



University of Saskatchewan- Graduate Students' Association

Wednesday, August 28th, 2024; 17:00-19:00 Meeting Location:

Online AGENDA

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 Agenda	1	<i>Decision</i>
3. Approval of Meeting Minutes		
3.1 Approval of June 26, 2024, Meeting Minutes	2-11	<i>Decision</i>
4. Motion to Receive GSA Executive Meeting Minutes	12-25	<i>Information</i>
4.1 GSA Executive Meeting May 1, 2024		
4.2 GSA Executive Meeting June 2, 2024		
4.3 GSA Executive Meeting July 3, 2024		
5. GSA Executives Reports	26- 33	
5.1 President's Report		<i>Information</i>
5.2 Vice President External Affairs Report		<i>Information</i>
5.3 Vice President Academic and Student Affairs Report		<i>Information</i>
5.4 Vice President Finance and Operations Report		<i>Information</i>
5. 5 Questions & Answers		
6. Other Business		<i>Information</i>
7. Adjournment		<i>Decision</i>

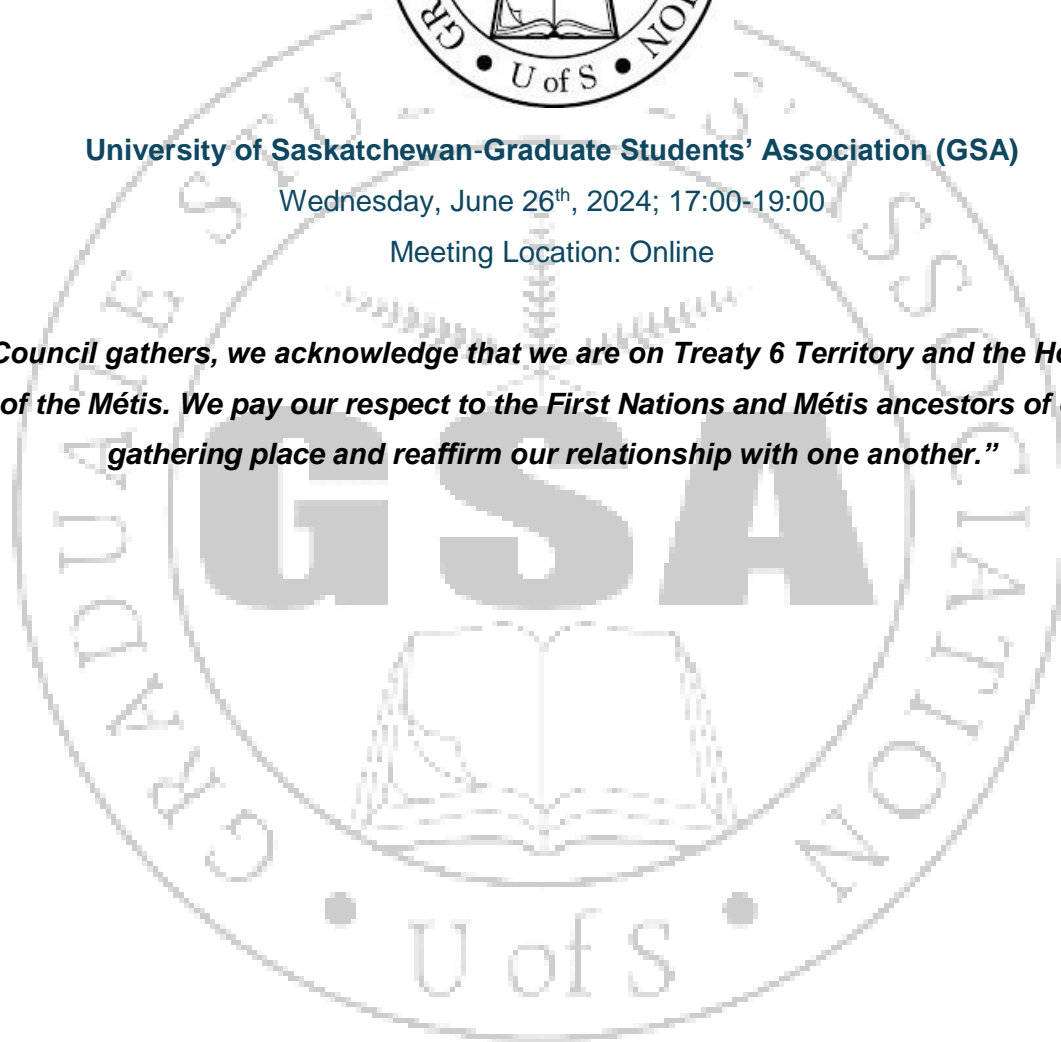


University of Saskatchewan-Graduate Students' Association (GSA)

Wednesday, June 26th, 2024; 17:00-19:00

Meeting Location: Online

“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

Chair: Devopriya Tirtho

Recording Secretary: Sara Nath

- **Call to Order**

The Chair, Devopriya Tirtho and the recording secretary, Sara Nath of the GSA officially welcomed all the graduate students, council members and executives to the meeting. The meeting was called to order at 5:07 P.M. after the quorum for the meeting had been met. Recording Secretary of the Council, compiled the meeting minutes.

The GSA chair shared a quote by Martin Luther King Jr., emphasizing the importance of persistence and resilience. The message is about determination, adaptability, and the unwavering pursuit of one's goals despite obstacles.

- **Rules and Regulation**

Before the approval, the GSA recording secretary explained the rules and regulations of the meeting to the council members. She explained that GSA uses the Robert's Rules of Order for its meeting, so for a decision to be passed or approved, a mover and a seconder are needed, and the vote cast is either in favor, opposed or abstain. Agenda items are addressed one at a time with specific time allocations; extended discussions move to the next meeting. Each council member has 3 minutes to speak, with notifications at 1 minute and 30 seconds remaining, and will be muted after their time. Respect and decorum are emphasized, with the Chair and Secretary authorized to mute or stop inappropriate speech. It is advisable for members to have their video on while speaking, but flexibility is allowed.

- **Introduction of Council Members**

The recording secretary requested each council member to introduce themselves by stating their name and the council they represent. The council members then introduced themselves accordingly.

- **Agenda: Approval of Agenda**

The chair announced the next item on the agenda, noting it was circulated via email but not posted on the GSA website, for which he apologized. The agenda package was shared in the chat box. The chair then asked if there were any amendments to the agenda package.

Mr. Mostofa raised a concern about the incorrect agenda package on the GSA website, which was from the previous year. The chair acknowledged the issue, attributing it to new coordinators in their learning phase, and promised to update the website. Mostofa also questioned the circulation of the meeting notice and quorum. Gwen suggested that additional concerns should be addressed under "other business" at the end of the meeting, and emphasized following the

stated agenda order. The chair confirmed that they had quorum and proceeded to request any amendments to the agenda package. Hearing none, the chair called for a mover and a seconder to approve the agenda package.

