



University of Saskatchewan- Graduate Students' Association

Council Meeting

Wednesday, March 26th, 2025; 17:00-19:00

Meeting Location: Online (ZOOM)

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	ACTION	PAGE
1	Call to order		
2	Approval of agenda	Decision	1
3	Motion to receive GSA council meeting minutes ➤ March 5 th	Action	3-12
4	Motion to receive GSA executive meeting minutes ➤ February 28 th , March 18 th	Action	13-17
5	Motion to receive second awards committee meeting minutes	Action	17-18
6	Motion to Establish a Task Force Committee for Childcare Implementation Purpose: To create a dedicated task force committee to oversee and implement GSA childcare initiative.	Decision	

	Motion Statement: "I move that we establish a task force committee specifically for the implementation of childcare programs and initiatives."		
7	Appeal to GSA Council: Proposal to Remove the Governance Committee Policy	Decision	18-19
8	Motion to approve Humaira Anjum in the Elections and Referenda committee	Decision	
9	GSA executive reports <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. President's b. Vice President Finance and Operation c. Vice President External Affairs d. Vice President Student affairs and 	Information	19-26
10	Adjournment		



University of Saskatchewan-Graduate Students' Association (GSA)

Wednesday, March 5th, 2024; 17:00-18:30

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: Shaily Tandekar

Recording Secretary: Arman Heydari

- **Call to Order**

The Chair, Shaily Tandekar, welcomed everyone to the Graduate Students Association meeting for February 2025. She expressed her gratitude to the executive team for their support and emphasized her excitement about working with all attendees. She extended a warm welcome to the council members, students, and GSA executives, appreciating their dedication to supporting the graduate student community.

Shaily highlighted the importance of maintaining an environment where everyone feels heard and respected. She encouraged open discussions that acknowledge different perspectives while ensuring a safe and inclusive space for all. She reaffirmed her commitment to fostering collaboration and meaningful discussions to enhance the graduate student experience.

Before proceeding with the agenda, Shaily acknowledged that the meeting was being held on Treaty 6 territory and the homeland of the Métis. She paid respect to the First Nations and Métis ancestors of this land and reaffirmed the commitment to maintaining relationships with one another.

The meeting was called to order at 5:04 PM after the quorum was met. Attendees were asked to record their attendance

- **Rules and Regulation**

Before proceeding with the agenda, the Chair introduced the rules and regulations for the meeting.

- **Agenda: Approval of Agenda**

The chair stated that today's agenda was emailed to all council members and posted on the GSA website as well. The chair then asked if there were any amendments to the agenda package.

Hearing none, he called for a mover and a seconder to approve the agenda.

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

- **Agenda: Motion to Receive GSA Council Meeting Minutes**

- **GSA Council Meeting Minutes for November**

The meeting moved to accept the GSA Council Meeting Minutes for November.

A motion was made and seconded.

A vote was held, and the minutes were passed with a majority vote in favor.

- **GSA Council Meeting Minutes for December**

The meeting moved to accept the GSA Council Meeting Minutes for December.

A motion was made and seconded.

A vote was held, and the minutes were passed with a majority vote in favor.

- **GSA Council Meeting Minutes for January**

The meeting moved to accept the GSA Council Meeting Minutes for January.

A motion was made and seconded.

A vote was held, and the minutes were passed with a majority vote in favor.

- **Agenda: Motion to Receive GSA Executive Meeting Minutes**

- **GSA Executive Meeting Minutes for January 3rd, 10th, & 28th, 2025**

The meeting moved to accept the GSA Executive Meeting Minutes for January 3rd, 10th, & 28th.

A motion was made and seconded.

A vote was held, and the minutes were passed with a majority vote in favor.

- **Agenda: Motion to receive first awards committee meeting minutes**

The meeting moved to accept first awards committee meeting minutes.

A motion was made and seconded.

A vote was held, and the minutes were passed with a majority vote in favor.

- **Agenda: Motion to remove Stella Aluko from the Awards 2025 Committee due to lack of participation**

The meeting moved to remove Stella Aluko from the Awards 2025 Committee due to lack of participation.

