will be demonstrated.

5.8 International Mother Language Day – The GSA Executives were invited to attend International Mother Language Day organized by Bangladesh Community Association of Saskatchewan (BCAS). The President gave a five-minutes speech. to promote the importance of awareness regarding multilingualism, cultural diversity, and multiculturalism. The President indicated that the event went very well overall.

5.9 Upcoming executive meetings scheduled as follows:

- Wednesday, March 16th, 2022, @ 5:30 pm (in-person GSA Commons)
- Wednesday, March 30th, 2022, @ 6:00 pm (Zoom)
- Tuesday, April 12th, 2022, @ 5:30 pm (Zoom)
- Tuesday, April 26th, 2022, @ 6:00 pm (Zoom)

6. Closed Session

7 Adjournment of Meeting – President Zahan motioned to adjourn the executive meeting on March 1, 2022.

Motion: To adjourn the meeting at 7:44 PM

Moved: VP Academic and Student Affairs

Seconded: VP External Affairs

***Vote: All in Favour,
Motion Carried.***

The meeting was adjourned at 7:44 PM.



University of Saskatchewan - Graduate Students' Association

Awards Committee Meeting Minutes

January 28, 2022 (ZOOM)

6:00 PM to 6:40 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.

Attendance: Devin Cherneski, Rifat Zahan, Ozra Mohammadi, Sourabh Kumar, Pezhman Zolfaghari Didani, Leonie Bettin, Sristy Sumana Nath

Items for Action/Discussion:

- The meeting started with each member introduced.
- Committee chair – Devin Cherneski, VP External Affairs
- Recording Secretary – Ozra Mohammadi
- An announcement e-mail to be drafted and sent from the Awards Committee regarding the 2022 Annual Awards nominations opening up.
- Awards policy and judging rubric discussed. The VP of External Affairs and recording secretary will send members rubrics and confidentiality agreements.
- Roles and responsibilities of committee members discussed.
- A reminder that committee members cannot nominate any graduate students.

Adjournment of Meeting: The meeting was adjourned at 6:40 pm.



University of Saskatchewan Graduate Students' Association

President's Report – GSA Council Meeting, March 2022

Dear Members of Council,

In this report I will present some initiatives that the Executives have been working on and some updates from the Executive team, which includes:

1. Avenue for Graduate Students to Represent at Board of Governors

The Graduate Students' Association (GSA) has been advocating for a seat in the Board of Governors for many years. The University of Saskatchewan Graduate Students' Association is the only Graduate Students' Association among U15 universities, which does not have a seat in the Board of Governors. Therefore, GSA is looking for avenues from the senior leaders on how the voices of graduate students can be heard at the Board of Governors' meetings.

2. National Lobby Week: Canadian Federation of Students

The GSA was able to attend the National Lobby Week organized by Canadian Federation of Students (CFS) to address students' concerns and requests at the federal level. The GSA representatives met Members of Parliaments (MPs) from Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and British Columbia to speak about affordability of education (tuition, living cost, debts), mental health support, parental benefits, etc. Some MPs promised to look into these matters and present the items to their caucus, parliament, standing committees, and in their many critic roles.

3. Delay in Graduate Studies and Minimum Guaranteed Funding Enhancement

The GSA Executives are working with the College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies to inquire into the delay in degree programs. Unlike, many other U15 universities, the graduate students at the University of Saskatchewan takes longer than usual to finish their degrees, which adds financial stress in students' lives, education becomes more expensive, and students are delaying in many important life-decisions, including, but not limited to, joining workforce to contribute to the economy, having children (who are the future of this country), buying houses, etc. Moreover, the minimum guaranteed funding that students receive in this university does not reflect the median time needed to finish their degrees. For example, doctoral students take over seven years to finish a PhD. However, the

minimum guaranteed funding that they receive in their first year is usually around for three years. There is no option for graduate students to study part-time and work full-time to support the skyrocketing education costs. Therefore, GSA is requesting minimum guaranteed funding for PhD students to be at least four years, for thesis-based Masters students to be three years. The GSA is also requesting the University to consider providing parental benefits to graduate students during their parental leave.

4. Changes for Graduate Students Living in University Residence

The GSA Executives have strongly advocated for graduate students living in the university residence, as we were receiving many concerns and complaints from these student group for many years. The GSA Executive had many interactions at different levels of the university leadership team to address such concerns and provided constructive criticism and feedback, so that the services are enhanced at university residence. Following such level of advocacy and discussions, the GSA received some updates from the University Residence Office: removal of early termination fee for graduate students, who finish their degree any time during their contract and the students will have the option to finish their contract by staying in the university residence even if the student was graduated earlier than the contract finish date. To address more inclusiveness, students who become pregnant or have babies will have the option to move to the kids-friendly residence without paying transfer fee and can continue to pay their rent according to the original contract until the end of the contract. After the contract ends, the students may choose to continue staying in the kids-friendly building with a new contract of that particular building, or may choose to move out of the residence. Students will also receive double the amount of Residence Cash Card (RCC) credit they used to receive with the option to rollover of the unused amount until the end of the contract.

5. Discussion with Studentcare for Enhancement of the Services of GSA Health and Dental Plan

The studentcare suggested a fee increase in the GSA Health and Dental Plan from the upcoming academic year. The GSA Executives decided not to put extra burden on the graduate students, as they are still recovering from the pandemic effect. Therefore, the GSA Executives have decided to use GSA's own fund to cover this extra cost for the continuation of the service provided by the GSA Health and Dental Plan. The Executives are still having discussions about service enhancement with Studentcare, so that students receive more coverage and better services with extensive members in the network.

