



University of Saskatchewan- Graduate Students' Association  
Wednesday, June 26<sup>th</sup>, 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.**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Page</b>	<b>Action</b>
<b>1. Call to Order</b>		
<b>2. Approval of Agenda</b>	1	<i>Decision</i>
<b>3. Approval of Meeting Minutes</b>		
<b>3.1 Approval of April 30, 2024, Meeting Minutes</b>	2-30	<i>Decision</i>
<b>4. GSA Executives Reports</b>	31-41	
<b>4.1 President's Report</b>		<i>Information</i>
<b>4.2 Vice President External Affairs Report</b>		<i>Information</i>
<b>4.3 Vice President Academic and Student Affairs Report</b>		<i>Information</i>
<b>4.4 Vice President Finance and Operations Report</b>		<i>Information</i>
<b>4.5 Vice President Indigenous Engagement Report</b>		<i>Information</i>
<b>4.6 Questions &amp; Answers</b>		
<b>5. Other Business</b>		<i>Information</i>
<b>6. Adjournment</b>		<i>Decision</i>



University of Saskatchewan  
Graduate Students' Association  
Emergency Annual General Meeting Minutes  
Tuesday, April 30, 2024. **Online 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*

**Chair: Devopriya Tirtho**

**Recording Secretary: Sara Nath**

**1. Call to Order/ Opening Remarks**

The Chair of the council officially welcomed all the graduate students, council members and executives to the meeting, reminding them to be respectful and work constructively for a productive meeting. He expressed hope for a successful event and acknowledged everyone's valued contributions. The meeting was called to order at 5:05 P.M. after the quorum for the meeting had been met. Sara Nath, the Recording Secretary of the Council, compiled the meeting minutes.

**Before Approval**

- The GSA chair explained to council members 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. He further said that all graduate students are allowed to vote, and the majority will get a decision to be passed.

**2. Approval of Agenda**

The chair mentioned that today's agenda was emailed to all council members and asked them to share it with their respective councils. Due to issues with the IT department, the agenda hasn't been uploaded to the website, but the chair has instructed the GSA admin to resolve this. The

chair mentioned that Mr. Abbas shared a screenshot in the chat box indicating that during the website upgrade process, publishing is not possible. This is likely why the agenda hasn't been uploaded to the website. Further, the Chair asked about any amendments to the agenda as circulated via email.

Palash, the acting President of the Computer Science Graduate Council, proposed adding a motion to the meeting's agenda. The motion, which he posted in the chat, is to Address Ethical Issues and GSA Award Policy Violation Concerning GSA Annual GALA Awards Committee and Awardees, moved by the CSGC. Palash, representing the Computer Science Graduate Council, raised concerns about ethical issues and policy violations in the GSA Annual Gala Awards process. He cited several complaints from Computer Science students and the department about the GSA Award Committee's lack of diversity, with approximately 58% of its members from a single ethnic group, suggesting potential bias. He also highlighted that GSA policy (section 13.4.4) requires informing unsuccessful candidates within two weeks after the nomination deadline, which hasn't happened. Additionally, he noted a conflict of interest in the Awards Committee, with some previous committee members who later became GSA executives receiving awards. Palash requested these issues be addressed, emphasizing that they compromise the fairness and integrity of the award process, affecting GSA's reputation and that of the University of Saskatchewan.

*Motion to add Addressing Ethical Issues and GSA Award Policy Violation Concerning GSA Annual GALA Awards Committee and Awardees amend to the agenda of the meeting. (Palash/Pabitra)*

**Carried**

***Yes: 40***

***No: 5***

***Abstention: 1***

The motion to add the item to the agenda was approved by the majority of the graduate students.

Ehsan also had amendment to the agenda. He stated that according to GSA policy and bylaws, any changes to governance documents must be approved by the Governance Committee, which has not met, and there are no meeting minutes. Therefore, any agenda items related to governance changes must be removed from the meeting's agenda. He also noted that budget-related items should be removed because there hasn't been a Budget Committee meeting, nor have budget items been approved. Since this is the last day for the current executives, Ehsan suggested that the incoming executives handle these matters, requesting to remove all governance and budget-related items from the agenda.

*Motion to remove the agenda items related to budget and governance committee from the meeting agenda. (Ehsan/Mostofa)*

*Yes: 28*

*No: 4*

*Abstention: 11*

As the majority of the graduate students voted in favour, the motion to remove the agenda items related to budget and governance committee was approved.

Kayla also had amendments, she noted that agenda items 4.2 to 4.8, and 4.11 to 4.12, have not been reviewed or recommended by the Governance Committee, which means these items need further assessment to determine feasibility. Regarding items 4.9 and 4.10, these are part of ongoing legal cases in the Saskatchewan court system and discussing them in this meeting would be unethical since they are under legal review. Regarding item 4.12, Kayla highlighted that it conflicts with existing bylaws (specifically 2.2.1.11 and 2.1.3.7), which require vacant positions to be filled by current executive members or the President. She suggested that these agenda items should be removed or reworked to ensure compliance with GSA's rules and regulations.

At this point, Arash noted that GSA staff and executives lack Cascade training, an online module that allows users to upload content to the university's website. Without this training, GSA personnel can't update the website, leading to delays in publishing documents. He questioned whether GSA had uploaded documents to IT or if there was a technical issue. Debasish, a former coordinator, added that he had Cascade training and confirmed that the current website could accept uploads. He noted that an executive had raised an IT ticket to upload the agenda, where the IT confirmed that the existing website was functional. Debasish asserted that if someone claimed they couldn't upload content, it was a lie, suggesting the reason for the delay might not be IT-related. Abbas responded to Debasish's comment about website updates, cautioning against using words like "lie" to avoid escalating the conversation. He also asked the chair to control the meeting. He clarified that while the website is under construction, updates might not go live immediately. Abbas invited Debasish to try updating the website to confirm if it was possible, given his previous role as office coordinator. Sristry then shared a screenshot from the previous day, indicating that the IT department stated the website was functional, contradicting Abbas's claim that it was under construction. Abbas replied that the IT department's information was from today, suggesting changes in the website's status. Sristry pointed out that even if the website is under construction today, the agenda should have been uploaded at least 3-5 business days before the meeting, not on the day of the meeting.

Mostofa noted that meeting minutes from the February and March GSA Council meetings were initially on the website but have since been removed. Abbas responded that proof is needed to support this claim. The chair acknowledged the missing meeting minutes and said he would follow up with the GSA Admin and IT department. Mostofa raised concerns about Kayla's suggestion to remove multiple agenda items from 4.2 to 4.13, questioning the purpose of the meeting if most agenda items are removed. He also clarified that his legal notice to Kayla, concerning an apology, was not an ongoing court case, contradicting Kayla's earlier statement. Mostofa argued that the removed agenda items were simply meeting minutes that had been approved and shouldn't be removed, emphasizing the need for transparency and accuracy in recording GSA proceedings. At this point, Abbas again asked the chair to control the meeting. Catherine advised Mostofa not to discuss certain items during the meeting, warning that it was being recorded and could be used against him. Alex suggested in the chat box that the vote on Kayla's proposal to remove agenda items 4.2 through 4.13 should take place before engaging in unscheduled discussions.

Sristy supported Ehsan's suggestion to remove agenda items 4.2 to 4.8 due to the lack of Governance and Budget Committee meetings. However, she believed that agenda items 4.9 to 4.13 should be discussed at the AGM, referring to a sudden decision in a December meeting that led to Mostofa's termination from GSA. Sristy indicated that these items required further discussion and transparency.

Ehsan commented that GSA executives should have read the bylaws to avoid recent issues. Alex asked Ehsan to be respectful, suggesting he was implying that GSA executives had not read them. Ehsan responded that if they had read the bylaws, they would have held the necessary committee meetings. Alex then advised Ehsan to address such concerns privately via email, not in a public chat during the AGM, which is viewable by all attendees.