A motion was made and seconded.

A vote was held, and the minutes were passed with a majority vote in favor.

- **Agenda: Motion to receive Governance committee meeting minutes January 31st and February 14th**

The meeting moved to accept the GSA Executive Meeting Minutes for January 3rd, 10th, & 28th.

A motion was made and seconded.

A vote was held, and the minutes were passed with a majority vote in favor.

- **Agenda: Approval of Amendments to the GSA Policy**

David Ohene-Amoako, Chair of the GSA Governance Committee, addressed the council regarding amendments to the GSA policy. He explained that the committee had received several proposed amendments from the Executive Committee. After reviewing the amendments and discussing them with the executives, the Governance Committee determined that the changes were necessary and beneficial. The committee made a few clarifications and ultimately approved

all amendments. David presented the approved amendments to the council for final acceptance, so they could become part of the working document.

Shaily then called for a mover and a seconder to support the approval of the amendments. Lindsay Carlson, VP Finance, requested clarification on what exactly was being voted on. After discussion, David suggested reviewing the amendments one by one, allowing executives responsible for each amendment to provide explanations before proceeding with the vote.

Lindsay Carlson offered to lead the discussion, as she had authored most of the amendments. She proposed sharing the document on-screen and reviewing each amendment individually before voting. Shaily agreed with this approach, and the council proceeded with reviewing and voting on the amendments.

- **Agenda: GSA Policy revision 2025**

1. Amendment 1: Removal of the Association Student Handbook Policy

The Association Student Handbook Policy is being removed because it is no longer cost-effective. The resources spent on printing and maintaining this policy could be reallocated to more effective digital awareness methods. Additionally, relevant policy information is already available through online resources and GSA communications.

The meeting moved for this policy revision, a motion was made and seconded. A vote was held, and the policy revision was approved with a majority vote in favor.

2. Amendment 2: Removal of the ThinkGRAD Section

ThinkGRAD is an organization that no longer exists, making this section irrelevant. The removal ensures that outdated references are eliminated from GSA documentation to avoid confusion and maintain clarity in policies.

The meeting moved for this policy revision, a motion was made and seconded. A vote was held, and the policy revision was approved with a majority vote in favor.

3. Amendment 3: Fee Waiver Approval Process for GSA Commons Bookings

A new requirement mandates that all fee waivers for bookings of the GSA Commons must receive unanimous approval from the GSA Executive. Additionally, fee waiver decisions must be

documented and transparently reported. This ensures fairness and accountability in providing fee waivers, preventing potential favoritism or arbitrary decisions.

The meeting moved for this policy revision, a motion was made and seconded. A vote was held, and the policy revision was approved with a majority vote in favor.

4. Amendment 4: Clarification of Free Booking Privileges for Ratified Groups

Previously, there was ambiguity regarding whether ratified groups could book the GSA Commons for free. This amendment explicitly states that ratified groups can book the space at no cost during regular hours but will be responsible for paying any additional costs associated with extra services, such as security, cleaning, or equipment usage.

The meeting moved for this policy revision, a motion was made and seconded. A vote was held, and the policy revision was approved with a majority vote in favor.

5. Amendment 5: Fixed Booking Fee for Non-Ratified Groups and Individuals

A fixed rate of **\$75 per hour** has been introduced for non-ratified groups and individuals booking the GSA Commons. This ensures a standardized, predictable pricing model, making it easier for both the GSA and external users to plan and budget for events.

The meeting moved for this policy revision, a motion was made and seconded. A vote was held, and the policy revision was approved with a majority vote in favor.

6. Amendment 6: BBQ Rental Fee Standardization

To simplify the BBQ rental process, a **flat rate of \$22** is set for ratified groups, while non-ratified groups will pay an **hourly rate of \$15**. This amendment also removes the additional propane charge, making the pricing structure clearer and more predictable.

The meeting moved for this policy revision, a motion was made and seconded. A vote was held, and the policy revision was approved with a majority vote in favor.