Motion to approve the agenda of the meeting. (Gwen/Lindsay)

Carried

Yes: 20

No: 0

Abstention: 0

As the majority of the council voted in favour, the motion was approved.

After the voting, the chair announced that the Vice President of Student Academics and Affairs is absent due to research work but will attend the next meeting. His report is included in the agenda package for review.

- **Agenda: Approval of Minutes**

1. Approval of April 30, 2024, Meeting Minute

The Chair asked about the approval of the minute from GSA Meeting from April 30, 2024.

Motion to approve the minutes from April 30, 2024. (Shuqi/Landon)

Carried

Yes: 21

No: 0

Abstention: 0

The motion to approve the *April 30, 2024*, minutes was approved by the majority of the council members.

- **Agenda: GSA Executive Reports**

The chair informed that the executive committee members are in a learning phase and have held meetings, but the minutes are not ready for this meeting. They promised that the minutes would be included in the next meeting's agenda package for approval or discussion of amendments.

➤ **VP External Affairs**

Reza, VP of External Affairs for GSA, reported that he received passwords for Instagram and Twitter accounts but had to reset Facebook and LinkedIn passwords as previous executives didn't have access. He submitted files for the GSA Handbook to CFS and secured only two sponsors, from CGPS and Student Care, after contacting last year's sponsors who were not interested.

Afterwards, Mostofa asked if the sponsorship money was enough to cover the handbook expenses. Reza replied that it would cover about 50% and would include all documents in his file. Jeisson asked why sponsors were no longer interested, and Reza replied that they gave no reasons. Jordan asked if there were other potential sponsors, and Reza explained that despite an extended deadline until June 21, he couldn't convince any new sponsors to invest in the GSA Handbook.

➤ **VP Finance and Operations**

Lindsay Carlson, a 3rd-year PhD student in biology, introduced herself and outlined her goals as a new GSA executive. Her key initiatives include creating a transition manual for future executives to ensure continuity and reduce information loss. Also, she extended the spring and summer bursary deadline to July 28 due to low application numbers. Lindsay is also updating the GSA bookkeeping system to facilitate digital funding distribution and improve efficiency and eco-friendliness in bursary distribution. Additionally, she highlighted her support for the two-Spirit and LGBTQ community during Pride Month, expressing her hope that everyone feels safe in the GSA and GSA Commons.

Mostofa thanked Lindsay for initiating the digital payment system and expressed his appreciation. He then raised a concern about the bursary announcement timing, noting that the application opened on May 31st, but the notification was received three weeks later. He suggested that the GSA manager should ensure timely announcements in the future. Lindsay clarified that the first announcement went out on May 31st and a second one about the deadline extension was sent before the initial closing date. She acknowledged the short application period and agreed it should be longer, especially in summer.

Mostofa then mentioned the need to approve the budget for the current year, highlighting that any spending or disbursement of bursary funds would be illegal without budget approval. He suggested calling an emergency AGM to address this. Lindsay confirmed the issue, stating the budget was not presented or approved by the previous executives, and emphasized the need to meet with the Budget Committee first. She mentioned the lack of budget actuals for 2023-2024 and the necessity to revise the budget to reflect current spending needs due to inflation. Lindsay also addressed an audit delay due to missing executive reports from 2022-2023 and asked for assistance in obtaining these reports.

Mostofa replied that he was working on obtaining the necessary documents and suggested using the previous year's approved budget as a reference for the new budget. Lindsay agreed but noted the need for budget adjustments to reflect actual spending.

Sainey asked if students who had already graduated were given the bursaries under the previous executive. Lindsay clarified that the current executives have not disbursed any bursaries yet as

they extended the deadline for spring/summer 2024 applications. She mentioned that any past bursaries were handled by previous executives and that, due to confidentiality bylaws, they cannot access previous identifying information. To prevent future issues, Lindsay stated they are working on an agreement with the university to validate enrollment at the time of application, rather than relying on potentially falsified confirmation documents.

➤ **VP Indigenous Engagement**

Jennifer expressed her gratitude and excitement for her role as Vpie and her temporary duties as VP Financial. She emphasized the importance of transparency regarding the Deb Wewin policy at the University of Saskatchewan, particularly in publishing verification numbers for indigenous status. Jennifer aims to advocate for greater clarity on how many individuals are verified under Deb Wewin and their demographics, stressing the importance of this data in understanding the university's commitment to diversity. Additionally, she discussed her plans to promote indigenous education and stewardship, including efforts to bring blanket exercises to colleges despite challenges in access to facilitators. Jennifer also highlighted her interest in using Juan Esquiman as a resource for indigenous land reclamation and education in Canada.

Jeisson expressed appreciation for Jennifer's ideas and support regarding the university and its history. Mostofa also conveyed his happiness upon hearing Jennifer's plans and extended his best wishes to her and the current GSA executive committee.

➤ **President**

David expressed his gratitude to the council members and executives, emphasizing his philosophy inspired by Robert K. Greenfield that good leaders must first become good servants. He highlighted his commitment to serve collaboratively rather than commandingly. David thanked past leaders, particularly Abbas and Mustafa, for their support. Celebrating Pride Month, he honored the LGBTQ+ community's resilience and progress. David announced the GSA's 40th anniversary celebration, set to begin this year and extend into next. He shared his efforts since May 1, 2024, which include attending various meetings, securing sponsorships, representing the GSA at convocation, advocating for affordable transportation, planning welcoming activities, and revitalizing past associations. David committed to fostering a collaborative environment and supporting all members to achieve their shared vision, leaving his doors open for discussions to help the GSA grow. He concluded by expressing profound gratitude to everyone involved and emphasized that every voice matters.

After David's report, there were no questions for the President, but Mostofa had questions for the VP Finance. Mostofa raised a concern regarding an email he received from the GSA Manager about correcting his tax receipt from the last academic year. He mentioned that the email stated a new auditor had been appointed, which he questioned, as only the AGM is eligible to approve

a new auditor. Lindsay clarified that no new auditor had been appointed and that the same auditor had been in place since at least 2017. She explained that the confusion might stem from the hiring of a new bookkeeping firm after the previous one resigned in December 2023 due to the workload. The new firm is digitizing records, which might be causing the confusion. Mostofa then asked for intervention as the incorrect information was delaying his tax submission. Lindsay asked him to forward the email for her to look into it.

- **Agenda: Other Business**

David reiterated the need for a vice chair and suggested that advertisements should start soon to ensure that there isn't just one person available for emergencies. He asked for this to be worked on promptly. The chair confirmed that the advertisement would be published through the GSA's social media channels and email in the coming weeks. He then asked if there was any other business to discuss. Seeing none, he proceeded with the last agenda item, which was the adjournment of the meeting.

22. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:04 p.m. (Jennifer/Rachel)

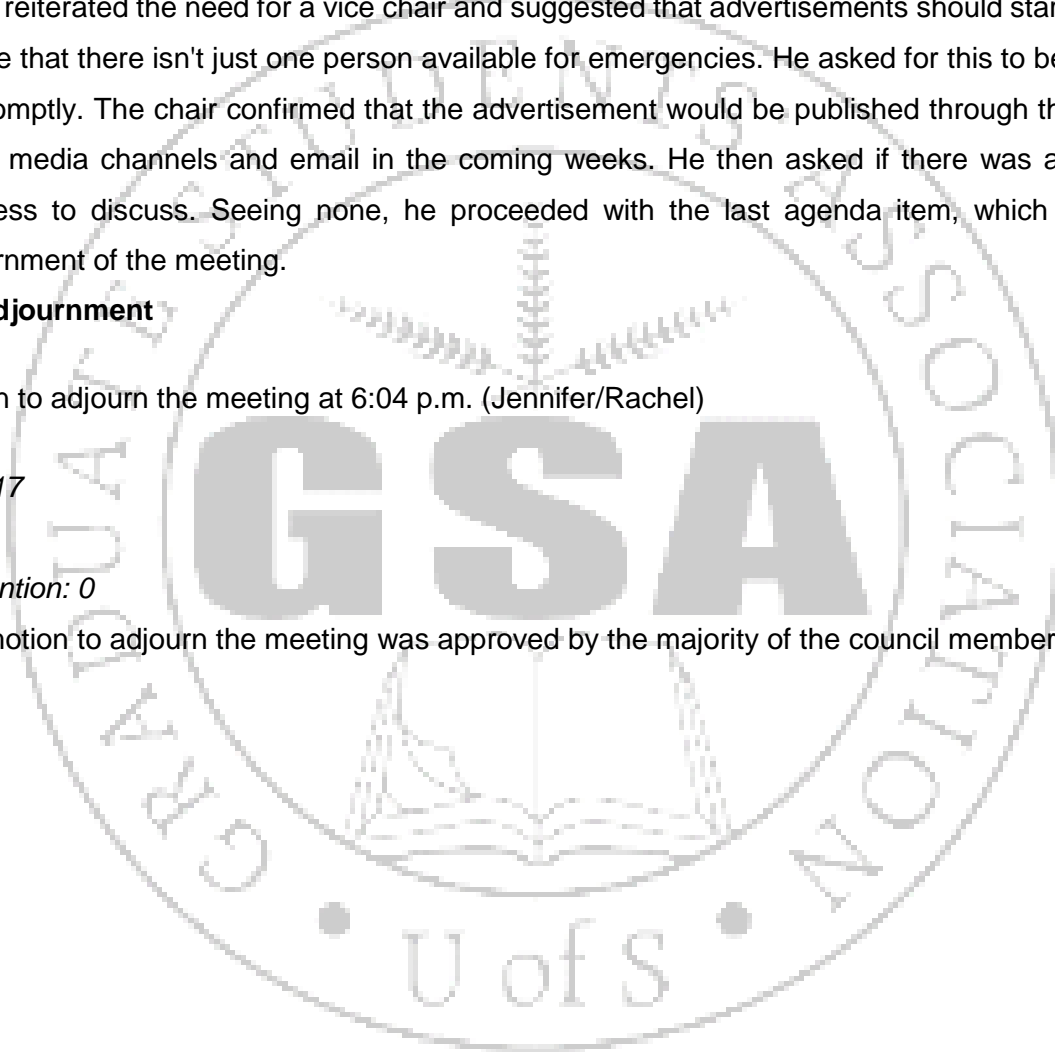
Carried

Yes: 17

No: 0

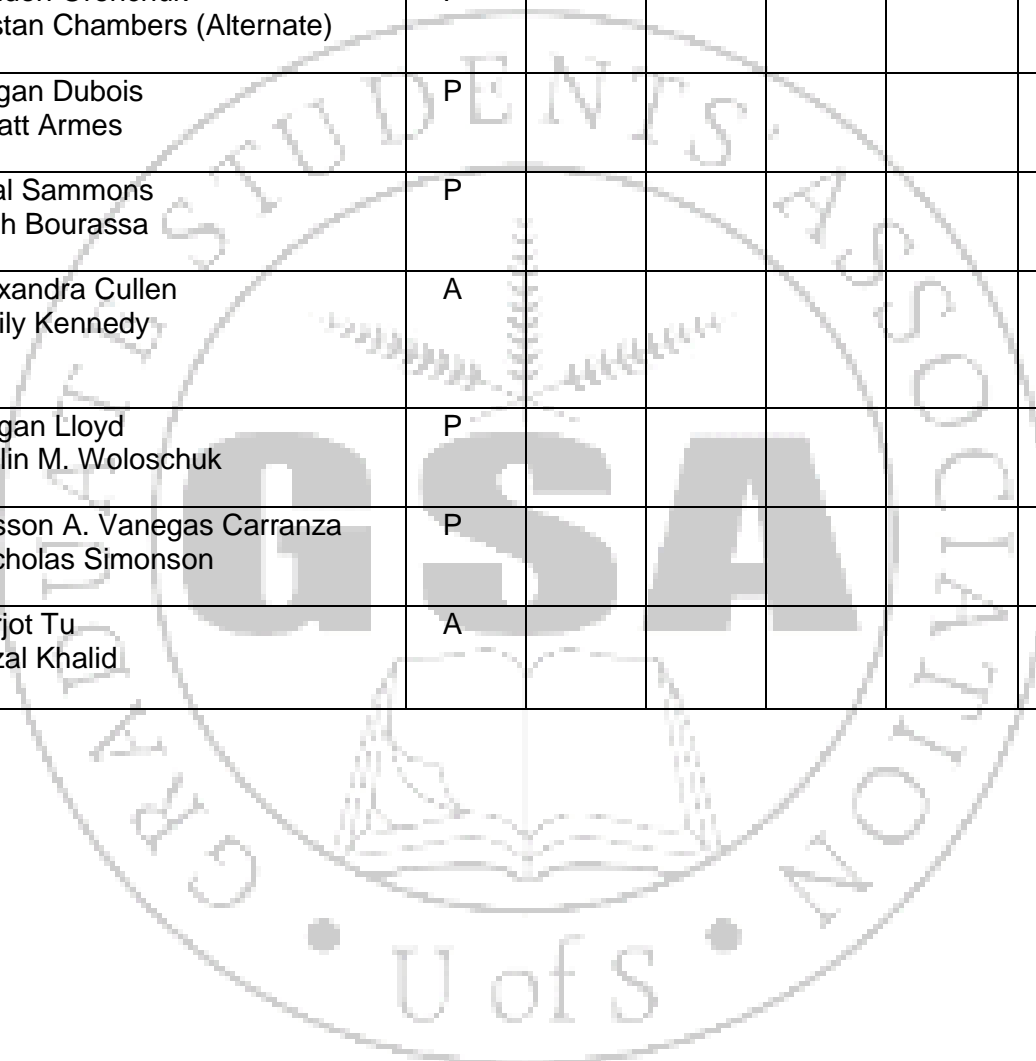
Abstention: 0

The motion to adjourn the meeting was approved by the majority of the council members.