The chair stated that as required by GSA bylaws, Kayla's motion to remove certain agenda items needed a vote. He asked attendees to remain quiet and cast their votes for or against the motion, or to abstain from voting. The outcome of this vote would determine whether the AGM would proceed with the proposed amendment. During the voting, Mostofa noted that the chair should clearly explain that if the motion is approved, items 4.2 through 4.13 would be removed from the agenda. He emphasized that council members should understand the impact of their vote. Elyse responded, reminding everyone that no discussion is allowed during voting. Abbas suggested that the chair mute people who talk during the voting process, emphasizing the need to control the meeting.

*Motion to recess 4.2-4.13 until a resolution is made via through the right channels of the council meeting. (Kayla/Kiegan)*

**Carried**

***Yes: 21***

***No: 22***

***Abstention: 8***

As the majority of the graduate students opposed, the motion to recess item no. 4.2-4.13 was not approved.

After the voting, the chair announced that items related to governance and budget would not be discussed. He then asked for any additional amendments of the agenda package.

Ramin pointed out that there is no background information provided for agenda item 4.11. He cautioned against discussing anything related to an ongoing investigation involving him, indicating that these matters shouldn't be addressed in an open meeting. Ramin suggested amending the agenda to remove this item if it's connected to any complaint or ongoing investigation. Debasish noted that there was no name mentioned in the item, but Ramin insisted that background information is essential to understand the context. Mostofa questioned how Ramin could be sure about its relevance without any name mentioned, indicating that belief alone doesn't justify assumptions. When asked to explain the motion further, Mostofa stated that he would do so when the appropriate time came during the meeting. After this, the chair asked both of them to keep quiet, as he would start the voting for the amendment of the agenda. Palash added that the motion he introduced from the Computer Science Graduate Council (CSGC) includes concerns about the bursary, which is part of agenda item 4.11. He indicated that since the CSGC's motion was already approved, the issue regarding the bursary should be discussed as part of the AGM. The chair acknowledged that CSGC's motion was approved but noted that the wording of agenda item 4.11 is different, allowing Mr. Ramin the right to propose amendments. To decide whether to remove or keep the item, the chair initiated a vote, creating a poll for attendees to cast their votes.

*Motion to remove item no. 4.11 from the agenda of the meeting. (Kiegan)*

**Carried**

***Yes: 19***

*No: 21*

*Abstention: 8*

As the majority of the graduate students opposed, the motion was not approved.

Later, the chair asked about any amendments to the agenda package. Kayla responded by proposing a friendly amendment to the meeting's agenda, suggesting the addition of a new item. The item is a motion to investigate a breach of confidentiality and process by the Ethics Committee and its chair. She stated that the Chair publicly disclosed details of a case that had not been addressed in a timely manner, which compromises the confidentiality of the Ethics Committee's proceedings. This premature disclosure raises concerns about the integrity of the investigative process, as the Ethics Committee Chair is responsible for handling sensitive information and adhering to proper procedures. The proposed resolution includes several key actions. First, it calls for an official investigation into the breach of confidentiality and process by the Ethics Committee Chair. This investigation should be conducted by a neutral third-party mediator, such as J. Morgans or a similarly independent figure, to ensure objectivity. The investigation will examine the unauthorized disclosure of case details, including the reasons behind it, potential violations of confidentiality, and the impact on the integrity of the process. The resolution also mandates that the Ethics Committee Chair be temporarily relieved of their duties until the investigation is complete, ensuring the integrity of ongoing and future investigations. The findings from the investigation will be reported to the GSA Council for further action, which could include disciplinary measures in accordance with GSA policies and procedures regarding confidentiality breaches. Additionally, the motion requires all GSA members to fully cooperate with the investigation and avoid discussing or sharing any confidential information until the investigation is completed. The resolution also suggests that the incoming GSA executives consider updating the process for selecting committee chairs to involve a neutral party, such as the College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (CGPS). The motion takes effect immediately upon passage, and Kayla opened the floor to discussion or amendments.

Debasish, who submitted that complaint to the Ethics Committee, stated that he does not believe the Ethics Committee Chair disclosed any confidential information. He explained that he had sent a motion to the chair by the deadline, requesting that it be added to the meeting agenda to discuss his issue. Debasish noted that he filed his complaint more than a month ago and that the Ethics Committee has struggled to resolve it within the GSA. Because of this, he wanted to discuss the matter during the meeting, indicating that the chair's actions were in line with his

request. Mostofa expressed that while he respects Kayla's concerns about integrity and confidentiality breaches, he pointed out that the GSA has established procedures for addressing such issues. He suggested that if Kayla has concerns, they should follow the proper process through the appropriate committee. If the chair is implicated, another committee member should preside over the matter to maintain impartiality. Mostofa emphasized that decisions must follow established GSA procedures. If the Ethics Committee's recommendations aren't accepted by the council, then it can be escalated for external review. He noted that GSA has a structured governance framework for these situations and urged adherence to it. He highlighted the need for consistent procedures and reiterated that the GSA should operate according to its rules, avoiding arbitrary decisions.

Elyse emphasized that a neutral party is essential in Ethics Committee meetings to ensure impartiality. She noted that any conflict of interest or its appearance must be declared and documented at each meeting. Jeisson suggested introducing a motion to avoid discussing irrelevant items at this meeting. He stressed the importance of focusing on the outcomes of the GSA elections and ensuring the GSA's transparency and alignment with its proper interests.

Kiegan, a member of the Ethics and Disciplinary Committee, said that he plans to resign because he believes the discussions during this meeting have compromised the committee's work and integrity. He noted that the discussions may have unintentionally tainted the issues the committee was trying to address, making it difficult to be fair and impartial. Kiegan expressed that, due to the current meeting's impact, he no longer feels capable of serving on the committee in good conscience and announced his intention to resign. The chair noted that the Ethics Committee's proceedings are conducted separately from the AGM. As the chair of the GSA meeting, he clarified that he would not discuss matters related to the Ethics Committee during the AGM. Palash, representing the Computer Science Graduate Council, stated that concerns have been raised with the council due to dissatisfaction with the Ethics Committee's handling of certain issues. He acknowledged that these matters are typically managed by the Ethics Committee but mentioned that due to the committee's perceived inefficacy, the concerns were brought to the Computer Science Graduate Council. Palash believed these issues should be discussed during this meeting. Ramin stated that the complaints against him were made public before he received formal notice or had a chance to read them. He questioned why the agenda was shared online with links that indirectly publicized the complaints against him, breaching confidentiality agreements. Ramin mentioned that although the motion related to the complaint was removed, it had already been shared online, violating confidentiality rules. He noted that even members of the Ethics Committee should not have access to this information without proper procedure, let



alone the broader public. Ramin viewed this premature disclosure as a serious breach and potential misconduct.

Catherine noted that the meeting had been ongoing for over an hour without successfully passing the agenda. She suggested that further discussions could occur as items arise but warned that at the current pace, the meeting could take all evening.

Palash clarified that the documents he shared did not name anyone specifically. He mentioned that he presented these documents to prompt discussion among council members and obtain answers for Computer Science graduate students who had raised concerns but received no response from GSA executives. Palash emphasized that his role is to represent these students and ensure their voices are heard, advocating for a transparent process and fair treatment. If the council members agree with the issues he presented, he believes the situation should be addressed. Ultimately, Palash's goal is to represent those students who feel they haven't received proper justice or clear answers. Here, the chair created poll for the voting of Kayla's motion.

*Motion to add 'investigate a breach of confidentiality and process by the Ethics Committee and its chair' to the agenda of the meeting. (Kayla/Abbas)*

**Carried**

***Yes: 23***

***No: 12***

***Abstention: 3***

As the majority of the graduate students voted in favour, the motion to add the item to the agenda was approved.

Kayla stated that if the motion she proposed is passed, which includes temporarily relieving the chair from their duties pending an investigation, then the chair cannot continue with the meeting. Debasish and Rachel corrected her that this voting was for adding the item to the agenda.