7. Amendment 7: Simplification of Purchasing Approval Process

Previously, GSA policies required two individuals to be involved in any purchases made outside the GSA Commons. This requirement was removed to simplify procurement and avoid

unnecessary administrative hurdles while still maintaining accountability through standard financial approval processes.

The meeting moved for this policy revision, a motion was made and seconded. A vote was held, and the policy revision was approved with a majority vote in favor.

8. Amendment 8: Clarification of Authority Over Health and Dental Insurance

This amendment clarifies that **only the GSA Executive and Council**—not the Board—have the authority to decide on health and dental insurance providers, policies, and fee structures. This ensures that decision-making remains in the hands of those who are directly accountable to graduate students.

The meeting moved for this policy revision, a motion was made and seconded. A vote was held, and the policy revision was approved with a majority vote in favor.

9. Amendment 9: Standardization of Academic Council Ratification and Funding Distribution

This amendment establishes clear guidelines for the process of **ratifying Academic Councils** and distributing funding to them. The changes help ensure consistency, prevent delays, and provide transparency in funding allocation.

The meeting moved for this policy revision, a motion was made and seconded. A vote was held, and the policy revision was approved with a majority vote in favor.

10. Amendment 10: Removal of Multi-Council Membership Requirement for Social Groups

Previously, social groups were required to have members from multiple Academic Councils. This amendment removes that restriction, allowing groups to form based on common interests rather than being forced to recruit members from different councils. It also clarifies ratification requirements for such groups.

The meeting moved for this policy revision, a motion was made and seconded. A vote was held, and the policy revision was approved with a majority vote in favor.

11. Amendment 11: Renaming of the Social Group Funding Policy

The "**Social Group Funding Policy**" has been renamed to the "**Event Funding Policy**" to clarify that funding is available for events organized by any ratified group, not just social groups. This ensures inclusivity and better reflects the funding policy's purpose.

The meeting moved for this policy revision, a motion was made and seconded. A vote was held, and the policy revision was approved with a majority vote in favor.

12. Amendment 12: Pre-Approval Requirement for Funding Requests

This amendment introduces a requirement that all funding requests for social groups must be submitted **before** event expenses are incurred. This ensures financial oversight and prevents groups from seeking reimbursement for unapproved expenses.

The meeting moved for this policy revision, a motion was made and seconded. A vote was held, and the policy revision was approved with a majority vote in favor.

13. Amendment 13: Increase in Maximum Funding for Academic Councils

The maximum funding limit for Academic Councils has been raised from **\$500 to \$750** to account for inflation and rising event costs. This allows Academic Councils to better support student activities and engagement.

The meeting moved for this policy revision, a motion was made and seconded. A vote was held, and the policy revision was approved with a majority vote in favor.

14. Amendment 14: Requirement for Regular Democratic Elections in Academic Councils

Academic Councils must now hold **elections at least once per year** through a fair and democratic process. This amendment ensures that leadership positions remain accountable to council members and are refreshed periodically.

The meeting moved for this policy revision, a motion was made and seconded. A vote was held, and the policy revision was approved with a majority vote in favor.

15. Amendment 15: Deadlines for Academic Council Ratification and Funding Applications

To improve clarity and efficiency, this amendment sets clear deadlines for when Academic Councils must submit ratification requests and funding applications. This prevents last-minute confusion and ensures that funding is distributed in a timely manner.

The meeting moved for this policy revision, a motion was made and seconded. A vote was held, and the policy revision was approved with a majority vote in favor.

16. Amendment 16: Compliance with the Event Funding Policy

All event funding applications must now comply with the newly renamed **Event Funding Policy** to ensure consistency, transparency, and fairness in the allocation of financial support for events.

The meeting moved for this policy revision, a motion was made and seconded. A vote was held, and the policy revision was approved with a majority vote in favor.