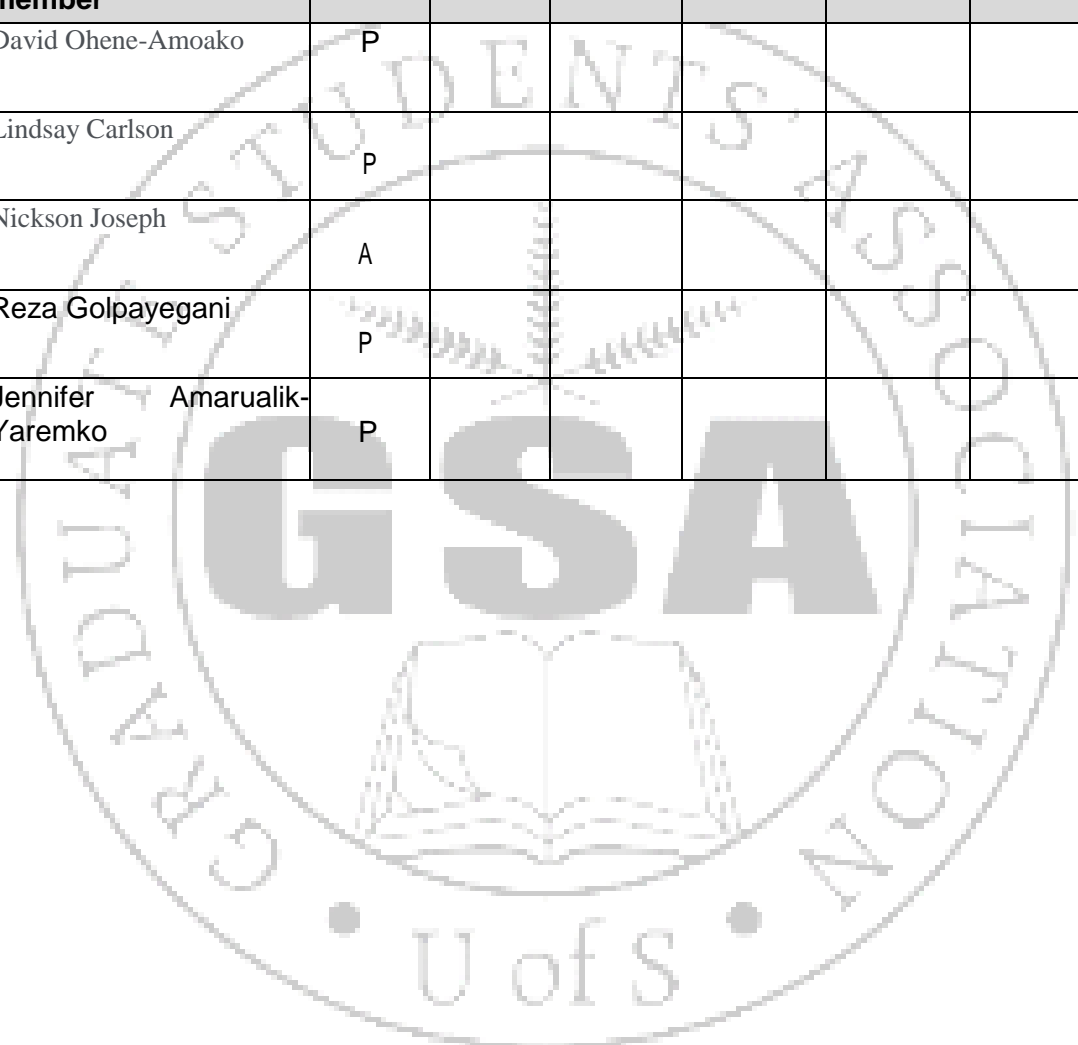


Engineering Graduate Community Council (EGCC) – Biomedical	Blessing Ekwueme	A								
Engineering Graduate Community Council (EGCC) – Chemical	Maliheh Heravi Ehsan Samimi Sohrforozani (Alternate)	A								
Engineering Graduate Community Council (EGCC) – Civil, Geological & Environmental	Ehsan Samimi Sohrforozani Corwyn Shomachuk (Alternate)	A								
Engineering Graduate Community Council (EGCC) – Electrical & Computer	Mohammad Salimi Hossein Nezhadian (Alternate)	A								
Engineering Graduate Community Council (EGCC) – Mechanical	Siddhartha Gollamudi Kathryn Avery (Alternate)	P								
English Course Council	Parastoo Tahmasbi Gwen Rose (Alternate)	P								
Geography & Planning Graduate Council	Emily Ireland Prakash Sapkota (Alternate)	P								
Kinesiology Graduate Student Council	Kevin Mageto Karissa Johnson (Alternate)	A								
Nursing Graduate Student Association (NGSA)	Jordan Sherstobitoff Catherine Lavigne Sarah Karwacki Solie (Alternate) Geneveave Barbo (Alternate)	P								
Plant Science	Sainey Ceesay Suma Ghosh- Alternate	P								
Physical Therapy Student Society (PTSS)	Tyler Blanchette Carter Frerichs (Alternate)	A								
SENSSA	Chelsea Ohenewaa Nyarko Aisha Adelah (Alternate)	P								
School of Public Health (SPHSA)	Somayeh Abdi Jacyn Edwards Ahmed Muftah (Alternate)	A								

Sociology GSA	Meaghan Boily Leah Houseman (Alternate) Kayla Arisman (Alternate)	P								
Soil Science Graduate Student Association	Landon Orenchuk Tristan Chambers (Alternate)	P								
Animal and Poultry Science GSA	Megan Dubois Wyatt Armes	P								
ARE Graduate Student Society	Koal Sammons Josh Bourassa	P								
Toxicology Graduate Student Association (TGSA) Academic Councilor	Alexandra Cullen Emily Kennedy	A								
History Graduate Student Association	Kiegan Lloyd Catlin M. Woloschuk	P								
Physics & Engineering Physics (PEGASUS)	Jeisson A. Vanegas Carranza Nicholas Simonson	P								
Johnson Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy Student Association	Harjot Tu Bazal Khalid	A								



Executive member	Name of executive member	Jun 2024	July 2024	Aug 2024	Sep 2024	Oct 2024	Nov 2024	Dec 2024	Jan 2025	Feb 2025
Exec. President	David Ohene-Amoako	P								
Exec. VP Finance and Operations	Lindsay Carlson	P								
Exec. VP Academic and Student Affairs	Nicksen Joseph	A								
Exec. VP External Affairs	Reza Golpayegani	P								
Exec. VP Indigenous Engagement	Jennifer Amarualik-Yaremko	P								





I acknowledge that I live and work on Treaty 6 Territory and the homeland of the Métis. I pay my respect to the First Nations and Métis ancestors of this place and reaffirm our relationship with one another.