6. GSA Winter Orientation: Curbside Pickup of Swag Bags

The GSA was able to distribute about 500 swag bags as part of the Winter Orientation activity. The Executives are grateful to the volunteers for helping GSA organize this event.

7. GSA Need-Based Winter Bursary

The GSA was able to provide winter term need-based bursaries to eligible applicants. The GSA is grateful to the College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies for this financial support to our graduate students.

8. GSA Annual Awards

The GSA has been organizing Annual Awards that are intended to celebrate graduate students, as well as honor faculty members that have generously supported graduate students in research, scholarly and artistic pursuits. The GSA Award Committee has extended the deadline to submit nominations for awards.

9. International Mother Language Day

In 1999, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) declared February 21 as the International Mother Language Day. This day is observed to protect languages used by people around the world. There are a lot of endangered and extinct languages worldwide, including in Canada. Also, there are fewer Indigenous languages, and some are even at the risk of declining further. This year, GSA released a statement to honour this day and also was invited to give a speech at the event of International Mother Language Day, organized by Bangladeshi Community Association of Saskatchewan. The GSA would like to request university to consider this day to be celebrated from upcoming years for a practice of multilingualism, cultural diversity, and multiculturalism.

10. Celebration of Black History Month

Along with the university, the GSA successfully celebrated the Black History Month by honouring the accomplishments made by the graduate students and faculty members coming from the Black Community. The GSA interviewed outstanding graduate students and published the interviews on the University Library website. The GSA is requesting university to seek department-level percentage of graduate students from Black Community for future improvement in diversity.

Rifat Zahan
President, Graduate Students' Association



University of Saskatchewan Graduate Students' Association

VP Finance and Operations report - GSA Council Meeting, February 2021

Dear GSA Councilors,

Please, find below the main area I together with the other GSA executives worked and working on during the Fall term:

1. GSA Winter Bursary

25 applicants were selected among 109 received applications and their cheque prepared and mailed out. During my tenure GSA received more than 400 applications and distributed \$65000 among 65 applicants.

2. Promoting GSA services and Responding Student concerns

Most of my time was on GSA financial documents and working on renewing contracts.

- I worked on GSA financial documents to prepare the GSA 2022-23 budget information.
 - Budget updating and preparing official documents
- I also organized tax information sessions with CRA agents so students can have interactive sessions in March since university publishes T4 by end of February.

I look forward to working with each one of you and making your voices heard as far as my role allows me to. If you have any questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact me at gsa.fin@usask.ca

Thank you,

Ehsan Moradi

VP Finance and Operations , Graduate Students' Association



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March 2022

RE: Vice President's External Affairs Report to Council

Dear Council Members,

Attached is my March executive report for council members:

1) **GSA Executive meetings**

I regularly attend GSA executive meetings to discuss various topics and events for the upcoming winter term. We had two sessions: February 14 and March 1, 2022. Please visit our GSA website to view our minutes.

2) **Usask - Black History Month**

The University of Saskatchewan's Black History Month was a huge success as the GSA played a significant role. Interviews, videos, and personal profiles were conducted with many graduate students in February. I want to thank the GSA, volunteers, executive council, and all the graduate students who took an opportunity to get involved. I was very impressed with the excitement and engagement of the events overall. The website is still open and can be viewed at [Black History Month - University Library | University of Saskatchewan \(usask.ca\)](https://www.usask.ca/black-history-month/)

3) **2022 GSA Annual Awards update**

I am working on the 2022 Annual Awards in collaboration with present and past GSA executives. Currently, we have 11 nomination packages received. The GSA Awards Committee has extended the deadline until Saturday, March 19th. Our executives discussed the possibility of having an in-person event for the winners

of the GSA Annual Awards at the GSA Commons, with approximately 40-50 people to attend. The GSA Annual Awards Committee will be meeting in March to discuss plans.

4) **Canadian Federation of Students – Lobby Week with Members of Parliament.** President Zahan, VP External Affairs, and members for the Canadian Federation of Students attended a meeting with Member of Parliament (MP) Corey Tochor and his assistance from the Conservative Party of Canada (Saskatoon constituency riding). Topics of discussion include education affordability, tuition, cost of living, covid-19, and mental health. Mr. Tochor accommodated to meet for approximately 20 minutes as he had another function to attend at the last minute. His assistant stayed a while after to go over our minutes and reaffirm our requests. Mr. Tochor, although not committing to taking any action with his critic role or standing committee, indicated that he would like to meet again in the next several months.

5) **Social media** – In collaboration with the GSA Office Manager and President, social media posts continue to be uploaded for the GSA and other graduate student events are scheduled ongoing. Requests can be sent to one of the three of us for approval and posting using four of our platforms.

6) **Meetings** - I regularly attend monthly meetings for my portfolio as VP of External Affairs and as a member of our GSA executive team. February has been a hectic month at the GSA and Usask, with many scheduled calls and events, including at the GSA commons as we had our GSA graduate students' swag bag pick-up on Friday, February 25, from 1-3 pm.

This concludes my VP executive report. Please feel free to e-mail me anytime at gsa.external@usask.ca if you have any suggestions or comments.

Best Regards,

Devin Cherneski

Vice-President External Affairs

Graduate Students' Association (GSA)

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