- **Agenda: GSA Executive Reports**
- **President**

David Ohene-Amoako reported on recent activities, including his participation in Black History Month events, where he represented the GSA on committees and performed at some of the gatherings. He acknowledged incidents during the period, particularly the loss of a community member in January and the subsequent commemoration in February. He also provided an update on the ongoing Child Care Initiative, which is being planned in both short- and long-term phases in collaboration with the Vice President Indigenous Engagement. He emphasized that efforts are being made to establish a committee to ensure the initiative's continuity beyond the current executive term. He directed the council to his written report for further details on meetings attended.

- **VP Finance and Operations**

Lindsay Carlson reported that the search for a new office manager, now titled Operations Manager, has been launched. Interviews for the top candidates are set to begin next week, with the goal of onboarding a new hire before the current executive term ends. She also noted ongoing work related to the fiscal year 2024 audit, tax documentation, and operational matters. Additionally, she announced the opening of the winter bursary application, which will close on March 31st. Within the first few days, 110 applications were received, matching the total number of bursaries awarded for the entire year, highlighting the financial challenges faced by students.

She encouraged council members to direct struggling students to apply for bursaries and utilize financial aid and food security resources.

- **VP Academic and Student Affairs**

Nickson Joseph provided an update on his recent activities, beginning with the GC Winter Orientation 2025, which was initially scheduled for January 17th but had to be canceled due to severe weather conditions. He noted that a brief summary of the event is available in his report and that the complete budget details will be published on the website once approved by the Executive Committee.

He also addressed the ongoing revisions to the Student-Supervisor Agreement, highlighting that a Google Form was circulated with assistance from the GSA Chair to collect feedback from graduate students. However, he noted that only one academic council has responded so far and encouraged all members to review the document on the GSA website and provide input via the link included in his report.

Regarding the Co-Curricular Record, Nickson reported that the University of Saskatchewan's Career Services, which administers this program, is planning to discontinue it due to resource constraints. As a result, the GSA will no longer be accepting Co-Curricular Record submissions moving forward.

Nickson also mentioned his involvement in the GSA Governance Committee, where he has been reviewing proposed changes. He expressed confidence that these revisions will enhance the effectiveness of the GSA.

For the discussion item, he sought council members' feedback on merging the Fall and Winter orientation events into a single, larger welcome event. This event would take place sometime between January and April and focus solely on welcoming students rather than providing an orientation. He emphasized that this idea is still in the early stages and welcomed suggestions.

Before concluding, he aligned this discussion with the GSA's plans to update its website, ensuring that more information is accessible to students. He requested council members to review item number two in his report and provide their thoughts.

- **VP External Affairs**

Reza Golpayegani reported that he has successfully raised \$33,000 for the GSA Gala, in addition to the \$5,000 allocated from the GSA budget, bringing the total budget to \$38,000. All event seats have been sold out, and no additional sponsorships are being accepted. He also mentioned

that the Awards Committee held its second meeting on March 3rd, and he will present the meeting minutes and application updates at the next council meeting. He invited council members to contact him via email regarding any concerns about the gala or the awards process.

Additionally, Reza noted that he sent a calendar invitation for the Gala to all council members but has received responses from less than half of them. He reminded members that the event is scheduled for April 12th from 5:00 PM to 10:00 PM at Marquis Hall. He urged council members to confirm their attendance and let him know if they would like additional invitations sent to other representatives.

- **VP Indigenous Engagement**

Jennifer Amarualik-Yaremko brought up a proposed bylaw amendment regarding the verification of candidates for the position of Vice President Indigenous Engagement. She suggested that candidates should be verified through the University of Saskatchewan's policy, which confirms membership in an Indigenous community. She stated that she would share the exact wording for the proposed bylaw amendment in the chat. Following discussion, she acknowledged that bylaw amendments should be approved at the AGM and thanked the council for clarifying the process. She also announced that she has secured a new job and will not be eligible to continue in her role past September. She urged council members to encourage Indigenous graduate students to apply for the position and offered her assistance in navigating the application and verification process in an impartial manner.

- **Agenda: Announcements**

Lindsay Carlson announced that the Fee Review Committee has approved changes to the health and dental fee. However, these changes cannot be publicly shared until after the University's Board of Governors meets in mid-April. She stated that once the approval process is complete, she intends to organize an informative town hall to explain the changes and their rationale. Additionally, the updated information will be made available on the GSA website.