GSA Meetings on May 15 and 28, 2023

Time: 5:00 pm to 7:00 pm

Attendance: David Ohene-Amoako, Lindsay Carlson, Nickson Joseph, Jennifer Amarualik-Yaremko, Reza Golpayegani

Regret: None

Guest: None

All of these actions were approved by all executives.

President:

1. Asked Everyone to introduce themselves briefly.
2. Asked the VP External to create a WhatsApp group for the executives.
3. Discussed the meetings that the executives have to attend.
4. Discussed executives meetings and all executives agreed to attend biweekly meetings until September and after that time executives will attend monthly meetings.
5. Supporting cultural diversity with ceremonies to show each country's culture.
6. Scheduling the next meeting with HGSA and Ehsan Moradi.
7. Nickson should represent GSA on the governance committee so that we can have a voting right.
8. Proposed to celebrate 40th Anniversary of GSA in late Nov 24.
9. Free coffee/tea is always available at GSA Commons.
10. Free bread is available every Friday.

11. Discussed asking the university to let students pay the tuition in three installments.

VP Finance:

1. Was absent from the first meeting of May.
2. Paying Recording Secretary: decided to pay her for 8 hours.
 - a. The Recording Secretary requested to be paid for 8 hours this month because of AGM of GSA was over 3 hours long which was approved by the executive board.
3. Addressing CFOAPAL payments.
4. Discussed bursary committee issue.
5. Bookkeeping firm meeting results.
6. Is responsible for coordinating the Graduate Research Conference and Holiday Hangout.
7. Would try to make applying for need-based bursaries easier so that students have to submit tuition reports and unofficial transcripts in order to prevent students from paying \$10 for a confirmation of Enrollment letter.

VP Academic:

1. Discussed two students who have requested financial support from GSA.
 - a. One from Education College (Problems with supervisor) asked for financial aid for the month.
 - b. Master's student defense was delayed due to being accused of plagiarism and asked for financial assistance for the extended term.
2. Wants to create a clear way to convey messages to graduate students.
3. Research Newsletter through GSA.
 - a. Committee to filter out the best articles.
4. Proposed Orientation Sept starting at 10 am. (Date TBD)
5. Proposed Creating Graduate Student Newsletter:
 - a. Publish the best articles submitted.
 - b. Should create a Committee for finding articles.
 - c. should have a small award of ~ \$100-200 per selected article.

VP Indigenous:

1. Intends to work with OVPIE to increase the transparency of identity verification processes.
2. Proposed finalizing GSA's budget for this fiscal year.
3. Proposed Wanuskewin trip for Executives board.

VP External:

1. Social Media Update:
 - a. Already got access to GSA's Instagram account which is connected to our Facebook page.
 - b. Currently, we don't have access to our Facebook account but our Instagram is connected to our FB page so whatever we share on the Instagram account automatically becomes shared on our FB.
 - c. Previous executives did not have access to our LinkedIn page and our Twitter (X). The passwords for our FB, LinkedIn, and Twitter are lost and we don't have access to them anymore.
2. Request for a bus pass for spring and summer terms.
3. Request for domestic Tuition for thesis-based masters students.
4. Arrived 44 minutes late for the second meeting.



I acknowledge that I live and work on Treaty 6 Territory and the homeland of the Métis. I pay my respect to the First Nations and Métis ancestors of this place and reaffirm our relationship with one another.

GSA Meetings on June 3 and 19, 2024

Time: 5:00 pm to 7:00 pm

Attendance: David Ohene-Amoako, Lindsay Carlson, Nickson Joseph, Jennifer Amarualik-Yaremko, Reza Golpayegani

Regret: None

Guest: None

All executives approved all of these actions.

President:

1. Proposed to have an established meeting time for Executives and all agreed to have biweekly meetings until September. (Every other Wednesday at 5 PM)
2. Proposed to put a message from the president on our social media.
3. Proposed to form a committee of executives to investigate the question of the office manager salary, specifically who office manager is technically employed by, whose jurisdiction salary changes are under, and appropriate market value for the position.
4. Proposed the reach out to all GSA representatives from all academic councils to introduce new executives and hopefully promote good communication and collaboration.
5. Missed the second meeting in June.

VP Finance:

1. Proposed to post information about student rights and best practices for conflict resolution in addition to student-supervisor agreement on the GSA website (in response to a student inquiry).
2. Proposed a list of best practices for organizing GSA files and information to improve efficiency within current executives and promote smoother transition to future executives.
3. Provided an update on the status of budget, including a few line items being investigated re: whether they are needed anymore. In general, the budget has not been changed since ~2020 and a number of items are now defunct, most actual budget values need to be updated.
4. Proposed to present and approve AGM minutes in the June council meeting. Proposed to get all 2023-2024 executive meeting minutes updated on the website.
5. Reported to the executive board results of early investigation into issue of office manager salary. Though office manager is paid through Usask, GSA pays the salary via CFOAPAL and is entirely responsible for hiring/salary decisions according to Director of Financial Operations at Usask.
6. Suggested that it may be good to complete an annual performance review before renewing Paul's contract, considering a salary increase.

VP Academic:

1. Discussed an initiative from a Ph.D. student whose supervisor has retired and his new supervisor was delaying his defense without a rational reason.
2. Proposed to meet with GSA chair and Recording secretary before June council meeting.
3. Discussed giving GSA Membership to graduate students of Affiliated Colleges.

VP Indigenous:

1. Updated executive board with key points from her meeting with Angela Jaime.
2. Discussed her plan for an executive board trip to Wanuskewin.
3. Proposed to meet with Abbas Fazel (Previous VP External) about meeting minutes.

VP External:

1. Discussed access to GSA's social media:
 - a. To this date (June 3rd), we do not have access to GSA's Facebook and LinkedIn.
 - b. It seems like the previous executives did not have access to these accounts as well.
2. Requested to put a section on top of next GSA's newsletter and ask graduate students to follow our social media.
3. June 19th update: All of our Social Media Passwords are secured in VP External's inbox according to the executive board discussion. (Including Instagram, Facebook, Twitter (X), LinkedIn, and GSA's Gmail account for executives.)
4. Reported to the executive board about the GSA Handbook submission process and assured everyone that it would be submitted before June 21st.
5. Shared Meeting minutes files that he received from the previous VP External.



We acknowledge that we live and work on Treaty 6 Territory and the homeland of the Métis. We pay our respect to the First Nations and Métis ancestors of this place and reaffirm our relationship with one another.