Before moving on to the approval of the agenda, Jennifer proposed a motion to raise the salary of the office manager to \$64,000. Jennifer emphasized the importance of the GSA office manager, noting that he plays a key role in the association's operations and is highly qualified. She mentioned that the current market rate for similar positions is over \$100,000, while the GSA office manager is paid only \$47,000, which is not even a living wage. Jennifer expressed concern that if he leaves for a better-paying job, which would be understandable, the GSA would face

significant operational challenges. She advocated for a salary increase to retain him and maintain the association's functionality. However, Debasish, Alex and Pabitra added that it had already been discussed before. Jimmy questioned the justification for raising the office manager's salary, asking for an explanation of the specific contributions made by the manager to students each year. He emphasized that any salary increase should reflect a corresponding contribution. Rachel highlighted that it's difficult to vote on a salary increase without discussing the GSA's budget and financial health. She pointed out that the meeting had already voted against a budget discussion, complicating any discussion about salary changes. Lecia mentioned that there should be clear procedural guidelines for salary increases, suggesting that salary discussions need to follow a well-defined process to ensure fairness and accountability. Also, the chair mentioned that Jennifer's proposal to raise the salary of the office manager had already been discussed in previous council meetings, suggesting it wasn't necessary to spend more time on it. Kayla objected, suggesting that the chair couldn't simply dismiss an item without a council vote. She proposed that the council vote on whether to keep the item for discussion. The chair replied that as it was a previously discussed matter, he had the right to move on. He explained that salary changes must be approved by the Budget or Governance Committees, not by the council, indicating that further discussion on this matter wasn't appropriate. However, he acknowledged that if the council wanted to, they could vote on whether to keep the item for discussion.

Elyse shared her opinion on the office manager's salary, clarifying that council members can't vote to increase it but can express their views to be noted in the meeting minutes. She questioned the claim that an office manager typically makes \$100,000, stating that as a business owner, she was unfamiliar with that number. After a quick search, Elyse found that the average salary for an office manager is about \$56,000 a year. She suggested that the GSA executives, who have the authority to decide on salaries, should conduct proper research to determine appropriate compensation. Elyse reiterated that council members can't vote on salary changes but can voice their opinions.

Lindsay clarified that the incoming GSA executives had not discussed the proposed motion, and it does not necessarily represent the views of all incoming executives. While she supported voting on whether to add the motion to the agenda according to the rules of order, Lindsay suggested that any current discussion should focus on the merits of adding the item to the agenda, rather than delving into the specific details of the proposal. Catherine acknowledged that the current office manager is overqualified for the role but emphasized that the duties are largely administrative, such as answering emails and acting as a receptionist. She indicated that it wouldn't be reasonable to pay someone \$100,000 a year for such tasks. Catherine explained that

if the incoming GSA executives wish to increase the salary, they must do so within the constraints of the GSA budget. However, she noted that discussing the budget wasn't possible because there had been no audited financial reports for the past three years. She stated that any changes to the office manager's salary must consider the GSA's budget and should be approached within the broader context of the association's financial health.

Alex expressed concern that the issue of raising the office manager's salary was being raised by incoming executive members despite previous votes against it by academic councillors within the past few months. He questioned whether the GSA office manager was asking incoming executives to reconsider his salary. Megan suggested that the meeting should avoid discussing details and focus on voting on each motion on the agenda, indicating that the current approach could lead to excessive delays and prevent the meeting from progressing effectively. She recommended voting and moving forward to maintain efficiency.

Abbas mentioned that in a previous meeting, a proposed salary increase to around \$100,000 was discussed but not approved by the council. He suggested that while salary discussions can happen, they should be informed by budget considerations. His idea was to form a committee or research group to study the appropriate salary range for the office manager, then determine a suitable increase. Mostofa explained that the former GSA office manager earned a higher salary after seven years of service, not after a short period. He emphasized that raising the current office manager's salary too quickly could have budget implications that affect all graduate students. As a former GSA president, Mostofa suggested forming a committee to study the potential salary increase and proposed that any salary-related decisions be submitted to graduate students through a referendum. He highlighted that if the salary is raised, it could lead to increased fees for all 4,500 graduate students, suggesting that this impact should not be decided by the executive council alone. Ehsan opposed the motion to raise the office manager's salary, citing concerns about the office manager's performance and conduct. He mentioned that the office manager had left his job for several days, posting a notice indicating he was leaving because of inadequate pay. Ehsan questioned whether the office manager was paid during this leave of absence, indicating this would be inappropriate if true. He argued that the role doesn't require significant responsibilities, suggesting that raising the salary would be a wrong decision. Wyatt stated that increasing the office manager's salary without following the proper procedures violates GSA policies. He reiterated that the meeting could not vote on the motion to increase the salary, as it would be against established GSA rules and policies.

After the discussions, the chair stated that they can vote on whether to discuss the motion proposed by Jennifer to increase the office manager's salary. He noted that as the GSA chair, he couldn't disregard the voting process, indicating that he would proceed with a vote on this matter.

*Motion to add 'raise the salary of the office manager to \$64,000' to the agenda of the meeting. (Jennifer/Kayla)*

**Carried**

***Yes: 4***

***No: 33***

***Abstention: 1***

As the majority of the graduate students opposed, the motion to add the item to the agenda was not approved.

Afterwards, the chair did the voting for approving the agenda of the meeting.

*Motion to approve the agenda of the meeting. (Alex/Ehsan)*

**Carried**

***Yes: 34***

***No: 0***

***Abstention: 3***

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

During the voting, Ramin suggested he had an amendment. Elyse and Sristy wrote in the chat box that amendments were no longer possible. The chair confirmed that the voting on the agenda was already complete and that he had earlier asked for any amendments after Jennifer's motion. Since no further amendments were raised at that time, he indicated that the meeting needed to move on with the other proceedings.

### **3. Approval of Minutes**

#### **3.1 GSA Emergency Annual General Meeting March 13<sup>th</sup>, 2024**

The Chair asked about the approval of the minute from GSA Emergency Annual General Meeting from December 13, 2023.

*Motion to approve the minutes from March 13, 2024, AGM. (Alex/Sristy)*

**Carried**

*Yes: 31*

*No: 0*

*Abstention: 1*

The motion to approve the *March 13, 2024, AGM* minutes was approved by the majority of the graduate students.

#### **4. Motion to receive GSA Standing Committee Reports**

##### **4.1 Bursary Selection Committee Meeting Minutes**

###### **4.1.1 Bursary Selection Committee Meeting Minutes – August 14, 2023**

Abbas asked the chair why his meeting minutes were not included in the agenda package for council approval. The chair responded that it might have been an oversight and asked Abbas to resend the minutes via email. Abbas mentioned that he had sent a compiled file. The chair clarified that he added Abbas's report to the agenda package at the end. Ramin pointed out that meeting minutes for August 15 and December 20 were missing from the shared documents, despite having submitted them. The chair responded that he could only share the meeting minutes he received and asked Ramin if he submitted them. Ramin clarified that he sent two PDF files: one with August 14 and 15 meeting minutes and another with December 6 and 20 meeting minutes. The chair explained that if PDFs contain multiple meeting minutes, it can be difficult to identify and separate them, suggesting that in the future, separate PDF files should be submitted for each meeting. This would make it easier to compile and avoid missing any important information. Ramin acknowledged the suggestion and explained that he compiled multiple meetings into one PDF for efficiency, but the chair reiterated that individual PDFs would be more manageable.

*Motion to receive the Bursary Selection Committee Meeting Minutes – August 14, 2023. (Mostofa/Alex)*

**Carried**

*Yes: 10*

*No: 0*

*Abstention: 14*

The motion to receive the Bursary Selection Committee Meeting Minutes – August 14, 2023, was approved by the majority of the graduate students.

#### **4.1.2 Bursary Selection Committee Meeting Minutes – August 15, 2023**

*Motion to receive the Bursary Selection Committee Meeting Minutes – August 15, 2023.  
(Abbas/Sristy)*

**Carried**

*Yes: 7*

*No: 0*

*Abstention: 14*

The motion to receive the Bursary Selection Committee Meeting Minutes – August 15, 2023 was not approved by the majority of the graduate students. It would be discussed in the next council meeting.

