



Graduate Students' Association

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 Executives Meetings on July 14 and 25, 2025

Time: 5:00 PM to 7:00 PM

Attendance: Palash Roy, Lindsay Carlson, Mandela Alema, Biraj Saha

Guests:

All executives approved all of these actions.

President

1. First Meeting as President

In his first meeting as president following his election in the by-election, Palash invited all executives to share their expectations for the upcoming term and discuss the changes they hoped to implement.

2. Executive Conduct Expectations

Palash outlined his expectations for executive conduct, including:

- All emails should be replied to within 48 hours.
- If an immediate comment or decision is not possible, executives should at least respond within that time frame, indicating when a follow-up response will be provided.

3. Graduate Student Feature Initiative

Palash proposed a new initiative to feature graduate students in the GSA newsletter, highlighting their research achievements and personal graduate life experiences. He also suggested creating a dedicated “News” page on the GSA website to post regular updates. The executive team unanimously supported the idea. Additionally, Palash recommended enhancing social media engagement by sharing graduate student stories and organizing interactive activities, such as “Instagram Takeovers,” where students document and share a day in their life through posts and stories on the GSA’s Instagram account.

4. VP Indigenous Position

Palash addressed the ongoing vacancy in the VP Indigenous position. As per interim president David’s direction, VP External Biraj will continue to fulfill these duties until the role is filled. The executive team will actively work to recruit a candidate for the VP Indigenous position.

5. U-Pass Program Engagement

Palash discussed the need to engage with Saskatoon Transit to address challenges related to the U-Pass program during the spring and summer terms. All agreed that VP External should initiate the contact, as it falls under his portfolio.

6. Fall Orientation Date

The Executive Board confirmed that the Fall Orientation will be held on September 10, 2025, to maximize attendance before the term becomes busy and to encourage guest participation. As Palash will be away during the event, an official video recording of his welcome address will be prepared in advance.

- Palash acknowledged Mandela's suggestion to order food and reviewed the approach taken in previous years. He stated that if the team agrees to proceed with ordering food instead of hosting a BBQ, he will contact some of his known vendors to explore low-cost options based on his previous experience organizing similar events.
- Palash agreed that a brief opening session should be held before the orientation begins at the booth, serving as a short inaugural address to officially kick off the event.
- After reviewing the photographer's quote, Palash noted that the cost was excessively high and suggested exploring alternative options, with the possibility of dropping the idea altogether. The final decision will be made by VP Academics, Mandela.

Vice-President Finance

1. Handbook/Calendar Printing

- Decision made to design from scratch rather than purchasing the typical handbooks from CFS due to a lack of previous uptake by students, and wanting to provide a more customized/unique product.
- In conjunction with the calendar, GSA will host a photo contest and use student photos/art/research images to make the calendar even more relevant to USask students and to provide an opportunity for students to be recognized for their work. The board approved \$600 total to support this contest (from the handbook budget) so that each winner (one for each of the 12 months) will receive a \$50 cash award. Lindsay wrote advertisements for the contest in the newsletter and via a separate PAWS announcement.
- The calendar will also include a section with information about GSA and GSA services. The Health and Dental Plan will have its own page. Studentcare will design the graphics based on the brochure they are creating for this year. Lindsay asked Biraj to fundraise for this project from previous sponsors (Studentcare, CFS, and CGPS).
- The final number of copies is to be determined after a final quote is received. GSA will purchase the maximum possible while staying within budget. Calendars will be ready to be distributed at the Orientation event.

2. T-Shirt Order for Orientation

- Lindsay explained that t-shirts containing any USask logo or using “University of Saskatchewan” or “Usask” can ONLY be purchased through the bookstore due to copyright.
- Last year’s cost per shirt was: \$15.79, and GSA had to place a second order for winter orientation as the most popular sizes (S, M, and L) ran out during fall orientation. Lindsay advised that GSA should purchase >300 (order number from last year), and reconsider the sizing distribution.
- Lindsay reached out to the bookstore to get design mock-ups and quotes for this year’s shirts. A new design in a grey color was selected as the primary option, with a request for mockups showing additional color variants.
- The board selected the final design, and the bookstore informed Lindsay that the cost for this shirt would be less than last year (\$9.50 per shirt), so the board approved purchasing 400 shirts, with an emphasis on most-requested sizes (S, M, L) given that many shirts in XL, 2XL from last year remain and could be distributed if we run out of this year’s design in those sizes.

3. Fall Orientation Planning

- Date confirmed: **September 10, 2025.**
- Suggested ideas include BBQ outside the GSA Commons with a menu to include vegetarian/vegan options, halal, and gluten-free variants.
- Event promotion to include posters, departmental announcements, campus TV ads, and social media posts]
- Suggested booth format rather than “speeches” as were done in previous years. Students need to be able to drop in, and do not want to commit a whole day to Orientation.
- From the event survey, free professional headshots were the most popular event type. Suggested free professional headshots could be offered at the entrance of GSA Commons in conjunction with the orientation event, but VPAS should explore scheduling and budget to determine if this is possible.

4. Bangladeshi Students Association Event Funding Request

- Reviewed and discussed the funding request.
- Lindsay explained the ratified group event funding process to the Board.
- Other executives raised questions about the event that were not provided in the application, so BSA was contacted for further information before a decision was made.
- All approved this request via email after further information was obtained.

5. Duties in the absence of the GSA President during the inquiry into the election

- Lindsay will be granted access to gsa.pres@usask.ca email account during the absence of the president during the inquiry into the election issues, and will keep up with any duties of that office, such as meeting attendance, response to student inquiries, preparing monthly newsletters, and scheduling executive meetings as per the bylaws.

Vice-President Academic and Student Affairs

1. Proposed and coordinated the **event format** for Fall Orientation, including:
 - **Talk Session** (10–15 minute presentations) from the GSA, key guests, and partner organizations (e.g., ALUMO, CFS).
 - **Booth Session** to follow, allowing attendees to interact with various groups and services.
2. Recommended ordering food from an **external vendor** instead of hosting a BBQ at the GSA Commons due to:
 - Time constraints.
 - Food safety and liability concerns.
 - Quality control and logistics.
 - Avoiding stress and burnout for volunteers.
3. Suggested including **interactive engagement activities** such as a Bingo game and a Photo Session during the Booth Session to keep the event lively and encourage participation.

Vice-President External Affairs

1. Supported the event format and committed to promoting Fall Orientation through GSA's social media channels to ensure high attendance and engagement.
2. Will coordinate with partner organizations to confirm booth participation and provide promotional materials for the event.