GSA Meetings on July 3, 17, and 31, 2024

Time: 5:00 pm to 7:00 pm

Attendance: David Ohene-Amoako, Lindsay Carlson, Nickson Joseph, Jennifer Amarualik-Yaremko, Reza Golpayegani

Regret: None

Guest: None

All executives approved all of these actions.

President:

1. Requesting that Nickson the VP of Student Affairs organize a well-engaging orientation for the fall and winter terms, varied from the previous year.
2. Appreciated how the GSA chair and GSA Recording Secretary coordinated the council meeting.
3. Updated executives on the results of his meeting with university authorities about making tuition payments in three installments.
4. Informed the executives of the discussion with the CGPS dean on the daycare establishment which is still in progress and seeking their support in executing that task.
5. Discussed an upcoming conference in the US which he is still following up to see how beneficial to GSA and keep executives updated.

6. College of Agriculture has contacted GSA regarding finding a GSA representative (can be a general member, need not be an executive) to represent graduate students on a committee for the College of Agriculture and Bioresources Dean Review Committee. David with Nickson will contact the GSA Agriculture Council members and ask them to select a student for this task.
7. Discussed the Canadian Federation of Students Conference in Toronto October 6-11.
 - a. Participating is free but flight is at GSA cost.
 - b. Will discuss who will attend later with more details.
8. Provided a recap of GSA Volunteer Recruitment events for executives who could not attend.
 - a. Jen asked what kind of duties these volunteers would be responsible for.
 - b. Asked Reza to create a Whatsapp group for all GSA volunteers.
9. Updated executive board about the applications of new committee members.
10. Reported to the executive board about the CFS Rise conference.
11. suggested making GSA a safe environment for each other by resolving the issues in a professional way.

VP Finance:

1. GSA Executives worked together to contact all GSA council representatives to introduce ourselves and open a line of communication prior to the first council meeting. Lindsay did not receive any responses; and inquired whether any council members replied to other executives' emails. No one received a reply, but council meeting attendance was good.
2. Updated executive board about her meeting with ISSAC about GSA's funding of Travel Awards.
 - a. Lindsay had received complaints from students that they applied for the award and never heard back. However, the website clearly states that only successful applicants will be contacted. Lindsay met with Bassey Bassey of ISSAC, who

shared the following data regarding the dispersal of travel award funding:

Fiscal Year	Number of Grad Students	Amount Paid
May 2021 - Apr 2022	44	\$12,712.92
May 2022 - Apr 2023	200	\$75,039.11
May 2023 - Apr 2024	164	\$65,326.94

- b. Bassey also stated that ISSAC is a few months behind in processing applications, so funding in winter 2024 was delayed. Lindsay asked that 1) ISSAC would contact all applicants to let them know the status of their funding (denied), 2) ISSAC provide better criteria regarding how students are selected for funding (denied). Based on the meeting however, applications are a first-come, first-served basis, and all eligible applicants will be funded until all funds are used.
 - c. Bassey said that nearly half of travel awards are to graduate students, and GSA's entire \$8,500 contribution goes to graduate students.
 - d. Bassey noted that ISSAC plans to increase the amount of funds provided to each student due to inflation (current maximum funding is \$500 for international trips).
3. During the meeting with ISSAC, Lindsay learned that the 2023-2024 GSA Executives failed to remit the budgeted \$8,500 in travel award funding to ISSAC (typically paid at the beginning of fiscal year). Lindsay proposed that GSA pay ISSAC \$17,000 for 2023-2024 and 2024-2025 to fund graduate student travel awards. All executives approved and a cheque will be issued.
 4. Lindsay investigated the GSA contribution to the Crisis Financial Aid program, given that the travel award payment was not made last year. This contribution was made for 2023-2024, and Frank Kusch (Crisis Aid Program Manager) thanks GSA for the support. Frank shared that ~\$600,000 in funds are provided each year, with graduate students receiving approximately half of that total. Lindsay proposed increasing the budget allocation to this program from \$7500 to

\$10000, given the increasing need/economic situation and GSA's inability to house its own crisis financial aid program.

5. Updated executives on efforts to rectify academic council funding for two groups who did not receive their funding last year.
6. Updated executive board about the office manager's salary review process - Lindsay, Jen, and David met with Steve Laycock Compensation Manager in the HR Department at USask. He provided data from the Willis Towers Watson Salary Benchmarking Survey to give us a median and range of Office Manager and Senior Office Manager Salaries across Canada and within Saskatchewan.
7. Reported that the office manager is going to delay his vacation because coordinators are not ready to take charge of all office duties. Paul will work remotely for most of July, only coming into the office when needed, and coordinators will staff the Commons and do daily tasks assigned by Paul.
8. GSA financials overview, discussion of proposed budget changes (updated proposed budget emailed to all executives last week). Major budget item changes include:
 - a. Realistic Commons income (\$10K decrease from the previous budget, but Commons has not brought in \$30K revenue in as many years as Lindsay can tell).
 - b. Removing defunct revenue sources (Cold Beverage Agreement, Notary Service... now an expense code)
 - c. Adding investment and interest income code
 - d. Increasing crisis financial aid contribution to \$10,000
 - e. Increasing funding for academic councils (number based on max possible funding with funding increased to \$6/member [plan to propose in policy/bylaw committee meeting] and current membership values plus some buffer - this value should be reassessed annually).
 - f. Increasing budget allocation for the Gala, as more is typically spent than fundraised.
 - g. Decreasing funding allocated to frequently underspent budget lines (postage, commons coffee, and tea, legal expenses) based on the last 5 years' audit.

- h. Inflation-based increase to the coordinator, chair, recording secretary, and executive fees based on time since the last change.
 - i. Salary increase requested by Paul, final value to be decided by executives at future meetings.
- 9. Lindsay has only received responses from 1 current budget committee member and 2 current bursary selection committee members despite numerous attempts to contact them. Proposed to send the PAWS announcement advertising search for committee members earlier than typical in order to fill these positions before necessary August meetings. All executives agreed.
- 10. Updated executives on the status of the digitization process; direct deposit for coordinators, recording secretary, chair, and executives will be available by the end of July. Wire transfers to Academic Councils, organizations like the Canadian Federation of Students, and Studentcare will be available shortly thereafter.
- 11. Asked to update council meeting dates on the GSA website, as they are not correct.
- 12. Absent the last meeting of July due to field work travel.

VP Academic:

- 1. Discussed the ratification process for council members and changes for this year.
 - a. All ratifications in September rather than scattered throughout the year
 - b. Requirement to submit departmental confirmation of council membership totals
- 2. Update on Fall Orientation..
 - a. The T-shirts will be delivered on July 18.
 - b. Suggestions regarding inviting speakers.
- 3. Asked other executives to give him feedback about his proposed document for Fall Orientation.
- 4. Proposed to meet students at the residence regarding Souris Hall issues.