#### **4.1.3 Bursary Selection Committee Meeting Minutes – December 6, 2023**

Catherine asked if the meeting was voting to receive or approve the meeting minutes from the Bursary Committee, noting that they are two different things. The chair clarified that the vote was indeed to receive the standing committee meeting minutes. Wyatt noted confusion, asking if they were voting on something that had already been received since the minutes were shared in the agenda package. The chair explained that voting to receive the minutes was a tradition that had been followed in previous meetings.

*Motion to receive the Bursary Selection Committee Meeting Minutes – December 6, 2023.  
(Nickson/Abbas)*

**Carried**

*Yes:10*

*No: 0*

*Abstention: 1*

The motion to receive the Bursary Selection Committee Meeting Minutes – December 6, 2023. was approved by the majority of the graduate students.

#### **4.1.4 Bursary Selection Committee Meeting Minutes – December 20, 2023**

*Motion to receive the Bursary Selection Committee Meeting Minutes – December 20, 2023.  
(Alex/Abbas)*

**Carried**

*Yes:15*

No: 0

Abstention: 12

The motion to receive the Bursary Selection Committee Meeting Minutes – December 20, 2023 was approved by the majority of the graduate students.

**12. Motion to show council members the evidence of false charges brought against Mr. Mostofa Kamal by the three GSA Executives (Kayla Benoit, Ramin Mohammadi, and Abbas Fazel Anvari Yazdi) to remove him as GSA president.**

*Motion to show council members the evidence of false charges brought against Mr. Mostofa Kamal by the three GSA Executives (Kayla Benoit, Ramin Mohammadi, and Abbas Fazel Anvari Yazdi) to remove him as GSA president (Mostofa/AD).*

Catherine reminded Mostafa in the chat box that anything he says in the meeting is recorded and could be used as evidence against him, suggesting it's in his best interest not to discuss certain topics. Mostofa stated that he was not seeking a vote but wanted to explain an incident that occurred on December 13, where he claims Kayla, Roman, and others brought false charges against him. He referred to approved meeting minutes from February 13, showing that a motion to remove the GSA president did not receive sufficient support. The motion required 22 votes but only received 18, indicating it was unsuccessful. Despite the failure to pass the motion, Mostofa described being physically assaulted and humiliated by police, leading to his removal from the meeting. He felt this treatment was unjust, especially after serving the GSA and its students. Mostofa urged council members to check the approved February 13 meeting minutes for verification and offered to answer any questions.

David asked whether the issue they were discussing was still with the police or in court, questioning if it's advisable to continue the discussion. Mostofa replied that the matter is not in court, explaining that he only served a legal notice asking why, despite failing to pass a motion to remove him, he was still revoked from his position. David suggested that discussing something potentially illegal could cause harm. He advised that care should be taken to understand the legal implications before proceeding. David suggested waiting for more information or responses before continuing the discussion.

Kayla stated that she was excusing herself briefly, following advice from her lawyer to avoid engaging in the matter as this is an open legal case. She cited concerns for her psychological safety due to perceived continued oppression and violence. Kayla asked attendees to read her

submitted PDF for her comments, noting that it related to a case resolved by the legal system in Saskatchewan, and encouraged them to observe the proceedings with curiosity.

Ehsan asked Mostofa if he claims to still be the GSA president but was illegally prevented from fulfilling his role since being removed. He asked Kayla to clarify if, based on bylaws and policies, Mostofa is still the GSA president. Kayla responded that she couldn't go into detail due to legal constraints but mentioned that her lawyer's response to the legal notice confirmed that the GSA followed its bylaws and policies in removing Mostofa. She suggested referring to the PDF she provided earlier, explaining that it contains the relevant information. Kayla recommended that incoming GSA executives review the bylaws to understand them better, noting their complexity. Ehsan pointed out that Kayla didn't directly address whether Mostofa is still the president, asking for further clarification. He emphasized that if two-thirds of the votes weren't cast to remove Mostofa, then he might still be the GSA president and sought a clear answer. Mostofa stated that according to GSA policy, 2/3rd votes are required for the motion to be successful. Thus, he claimed that the motion to remove him was defeated, suggesting he should still be the GSA president until the end of the term.

However, Catherine pointed out that the result of the vote might be unclear due to missing minutes and that people who attended the meeting had no false impression about Mostofa's removal from office. Catherine stated that motions in the council are based on those who are present and that there's no need for a minimum number of attendees to pass a motion. Mostofa corrected her, indicating that only eligible members can vote in a council meeting. He explained that at the meeting in question, there were 34 voting members present, and the approved meeting minutes from February showed that only 18 members voted to remove the president. Catherine pointed out that the vote outcome depends on the number of people present at the time of the vote, not the number of people present at the beginning of the meeting. Jordan noted that the council, not just the executive, voted to remove him during that meeting. Emily added that the meeting minutes from February were missing, contributing to the confusion.

Ehsan mentioned that a legal document should be based on the sheet with the names of people who were present during the vote, suggesting that this should determine the legitimacy of the vote, not speculation on how many people were actually there. Abbas noted that the December meeting was not recorded, leading to uncertainty about the details. He mentioned that Asutosh, the previous chair, and Sara, the secretary, had difficulty recalling specific details, and there was conflicting information regarding who was present. He pointed out that meeting details were unclear, raising questions about claims of attendance and quorum. Sristy pointed out that



although the meeting was not recorded, the meeting minutes were approved, making them a valid document for reference. Alex, who was present at the December meeting, stated that 3 out of 5 executives and all councilors present voted to remove Mostofa. She suggested that continuing to fight for a position where constituents do not want him as president is inappropriate.

Elyse stated that she felt out of her depth dealing with the ongoing matter, suggesting that the council was being put in the role of judge and jury. She emphasized that there are clear bylaws and procedures to follow and noted that the situation should be resolved through the appropriate channels, not during the meeting. Arash reflected on the events that led to Mostofa's removal as GSA president, noting that whatever happened, the aim should be to benefit the students. He mentioned that during the past few months, students didn't get the benefit of Mostofa's leadership and expressed regret over the situation. Arash believed that Mostofa still aimed to do what's best for the students and the GSA. He emphasized that the ongoing issues and disputes were harming the GSA, leading to unproductive meetings and lost time. Arash suggested that everyone should focus on working together for the benefit of the GSA and its students, highlighting the need to move past the current impasse. Alex expressed that she has lost faith in the GSA's functioning due to Mr. Kamal's behavior and conduct in GSA meetings. Kayla mentioned that she tried to resolve the matter through mediation, but it was declined.

The chair stated as there is no voting on this, indicating that the discussion should end. He moved on to the next agenda item, noting it was similar to the previous topic about the unsuccessful attempt to remove Mostofa Kamala as GSA president during the GSA Council meeting. Since this item was related to the earlier discussion, the chair suggested skipping it to proceed with other agenda items. He explained that Mostofa's evidence and concerns were already included in the agenda package, and there was no need to re-explain them to the council. Mostofa insisted that his motion wasn't meant to challenge the process but to correct a false allegation and asked for two more minutes to explain. He also added that it's a life-and-death situation for him due to a \$45,000 false embezzlement allegation. Alex, Megan, Wyatt, Jennifer asked the chair to mute Mostofa. David stated that whenever Mostofa spoke, the chair seemed to listen, respond, and then pretend to mute him. He urged the chair to maintain order and fairness with due respect to all participants. Saikat expressed frustration with the meeting, urging the discussion to move on. Alex stated that Mr. Kamal should be removed. After all these discussions, the chair moved on to the next agenda item.

**14. Motion to discuss that no current or former GSA executives are entitled to any financial expenses resulting from personal or collective actions or unlawful activities. The GSA will not be liable for any illegal activities by any GSA executives.**

Mostofa clarified his motion was not aimed at any past or current GSA executive. His intention was to ensure the GSA doesn't lose money due to any executive's harmful or damaging actions, emphasizing that the GSA should not cover legal fees in such cases. He stated that his purpose was to protect the GSA for a better future. There were no further discussions on this item.

**15. Motion to discuss that no GSA executive can hold any two executive positions at a given time. A current GSA executive must step down within 24 hours after getting elected to a new GSA executive position**

Mostofa proposed that if a GSA executive takes another position, they must step down from their current role within 24 hours. He argued that holding two positions simultaneously violates the GSA bylaws and broader non-profit regulations.

Alex responded that this motion seemed directed at Kayla Benoit, who had taken over as interim president in a move that was approved by academic councillors. Catherine noted that the motion contradicted GSA governing documents, which were not to be discussed in this meeting, explaining that if a higher position becomes vacant, it is filled by vote, and the president is responsible for assuming other vacant roles.

Kayla, believing the motion targeted her, clarified that while she held the positions of interim president and VP of Indigenous Engagement, she never publicly claimed to control everything. She emphasized that she never presented herself as holding both roles simultaneously. Kayla reiterated that if the motion's proponent would like to resolve the matter through an unbiased third-party mediator, she would be open to it. She also mentioned that the current meeting environment didn't feel safe due to the conduct she experienced.

**16. Motion to review and reinforce compliance with financial and facility usage policies within GSA**

Mostofa mentioned that GSA policy prohibits executives from using the GSA Commons without following the formal booking process. However, he noted that some executive members have been using the Commons without following this process, violating GSA policy. He argued that this illegal use prevents GSA from making money that is meant for student welfare. Mostofa suggested that if the council does not approve of these illegal activities, they should address it with a motion to ensure no executive member uses the GSA Commons without proper booking.

Ehsan added that there had been no committee meetings or motions regarding audit companies, indicating a lack of accountability. He suggested that current GSA executives should not receive their final paycheck since they failed to complete their portfolios.

Catherine pointed out that it was Mostofa's GSA team that had not posted audited reports for the last 2/5 years, indicating a broader issue with accountability and financial transparency.

### **16. Motion to discuss regarding the Spring and Summer transit pass for graduate students**

Ebuka proposed a motion to address the lack of transit system support for graduate students during the spring and summer sessions. He noted that graduate students are required to register full-time, but the transit program doesn't accommodate them during these periods, unlike undergraduate students who can opt into the transit system for spring and summer. Ebuka suggested that the same transit options available to undergraduates should be extended to graduate students, and he moved to discuss and investigate this matter.

Rifat mentioned that the issue should be addressed by the VP Finance and that it shouldn't be approved at an AGM but instead discussed in a separate meeting or referendum. The chair acknowledged this and said that the voting is for to discuss about this matter and VP Finance and the Budget Committee should work on it.

*Motion to discuss regarding the Spring and Summer transit pass for graduate students.  
(Ebuka/Mustakim)*

**Carried**

*Yes: 29*

*No: 0*

*Abstention: 0*

As the majority had voted to discuss the motion, the chair referred it to the Budget Committee and the upcoming VP Finance for further consideration.

### **18. GSA Executive Reports**

The chair mentioned that the GSA executives' annual reports were attached to the agenda package, but due to time constraints, they wouldn't present them. However, any executive wanting to speak about their report could do so.

Kayla encouraged everyone to review her report, acknowledging that it had been a difficult year with tough decisions to make. She thanked the council for its support over the last four months and advised the new executives to stay strong. She expressed hope that they would have a more

positive experience and focus on successful events to celebrate graduate students, reminding everyone that the GSA exists for the benefit of students, not for personal interests.

### **19. Addressing Ethical Issues and GSA Award Policy Violation Concerning GSA Annual GALA Awards Committee and Awardees.**

Palash, acting president of the Computer Science Graduate Council (CSGC), raised concerns about the GSA Award Gala, noting that multiple students from the Computer Science department had approached him with issues related to the gala's awards. He explained that he was not accusing anyone but addressing concerns raised by students.

One of the concerns was that 58% of the award committee members were from a single ethnic group, raising questions about potential bias in award distribution. Palash shared an example of two profiles, "Alex" and "Bob," and asked attendees to vote in the chat box on who they believed should win a research excellence award based on their public profiles. The majority voted for "Bob," which Palash cited as evidence that the award process might be biased. He also mentioned a potential conflict of interest, where an award winner had previously served on the award committee and was a GSA executive. According to GSA policy, current and former executive members and award committee members are not eligible to apply for awards, raising concerns about compliance with GSA rules. Additionally, he noted that the GSA policy required notifying all nominees, whether successful or not, about the results, but this had not been done. Palash suggested that these issues needed to be addressed, asking the VP External to respond to these concerns and hoping for clarification to ensure fairness in the GSA awards process. He emphasized that he was not accusing anyone but was seeking answers on behalf of the concerned students.

Abbas responded to Palash's claim that 58% of the GSA Award Committee members belonged to a single ethnic group, asking for the source of this information. Palash explained that he inferred this from the committee members' names and suggested that anyone could see it by looking at the committee list. Abbas clarified that committee members nominate themselves, and the council approves them. He noted that due to some members stepping down, additional nominations were opened. Abbas indicated that the committee list on the GSA website wasn't updated due to a coordinator, Debasish's oversight. He pointed out that he didn't choose the committee members; they were self-nominated, and the council approved them. Abbas stated that only 33% of the committee members belonged to one nationality, not 58%, and emphasized that he did not personally select the committee members. Debasish, the previous coordinator, clarified that as an office coordinator, updating the website wasn't part of his duty; it was the manager's

responsibility. He mentioned not receiving any email from Abbas regarding updating the award committee. Debasis warned against spreading false information, emphasizing the importance of accuracy in communication with GSA members.

Palash clarified that his observation was based not only on names but also on the public profiles of committee members, such as those on LinkedIn, where one can find information about their nationality or ethnic background.

Abbas explained that the GSA Award Gala marks the end of the fiscal year, which requires a significant amount of preparation. Since there's usually no council meeting in April, the ratification of award results is handled by the Standing Committee. Abbas pointed out that the VP External had to manage both the awards and the gala, which are two large projects to accomplish in a short period. He mentioned that this year's gala was a major undertaking for his team, suggesting that the tight timeline and preparation demands justify the need for quick ratification of award results. He also addressed the issue of failing to notify award recipients within two weeks. He apologized, explaining that he was overwhelmed with various responsibilities, including sponsorships, government invitations, and responding to numerous emails. Abbas mentioned that he sent over 500 emails in the past few months related to the gala and its preparation, highlighting that he is a student with his own studies and research. He acknowledged that this might not justify the delay but asked for understanding given his workload and personal commitments. Palash responded, questioning whether being busy excused not following GSA procedures. Abbas apologized, admitting his mistake and asking for forgiveness.

Abbas also addressed the issue of potential conflicts of interest in the GSA award process, explaining that he consulted with the award committee members to review the situation. After a student raised concerns, Abbas asked the committee to re-evaluate their decision, considering the policies and bylaws. He clarified that the GSA policy regarding bursaries, not awards, might be causing confusion. He pointed out that the relevant section (12.3) is about bursaries, not awards, and urged everyone to revisit the policy for clarification. He noted that the award committee members reaffirmed their decision, saying it complied with the current policy. He acknowledged the need to revise the policy if there's widespread concern about conflicts of interest but stressed that the existing policy led to the committee's final decision. Arash asked whether the award selection process involved an in-person meeting. He also inquired about the addressing of potential conflicts of interest and biases during the meeting. Abbas confirmed that there was a meeting and said it is included the meeting minutes.

Alex noted that addressing the ethnic composition of GSA committees could become discriminatory. Sara questioned whether students demonstrating leadership through GSA participation should be exempt from winning GSA awards, suggesting that the current approach might unfairly restrict deserving students. Alex pointed out that with international students representing 33% of graduate students, suggesting that only one-third of committee members be international students could be biased toward domestic students. Catherine and Lindsay raised concerns about making assumptions about committee members' race or ethnicity based on their names, pointing out that this practice is unethical. Nickson agreed, emphasizing that judging people based on names is wrong. These comments highlight the challenges and ethical concerns in discussing the representation and composition of GSA committees.

Elyse asked whether there was a selection criteria grid for jury membership and for assessing presentations, suggesting that it might be time to include annual bias and Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) training. Kayla agreed, indicating there was a selection criteria, though she wasn't sure about the process for jury membership since she joined in January. Catherine proposed de-personalizing applications to reduce bias, implying that removing identifying information might help. Kayla agreed this would be beneficial, acknowledging that there could still be inferences made from details like the location of education. She suggested that a way should be found to mitigate these biases.