5. The university is seeking graduate student representation on a committee focused on updating academic misconduct regulations in consideration of AI developments.
 - a. We will suggest a student for that committee
 - i. Two regular GSA members were put forward as possible representatives by Nickson and Lindsay
6. Membership of Grad students from affiliated colleges (i.e., St Thomas More College).
 - a. Follow-up email: two students want to join GSA but the University needs to provide NSID or alternative.
7. Fall Orientation schedule and guest update:
 - a. List of speakers
 - i. All executives will give a speech and introduce themselves.
 - ii. Guest speaker last year was Debby Dean of CGPS.
 - iii. ISSAC representative.
 - iv. USASK Library representative (Katty Ganar was suggested)
 - v. Gordon Oaks Center representative (lari delorm)
 - b. Second section: Information session
 - i. Career services
 - ii. Student Care
 - iii. Student affairs and outreach (Jordan Heartshorn suggested by Reza)
 - c. Departmental Council should also be included (By David)
 - d. The event ends with a launch.
8. GSA 40th Anniversary souvenirs were not discussed so far.
 - a. The executive board decided to put a hold on this matter.

VP Indigenous:

1. Reported to the executive board about her meeting with authorities at the University to discuss deybwewin policy.
2. Discussed executive board and ISSAC trips to Wanuskewin.
3. Mentioned the GSA executive positions are all underfunded for what is expected of us and also do not have enough discretionary funds.

The VP Indigenous Engagement position is especially difficult given other burdens on Indigenous students

4. Proposed that we should improve the GSA onboarding process as we have all been working very hard to find information that should already be easily available to us.
5. Housing problems in the dorms- could help advocate with Nickson for better conditions and a better relationship between GSA, Housing management, residents, and other stakeholders.
 - a. Pest problems in the dorms.
 - b. Ask Consumer Services to find out what they can do.
 - c. We will talk to USSU and Grad students in Souris Hall.
6. Brought up the issue of students asking GSA to make statements on non-local/political issues, and asked the executives to come to an agreement on what should be handled.
 - a. Executives agreed that GSA is an apolitical organization, so it is not necessarily in our mission to be making political statements. This is a slippery slope that may not be in our best interest to do this, because we don't always have a complete understanding of the situation, and people with opposing views may both ask us to make statements.
 - b. Jen suggested that the GSA can promote or support grassroots movements by students if there is a large subset of GSA members participating.
 - c. David suggested that we write a letter of support addressed to the student group who recently contacted us, rather than make a statement about the issue directly.
7. Updated executive board on Souris Hall pests and how they're dealing with it.
 - a. The problem was resolved.
 - b. Suggested to track Staff attitude in consumer services.
8. Suggested beginning a big advertising campaign of some kind to raise awareness about pests with the School of Public Health, MN-S, GSA, USSU, etc.
9. Discussed Faculty In Residence meeting:

- a. Continue the relationship with faculty members at the residence.
- b. Executives are supposed to text Jen for attendance.

VP External:

1. Missed the first meeting in July.
2. Proposed providing more protection for Graduate students' funding through GSA and CGPS.
 - a. Making a student-supervisor agreement an obligation.
3. Moved to support One Health Conference Sponsorship on November 23, and all executives approved.
4. Discussed Pac Representative for GSA with Lauren Heinz.
5. Move to approve meeting minutes of May and June 2024.
6. Suggested to Replace the whiteboard in the executive office with a display.
 - a. Replace it with a TV and HDMI cable on the main desk (All approved) Reza will send an email to Paul to buy it.
7. Proposed adopting a structured approach to managing sponsorships within GSA.



Report from the President (Spring and Summer Council Meeting) Spring and Fall

August 28, 2024

Dear Council Members,

I highlight the GSA president's activity report for the spring and summer seasons below.

GSA Executive meetings. (July 3, 17, 31, /August 07, 16, 2024)

There were five executive meetings held during the spring and summer seasons, including one emergency meeting. The Graduate Students' Association (GSA) needs to address numerous issues to ensure a strong foundation for the future, as evidenced by the frequency of these meetings. These meetings focused on the GSA's welfare and sustainability.

Meeting with the Dean of CGPS in July and August of 2024.

The GSA president met twice in succession with the Dean of the College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (CGPS) to discuss how to enhance the GSA's visibility, address graduate students' needs, and explore the possibility of establishing a daycare facility on campus for nursing mothers. The discussions also included the option of paying tuition in installments. Regarding tuition, the dean directed the president to the appropriate office that could help. Work is currently in progress.

Meeting with Volunteers (July 15)

The GSA extends its gratitude to all volunteers for their commitment to serving the association. We briefed the volunteers on their expected duties and how we expect them to contribute as part of the team.

Pests in Residence Control (July 26)

The Vice President of Indigenous Engagement led this agenda, which aimed to address complaints from some GSA members. The goal is to enhance the visibility of the student association within the residences, ensuring timely access to information and prompt attention to issues. The initiative is currently in progress.

Canadian Federation of Students RISE Conference (July 29-31, 2024)

The president represented USASK at the CFS Racialised and Indigenous Students Engagement Conference in Huntsville, Ontario. The event featured renowned speakers who inspired students by emphasising the importance of student advocacy and encouraging greater involvement in student activities.

GSA and USSU meeting (August 22, 2024)

The GSA president met with the USSU president and their manager to discuss renewing the existing UPASS agreement and reviewing UFood services, given the significant increase in patrons of the Ufood.

Finally, the GSA engaged and planned during spring and summer. From frequent executive meetings to advocating for student needs with university leadership, the GSA has worked to improve the graduate student experience. The president's participation in national conferences and engagement with other student bodies supports the association's commitment to inclusiveness and support. Progress done during this phase lays down the foundation for future projects and GSA growth.

Thank you

David Ohene-Amoako

GSA President

DO-A



Report from the VP External (August 2024 Council Meeting)

1) Executive Meeting Minutes

The minutes for the meetings held in May, June, and July have been successfully posted on the GSA website. Additionally, they have been shared with the GSA Chair for review and reference.

2) Handbooks

On August 20, I received an email from Patricia Navidat confirming that the handbooks will be shipped during the upcoming week.

3) GSA Representative in PAC

The GSA had a meeting with the PAC on August 7th. During this meeting, the GSA Executive Board decided to seek a volunteer to represent the GSA in PAC activities. Parsa Nateghi, a master's student in Public Health, has volunteered for this role. Parsa will attend the PAC's monthly meetings, assist in organizing sports activities, and report back to the GSA Executive Board.