Alex sought clarification on why ethnicity is being brought into the conversation about performance and awards. Elyse suggested adding this topic to the upcoming diversity committee's agenda for further discussion and action. Sara questioned whether there was concrete evidence supporting the accusations of conflict of interest, suggesting that such accusations may be veering into racist territory. Pezhman inquired about rules regarding committee member nationality and asked for evidence of accusations. Nickson affirmed that the concern was thoroughly discussed within the committee, and meeting minutes were appended to the agenda for reference.

Ehsan emphasized the importance of collaboration among GSA executives for the annual gala, noting that it's a significant event causing considerable stress. He criticized the lack of communication from Abbas about the gala, stating that graduate students should have been included in the event planning discussions. Ehsan expressed regret over the situation and highlighted the need for accountability in organizing events that directly involve graduate students' funds.

David expressed concern about the handling of accusations during the awards system process, mentioning that committee members were not allowed to respond to accusations. He criticized the decision to conduct a voting session based on incomplete information. David also raised reservations about judging ethnicity based on names alone and suggested that committee members should have the chance to respond to accusations collectively rather than individually.

Mostofa raised concerns about the approval process for awards, citing past incidents where an awardee was selected but later cancelled at an executive meeting. He emphasized the need for transparency and highlighted previous allegations of misconduct within the awards committee. Mostofa clarified that his intention was to ensure the committee avoided past mistakes and operated transparently. He refuted accusations of influencing the committee and requested that the council members review the recorded meeting to verify his statements. Additionally, Mostofa expressed concerns about the workload imposed on committee members, stating that such demands could discourage volunteers. He denied accusations of influencing the committee and urged council members to judge for themselves based on the facts presented.

Alex questioned the relevance of the ongoing defense, suggesting that the conversation was veering off course from the motion concerning the awards committee. Lindsay proposed moving on from the agenda item, expressing confidence that the new executives would address any concerns in the future. She emphasized the deserving nature of the GSA awardees and encouraged everyone to be happy for them.

As Mostofa was taking too long, Alex and Nickson wrote in the chat for Mostofa to stop. Wyatt questioned the chair about Mostofa's extended speaking time, asking if they were friends and why Mostofa was given such liberty to speak at length. The chair refuted the allegation, emphasizing the importance of mutual respect among participants. He clarified that Mostofa wasn't his friend and reiterated his policy of allowing everyone to speak.

Sahrima raised concerns to the GSA VP External Affairs about potential biases if a member had previous affiliations with the award committee. Abbas clarified that the bylaws and policies addressed this. Sahrima requested further review to uphold the integrity of the GSA and avoid any allegations or concerns. Sahrima questioned the consistency in comparing GSA awards to research grants but not bursaries. Abbas acknowledged the concern, attributing it to the previous executives' failure to revise policy, expressing a wish to address it during his tenure.

Pezhman highlighted Abbas's initiative to request additional meetings to update the old awarding rubric with a new one, contrasting it with previous years. He emphasized that this improvement

should be acknowledged rather than criticized. He noted that everyone had equal access to the criteria for the awards, emphasizing fairness, unlike in previous years.

Alex expressed confusion regarding the awards issue, noting the absence of solid evidence or examples presented during the discussion. She suggested that such matters should be addressed by the ethics committee rather than at the AGM. Megan agreed, stating that the AGM was not the appropriate venue to handle these serious allegations. Mostofa countered by highlighting the unauthorized awards given by the committee, prompting Alex to question why the issue was brought to the AGM, emphasizing that voters cannot act on it and suggesting it may be intended to incite emotions rather than find a solution.

After discussing about the GSA award policy violation, Palash, the mover of this motion requested the chair to let Debasish talk about his concern regarding ethical issues within GSA. Debasish raised concerns about an issue he previously brought up to the Code of Ethics Committee and wanted to discuss it at the AGM. However, GSA advised against adding it to the agenda. Debasish sought guidance from the Council members on whether to proceed with the discussion. As majority wanted to know about this, the chair permitted Debasish to speak. However, the chair stated that if Debasish had already submitted complaints or evidence to the Code of Ethics Committee and it was under review, he couldn't discuss it at the AGM. Debasish agreed to address his concerns directly with the code of ethics committee.

Sristy raised concerns in the chat box about unresolved issues, particularly the serious allegation regarding the GSA awards. She asked the chair how the GSA plans to address these issues. Pabitra also wrote there are a lot of complaints which needs to be resolved. GSA should take bold actions against all of these issues.

After that, Palash requested the chair to let Ehsan talk about his concern regarding the unprofessional behavior directed towards former GSA executives from the computer science department. Ehsan expressed frustration about his attempts to communicate with the current executives regarding important matters like budget committee approvals and audit arrangements. Despite his efforts, he felt ignored and excluded, even being denied attendance at the GSA gala. He emphasized the need for future executives to be respectful, open-minded, and focused on serving graduate students rather than personal interests.

Debasish raised concerns about unauthorized use of GSA space and misuse of parking passes by an executive member. Ramin interrupted, stating that the matter was under ethical review. Palash pointed out that Robert's Rules had been broken by Ramin's interruption. The chair intervened,



urging respect between Debasish and Ramin and advising Debasish not to share specific names or allegations. Debasish clarified that he had submitted a complaint to the ethics committee but had not received a resolution. He sought assistance from council members to expedite the process. The chair cautioned against repeating the allegations in front of the council, as they were under review. Saikat expressed disappointment in the current state of meetings, emphasizing the need for constructive discussion and better decisions for student welfare. He criticized the tendency for some executives to prioritize personal interests over leadership, urging respect, consideration for mental health, and collegial treatment among members. Saikat expressed confidence in the GSA's ability to restore its reputation and prestige.

Mostofa stated extensive corruption and violations by three GSA executives, jeopardizing financial transparency and legitimacy. He intends to hold a press conference to disclose the bias he perceives under the oversight of council members.

## **20. Investigating a breach of confidentiality and process by the Ethics Committee and its chair**

Kayla introduced her motion, stating that she didn't have much additional commentary beyond what was written. She emphasized the need for investigation due to a breach that had occurred, suggesting it be addressed either immediately or in the future.

*Motion to discuss regarding the Spring and Summer transit pass for graduate students.  
(Kayla/Alex)*

**Carried**

*Yes: 17*

*No: 12*

*Abstention: 0*

As the majority voted in favour, the motion to investigate a breach of confidentiality and process by the Ethics Committee and its chair had been passed.

## **21. GSA Executive Reports**

The chair mentioned that the reports for all the executives are available in the agenda package for council members to reference.

The chair moved on to introduce the new GSA executives: Mr. David as the new president, Miss Lindsay as the Vice President of Finance and Operations, Mr. Nickson as the Vice President of

Academics and Student Affairs, Mr. Reza as the Vice President of External Affairs, Miss Jennifer as the Vice President of Indigenous Engagement. The chair and all the attendees on the AGM congratulated the new executives on their election to the GSA. They expressed confidence in their abilities and mentioned that the previous committee members would provide them with information. Due to time constraints, the chair only invited the new elected president to say a few words.

New president, David, expressed gratitude to everyone for their confidence in the new executive team. He emphasized their commitment to learning from past mistakes and building upon them to improve the GSA. David quoted Abraham Lincoln, highlighting the importance of making wise decisions today for a promising future. He reaffirmed their dedication to working collaboratively with council members and executives to achieve positive outcomes for the GSA.

## **22. Adjournment**

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:06 p.m. (Alex/Catherine)

**Carried**

**Appendix A**

<b>Academic Council</b>	<b>Name of Councilors and (alternates)</b>	<b>Oct 2023</b>	<b>Nov 2023</b>	<b>Dec 2023</b>	<b>Jan 2024</b>	<b>Jan 24, 2024</b>	<b>Feb 2024</b>	<b>Mar 2024</b>	<b>Apr 2024</b>	<b>May 2024</b>
Biology Graduate Student Association	Shuqi Ren Ilsa Griebel (Alternate) Lynsey Bent (Alternate)	P	P	P	P	P	P	A	P	
Chemistry Course Council	Nasrin Aliasgharlou Vi Phan (Alternate)	A	P	P	P	P	A	A	P	
College of Medicine Graduate Students Society – Anatomy, Physiology & Pharmacology	Mary Lazell Wright Farnoosh Tabatabaieian (Alternate)	P	A	P	P	A	A	P	A	
College of Medicine Graduate Students Society – Biochemistry, microbiology & Immunology	Rachel Harris – Councilor	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	
College of Medicine Graduate Students Society – Community Health & Epidemiology	Zoe Schipper – Councilor Tachlima Chowdhury Sunna (Alternate)	A	P	P	P	P	P	A	A	
College of Medicine Graduate Students Society – Health Sciences	Elyse Proulx-Cullen – Councilor Shima Hozhabrimahani (Alternate)	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	
Computer Science Graduate Council (CSGC)	Thulani Hewavithana Norah Ridley Mumtahina Ahmed (Alternate)	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	
Engineering Graduate Community Council (EGCC) – Biological	Pabitra Chandra Das	P	P	P	P	P	A	P	P	



Physical Therapy Student Society (PTSS)	Tyler Blanchette Carter Frerichs (Alternate)	P	P	P	A	P	P	P	A	
SENSSA	Chelsea Ohenewaa Nyarko Aisha Adelah (Alternate)	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	
School of Public Health (SPHSA)	Somayeh Abdi Jacyn Edwards Ahmed Muftah (Alternate)	A	P	P	A	A	A	A	A	
Sociology GSA	Meaghan Boily Leah Houseman (Alternate) Kayla Arisman (Alternate)	P	P	P	A	P	A	P	A	
Soil Science Graduate Student Association	Landon Orenchuk Tristan Chambers (Alternate)	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	
Animal and Poultry Science GSA	Megan Dubois Wyatt Armes	A	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	
ARE Graduate Student Society	Koal Sammons Josh Bourassa	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	A	
Toxicology Graduate Student Association (TGSA) Academic Councilor	Alexandra Cullen Emily Kennedy	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	
History Graduate Student Association	Kiegan Lloyd Catlin M. Woloschuk	A	P	P	P	A	P	A	P	
Physics & Engineering Physics (PEGASUS)	Jeisson A. Vanegas Carranza Nicholas Simonson	N/A	N/A	P	A	P	P	P	P	
Johnson Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy Student Association	Harjot Tu Bazal Khalid	N/A	P	P	A	A	P	A	A	

<b>Executive member</b>	<b>Name of executive member</b>	<b>Oct 2023</b>	<b>Nov 2023</b>	<b>Dec 2023</b>	<b>Jan 2024</b>	<b>Jan 24, 2024</b>	<b>Feb 2024</b>	<b>Mar 2024</b>	<b>Apr 2024</b>	<b>May 2024</b>
Exec. President	Kayla Benoit	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	P	P	P	P	
Exec. VP Finance and Operations	Ramin Mohammadi	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	
Exec. VP Academic and Student Affairs	Sristy Sumana Nath	P	P	A	P	P	P	P	P	
Exec. VP External Affairs	Abbas Fazel Anvari Yazdi	A	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	
Exec. VP Indigenous Engagement	Kayla Benoit	A	A	P	P	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	



## **University of Saskatchewan Graduate Students' Association**

### **President's Report to the council 26 June 2024**

"Good leaders must first become good servants." - Robert K. Greenleaf. Inspired by this philosophy, my tenure in office began with a commitment to serve rather than to command. My goal is to collaborate effectively with all members to achieve collective success. I would like to extend my appreciation to our past executives who, despite numerous challenges, managed to organize elections and hand over responsibilities to the new 2024/2025 executives. We began our work on May 1, 2024, with limited but valuable information. Special thanks to Mr. Fazel Anvari Yazdi Abass, the former Vice President of Finance, who took time out of his busy schedule to introduce the new executives to the appropriate offices and other responsibilities and the office manager and coordinators.

In the spirit of Pride Month this June, let's celebrate the incredible diversity and resilience of the LGBTQ+ community. This is a time to honor the courageous individuals who have fought for equality and to recognize the progress that has been made.

I am pleased to inform all council members that this year marks the 40th anniversary of the Graduate Students Association. Further communications regarding the celebration will be provided later.

Since May 1, 2024, I have participated in a series of meetings to understand office operations and the broader university environment. My role has required attendance at several

meetings with USASK administration and other entities needing GSA's attention. Efforts to secure sponsorships for the GSA are ongoing.

I have represented the GSA at the convocation with the Chancellor's party and participated in discussions regarding the new transit routes, advocating for affordable transportation for low-income earners, which was featured in the June newsletter. Additionally, there was a meeting with ISSAC via the VPIE to ensure proper collaboration on activities, such as welcoming new students.

With the executive team, we have held a welcome and familiarization meeting with the College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (CGPS), participated in the President Executive Committee (PEC) meetings, engaged with the University governance, bookkeeping firm, and coordinated the recovery of our social media platforms lost in transition. I have also met with several students to address issues related to tuition, dental plans, scholarships, the Gala awards, and more.

Furthermore, I have reached out to institutions previously affiliated with the GSA that had become inactive, working to reintegrate them into our association as we celebrate our 40th anniversary.

Here is the statement with an integrated quote:

"My office is committed to providing the necessary support to all executives, staff, and council members to ensure our success. As John C. Maxwell once said, Teamwork makes the dream work, but a vision becomes a nightmare when the leader has a big dream and a bad team.' We are dedicated to fostering a collaborative environment where every member is empowered to contribute to our shared vision. "My doors are opened for discussions with



every council member for the betterment of GSA, however being firm and responsible of our words will be the plan of the game.

I conclude by expressing my profound gratitude to my hardworking and cooperative executives, the office manager who saved our association from the brink of collapse, the coordinators, the chair, the secretary, and especially all council members present for making this meeting productive.

Your support and participation are of great importance as we navigate through our term. Remember, your voice matters, and together we can achieve great things.

Thank you.

**David Ohene-Amoako**  
President, Graduate Students' Association  
University of Saskatchewan



*May and June Report, VP of External Affairs*

*Reza Golpayegani*

**1) Social Media Passwords**

As part of my duties, I successfully regained access to GSA's social media accounts including Instagram, Facebook, Twitter (X), and LinkedIn. These accounts had been inaccessible for several years, except for Instagram. The recovery email and passwords for all these accounts are documented in an email titled "Passwords for GSA Social Media," pinned at the top of the VP External's email inbox. These credentials are strictly confidential. Additionally, I granted super admin privileges to the current GSA president and content admin privileges to all other executives and GSA's Office Manager for our LinkedIn page.

**2) GSA's Handbook:**

I submitted all handbook files to CFS on time. I reached out to all previous years' sponsors, but most were no longer interested. Currently, we have CGPS and Student Care as our sponsors, each having ordered one full page in the handbook. I included four welcome messages from the GSA President, the Mayor of Saskatoon, the President of USASK, and the Dean of the College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies. Additionally, I obtained handbook files from previous years from the former VP External (Abbas) and uploaded them to the Executives' shared Google Drive account.

**3) Open for Collaboration:**

I am excited about the opportunities ahead and look forward to collaborating with each of you to create a vibrant and inclusive graduate student community. Together, we can achieve great things and make our time at the University of Saskatchewan truly memorable. Thank you once again for your continued support. Let's work together to make this journey a successful and enriching experience for everyone. If you have any questions or need assistance, please feel free to reach out to me at [gsa.external@usask.ca](mailto:gsa.external@usask.ca).