Meetings Attended

7/3/2024	Executive Meeting
7/17/2024	Executive Meeting
7/30/2024	Meeting with Susan Bens at Gwenna Moss Centre (Student Guidelines for GenAI)
7/31/2024	Executive Meeting
8/7/2024	Meeting with PAC
8/7/2024	Executive Meeting
8/16/2024	Executive Retreat

Thanks,

Reza Golpayegani

He/Him

Vice-President of External Affairs

M.Sc. Student, Department of Computer Science

University of Saskatchewan

Graduate Students' Association (GSA)

BE WHAT THE WORLD NEEDS

Email: gsa.external@usask.ca | Web: gsa.usask.ca

Twitter: [GSA_USask](https://twitter.com/GSA_USask) Instagram: [GSA_Usask](https://www.instagram.com/GSA_Usask)

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



Report from the VP Academic and Student Affairs (August 2024 Council Meeting)

Dear GSA Councilors,

I am writing to provide you with an update on my July and August activities.

- **GSA FALL ORIENTATION - 2024**

Given below is an update on the event:

1. **Event Date & Venue:** The Fall Orientation for incoming graduate students is scheduled for September 12, 2024, starting at 9 AM at the GSA Commons, located in the Emmanuel & St. Chad Building on College Drive.
2. **Guest Speaker:** Dr. Debby Burshtyn, Dean of CGPS, will be the guest speaker for the orientation, offering valuable insights to new graduate students.
3. **Program Highlights:** The event will include a welcome session for new graduate students, an information session, and the distribution of free GSA 2024 t-shirts to all new attendees. A free lunch will also be provided to all invitees.
4. **Registration:** A QR code has been included on the event flyer for easy registration, encouraging students to sign up in advance for the orientation.

- **GSA-CGPS NEED BASED BURSARY SELECTION COMMITTEE**

As the GSA VP Academic and Student Affairs I was part of the Bursary selection committee. Nearly all of the points mentioned below are also mentioned in the VP Finance and Operations' report. Here are the condensed points:

1. **Extended Application Deadline & New Committee Formation:** The bursary application deadline was extended to July 28, and a new Bursary Selection Committee was formed, with four eligible members joining. They reviewed 159 applications on August 7, leading to the distribution of bursaries to 32 top applicants.

2. Engagement Challenges & Early Call for Committee Members: Due to low initial engagement, an early call for standing committee members was made, leading to a more effective committee formation and smoother application review process.

3. Rubric Revisions & Future Encouragement: Serious revisions to the rubric are being considered to ensure bursaries reach the right applicants. Unsuccessful candidates are encouraged to apply again in the fall.

- SENS MASTERS' STUDENTS ISSUE RESOLVED

1. Course Offering Issue: Second-year students in the Master of Regenerative Sustainability Program faced issues with course offerings, being asked to retake similar courses instead of new ones and being wait-listed for courses they wished to take this fall due to poor planning.

2. Immediate Intervention: As a GSA executive, I intervened, working closely with CGPS and other executives to resolve the issue. We successfully had the wait-list status changed to 'registered' status, allowing students to enroll in their desired courses.

3. Long-Term Assurance: Our discussions with the School of Environment and Sustainability were productive, leading to an assurance from the director that future program planning will be improved to better serve the needs of graduate students.

- PARTICIPATION IN UNIVERSITY WELCOME EVENTS

1. Active GSA Participation in USASK Welcome Events: The GSA is actively engaging in key USASK welcome events, including JumpStart organized by the University Library and the Master of Physical Therapy (M.P.T.) program, to support and welcome new students.

2. Representation at Campus Expo: We are proudly representing the GSA at the Campus Expo alongside CGPS and other campus partners, ensuring that graduate students feel welcomed and informed as they begin their journey at USASK.



Report from the VP Finance and Operations (August 2024 Council Meeting)

Dear GSA Councilors,

I am writing to provide you with an update on my July and August activities as the Vice-President Finance and Operations.

1) GSA-CGPS spring/summer bursary update

The GSA-CGPS Spring/Summer Bursary opened on May 31 and was originally scheduled to close June 23, but the application deadline was extended to July 28. The Bursary Selection Committee was originally contacted in early June to schedule a July meeting, but only one member replied to a series of three emails. Upon extending the deadline, I again requested for the committee to provide their availability for August. I only received responses from two people, one of whom was unavailable to meet. Given the lack of engagement from the committee, the executives voted to open the call for standing committee members earlier than typical (usually done in September). The call for standing committee members was sent via PAWS announcements on July 19th to stay open until August 18th. All four eligible members who expressed interest in the Bursary Selection Committee were contacted in late July, and three replied and agreed to begin their service early. These members underwent orientation, then assisted with the review of spring/summer bursary applications on August 7. We received 159 applications to the spring/summer bursary call, including a number of incomplete and duplicate applications, as well as ineligible individuals (had received a bursary in the previous two calls). CGPS validated enrolment status for the top applicants, so a Confirmation of Enrolment was not requested. Successful applicants were notified on August 12. Bursaries in the amount of \$1,000 were distributed to the top 32 applicants by cheque during this call. The GSA Executives would like to thank the Bursary Selection Committee for their assistance with reviewing the applications and CGPS for their contribution to the bursary fund and assistance with validating enrolment. We hope that these bursaries provide financial relief for students during these challenging times, and we encourage unsuccessful applicants to apply in the fall.

2) Investigating budget items and GSA contributions

In preparing the 2024-2025 budget, I have been investigating several budget items that are now defunct or require significant revisions. For example, the University of Saskatchewan Cold Beverage Agreement and Notary Services have not provided the GSA with revenue for a few years, but both have still been listed in the budget as a revenue source. Similarly, there are expense lines not needed and should be removed, such as the ThinkGrad membership (organization no longer active). Additionally, I am working to analyze previous years' expenditures to gain a better understanding of how well the budget reflects actual spending, to best tailor the budget to GSA's mission and objectives. One of my primary objectives is to

increase funding support for Academic Councils, as I feel the historical rates are insufficient in the current economy. Changes are being made to support this in the current budget, if approved by the Budget and Finance Committee, but the Governance Committee also must be convened to make these changes official. Finally, I am working with managers of these programs to understand 1) how GSA's contribution to the Travel Award, the Crisis Financial Aid Program, and USSU Food Bank are used (ensure they are targeted to support graduate students only), 2) rectify contributions which were not made to these programs during the last fiscal year, and 3) evaluate any necessary changes to program contributions for the forthcoming budget.

Meetings Attended

7/3/2024	Executive Meeting
7/10/2024	HR/Market Analysis Meeting
7/10/2024	Digitalization Meeting
7/17/2024	Executive Meeting
8/7/2024	Bursary Selection Committee Meeting
8/7/2024	Executive Meeting
8/16/2024	Executive Retreat

Lindsay G. Carlson (she/her)

VP Finance and Operations, Graduate Students' Association (GSA)

PhD Student, Department of Biology

University of Saskatchewan

Email: gsa.fin@usask.ca | Web: gsa.usask.ca

Twitter: [GSA_USask](https://twitter.com/GSA_USask) Instagram: [GSA_Usask](https://www.instagram.com/GSA_Usask)

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