#### 4) Meetings Attended

4/30/2024	Annual General Meeting
5/7/2024	CGPS Meeting
5/15/2024	Onboarding/training
5/22/2024	Onboarding/training
5/23/2024	PEC
5/23/2024	Executive Meeting
5/22/2024	Onboarding/training
5/28/2024	Executive Meeting
6/29/2024	Onboarding/training
6/4/2024	Executive Meeting
6/5/2024	Onboarding/training
6/12/2024	Onboarding/training
6/19/2024	Executive Meeting

Best Regards,

**Reza Golpayegani**

**Vice-President of External Affairs**

Graduate Students' Association (GSA)

University of Saskatchewan

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Facebook: [UsaskGSA](#) | Twitter: [GSA\\_USask](#) | Instagram: [GSA\\_Usask](#)

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

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*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.*

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Greetings to the Graduate Student Community

I am Nickson Joseph, the newly elected Vice President Academic and Student Affairs at the Graduate Students' Association, University of Saskatchewan. As an international student pursuing my PhD under the College of Medicine, I am deeply humbled and honored by the overwhelming support from our graduate student community during the recent elections. Your trust and confidence in my leadership inspire me to work diligently for the betterment of our community.

### **Vision and Goals**

My tenure as Vice President Academic and Student Affairs will focus on several key areas to enhance the graduate student experience:

#### **1. Bridging the Gap Between Graduate Student Communities**

One of my primary objectives is to foster stronger connections between graduate students from different colleges. By increasing involvement in GSA activities, we can create a more unified and supportive community.

#### **2. Showcasing Graduate Students' Talents**

I am committed to providing platforms for our students to showcase their talents, both academically and non-academically. This includes organizing events where students can present their research, artistic skills, and other talents to a broader audience.

#### **3. Supporting Students in Distress**

The well-being of our students is a top priority. I aim to establish and enhance support systems for any graduate student facing difficulties, ensuring they have access to the resources and assistance they need.

## **Committees and Councils**

In my capacity as Vice President Academic and Student Affairs, I am a voting member of several key committees and councils, including:

- University Council
- Graduate Programs Committee
- Annual Programs Committee
- Graduate Academic Affairs Committee
- CGPS Faculty Council

## **Looking Forward**

I am excited about the opportunities ahead and look forward to working with all of you to create a vibrant and inclusive graduate student community. Together, we can achieve great things and make our time at the University of Saskatchewan truly memorable.

Thank you once again for your support. Let's make this journey a successful and enriching experience for everyone.

Warm regards,

Nickson Joseph

Vice President Academic and Student Affairs

Graduate Students' Association

University of Saskatchewan



## **Report from the VP Finance and Operations (June 2024 Council Meeting)**

Dear GSA Councilors,

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

### 1) New GSA Executives' term & transition

I want to thank the GSA Office Manager, Paul Trujillo-Jacome, for his efforts in onboarding new executives. He has spent weekly time with each of us to orient us to the organization and our roles, which is typically done by outgoing executives. It seems that some institutional knowledge was lost during recent terms, so incoming executives were not provided with a transition manual of important information as is mandated by GSA Policy 1.5. Current executives are working to create a current Transition Manual to pass to our successors.

### 2) GSA-CGPS spring/summer bursary update

The GSA-CGPS Spring/Summer Bursary opened on May 31 and was originally scheduled to close June 23. However, based on feedback from the bursary selection committee and the number of applications currently received, we have extended the application deadline to July 28. The committee will meet during the first week in August and results will be communicated to successful applicants by August 12. This year, GSA, in collaboration with CGPS, will distribute \$110,000 in bursary funding. Approximately 30% of bursaries will be awarded from the Spring/Summer call, which will be distributed by cheque as in previous years. However, I have been working with CGPS to set up a university fund which will allow us to disperse bursary funding by direct deposit to students in the future. This will ensure that bursaries are distributed more quickly, reduce the burden on our office and bookkeeping staff, and be more eco-friendly.

### 3) Updating bookkeeping system, audits

I have been working with the GSA Office Manager to hire a new bookkeeping firm and facilitate a transition from the paper-based bookkeeping system GSA has been using for more than a decade, to a fully digital system where receipts can be submitted online rather than hard copy, and coordinators can receive their pay via direct deposit rather than paper cheques. This should allow us to pay GSA ratified groups electronically as well. The update will improve the speed and efficiency of our audit process.

### 4) Pride

Though GSA does not have any activities planned for Pride Month, I would like to express my ongoing support for the 2SLGBTQIA+ community. GSA hopes to create a safe space for students to be their truest selves.

## Meetings Attended

4/30/2024 Annual General Meeting  
5/7/2024 CGPS Meeting  
5/14/2024 Onboarding/training  
5/16/2024 CGPS Bursary Meeting  
5/16/2024 Onboarding/training  
5/23/2024 PEC  
5/23/2024 Executive Meeting  
5/23/2024 Onboarding/training  
5/27/2024 Chart 2 Fund Meeting  
5/28/2024 Bookkeeping Firm Interviews  
5/28/2024 Executive Meeting  
5/30/2024 Bookkeeper/Auditor Meeting  
6/3/2024 Onboarding/training  
6/4/2024 Executive Meeting  
6/19/2024 Executive Meeting  
6/25/2024 ISSAC Meeting re: Travel Award  
6/26/2024 Studentcare Meeting

Lindsay G. Carlson (she/her)

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

PhD Student, Department of Biology

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## **Jennifer Amaruualik-Yaremko VPIE address to GSA council June 2024**

Hello everybody. I am grateful to have this position and very lucky to be serving as VPIE on the current executive. I am also serving under the in-person duties of our VP Financial until she gets back from fieldwork, which just means that I have signing authority on the cheques temporarily.

My time in office comes with a few different visions that I hope to accomplish. The first involves Indigenous status at the U of S. We have two different streams of Indigeneity at the U of S: “verified” under deybwewin | taapwaywin | tapwewin, and self-identified Indigenous students.

I have plans to advocate for greater transparency from the OVPIE on its deybwewin | taapwaywin | tapwewin policy, which verifies Indigenous people as having a genuine connection to the communities they claim in exchange for the opportunity to receive material benefits from the university. I want the OVPIE to publish at least some numbers on how many people are verified under deybwewin | taapwaywin | tapwewin. At the moment, we do not know how many students, staff, and faculty are verified, and we do not know the different stages of “Verification” and what that process means. I have met with Angela Jaime about deybwewin | taapwaywin | tapwewin and she explained to me that the University is very careful to avoid determining who is verified- she says that is entirely up to communities to claim their people. However, this process, how it works, and its different stages have not been published to my knowledge, nor is the university community given any insight into how many Indigenous people are verified as students, staff, award recipients, or other recipients of material value from the University.

Angela has explained to me that this data is highly confidential, and the data will have to be used extremely carefully, and the people involved will have to consent to any uses or publishing of their data. However, the university happily publishes data on all of us every month, every week, about its entire non-Indigenous population, and it appears to use information like how many self-identified Indigenous students are enrolled in University programs to fundraise. I take the position that if the university can fundraise about us without our express consent, then it can publish the data that it has about its verification numbers.

I am not asking the university for a how-to guide on verifying as Indigenous, since the process can be misused. I am also not asking for a department-level breakdown on how many verified Indigenous people are at the university, since that information can also be misused. I would just like to know how many people are verified, and perhaps a gender breakdown of that verified population. I believe this information will help inform the university community of how our University is living up to its diversity commitments in the student and faculty body.

Secondly, I want to bring everybody out to Wanuskewin. I used to work there- and the job itself was not fun. It was not fun because I saw the extent to which Canada is failing to educate us all on its own history. That has nothing to do with Wanuskewin, it was just sort of a retail vibe that is common to the entire tourism industry. I am planning to mitigate that lack of education in any way I possibly can! Wanuskewin is a key resource for Indigenous land reclamation and stewardship and it is also a great resource for educating Canadians on Indigenous history. When I say “Canadians”, I mean, everyone in Canada. Everyone.

I am also in talks to bring blanket exercises to all of the colleges, but that is more difficult than I expected. Saskatchewan only has 1 licensed Blanket Exercise facilitator for the whole province. Bringing them in from out of province is pricey. Each licensed Blanket Exercise facilitator is also in extremely high demand.



I welcome any questions that the GSA council may have here in this meeting or by email at [GSA.Indigenous@usask.ca](mailto:GSA.Indigenous@usask.ca).