- **Agenda: Adjournment**

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:30 pm.

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



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GSA Executives Meeting on February 28, 2025

Time: 4:30 PM to 6:30 PM

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

Guests: None

All executives approved all of these actions.

President:

1. Proposed that a future Childcare project could use the GSA Commons and begin as a 3-hour period, two days per week – possibly Tuesday/Weds or Tues/Thurs. Some executives expressed concern about the complicated logistics of a childcare offering at the GSA Commons (e.g., childproofing furniture, flooring, security, staffing) and whether this short period of time offered is even useful to students, given that many students are in need of more full-time childcare. Other executives felt that this would be a good start and would be a useful service to students.
2. Sought input from executives about a report from a student previously living in a residence hall. Decisions and communications will be kept confidential to protect student privacy.

VP Finance:

1. Reported on applications received for the Operations Manager position and the process of using HR consultant's screening tool to rank applicants. Top candidates will be invited for interviews the week of March 10-14.
2. Suggested that she would lead interviews, but at least two executives should be present for each interview. VP Finance noted that all candidates will be asked the same questions during the interview, following the HR consultant's interview script.
3. Inquired about the exact timing of GSA Elections and GSA AGM 2025, noting that the GSA bylaws require a certain amount of notice to be provided for these events. Recommend that the GSA Chair begin working on the election schedule immediately, so that nothing is rushed/falls behind. The President responded that the chair has raised that and he would be meeting in the week ahead for discussions.

4. Reported that she is collaborating on efforts to host a tax information session in March.
5. Invited executives to attend an all staff meeting at GSA Commons to review policies and procedures with coordinators.

VP Academic:

1. There have been inquiries about whether GSA will have a research conference this year. Suggested to have an Elevator Pitch competition on March 20th, rather than a research conference due to limited time/bandwidth of all executives to plan such an event.
2. Contacted ISSAC to seek potential collaboration for a session on ‘life after graduate studies as an international student’.
3. Discussed suggested policy changes to the executives’ board.

VP External:

1. Moved to approve January Meeting 2025 executives' meeting minutes.
(Approved)

2. GALA 2025:

- a. Asked executives to finalize their guest list for GALA 2025.
- b. The total budget for GALA 2025 was confirmed as \$38,000, comprising \$33,000 from sponsorships and \$5,000 from the GSA budget. Executives recommended that we should aim to not spend \$5,000 from the GSA budget, and that we should be able to do everything we aim to do with the funds raised.
- c. There was discussion about the amount of the “scholarship” funds that accompanies each award. It was decided that the faculty receiving an award should not receive any funds, and that funds would be dispersed following the event by bank transfer after we collect information needed for tax purposes.

3. Program of the event:

Opening Speeches 5 - 6	Some of the names are removed for confidentiality purposes. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indigenous Drummer Performance • Indigenous Elder • Indigenous Elder • David Ohene-Amoako (GSA President) • Dr. Debby Burshtyn (USASK CGPS Dean) • Dr. Vince Bruni-Bossio (USASK Acting VP Academic) • Dr. Jerome Cranstone (USASK VP Student and Learning)
Dinner 6 - 6:30	Tables should be called one by one by MC.
Awards Session 6:30 - 7:15	People on the stage for the awards session: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • David Ohene-Amoako (GSA President) • Nickson Joseph (GSA VP Academic) • Jennifer Amarualik-Yaremko (GSA VP Indigenous Affairs)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reza Golpayegani (GSA VP External) • Dr. Jerome Cranstone (USASK VP Student and Learning) • Dr. Debby Burshtyn (USASK CGPS Dean) • Dr. Baljit Singh (USASK VP Research) <p>Awardees with a speech:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Banani Roy (Advising Excellence) • Jeremy Irvine (Excellence in Community Service) • Nima Khalili Tanha (Mark Kroeker Exceptional Student Leadership Award) <p>The rest of the awardees do not have a speech time slot.</p>
Closing: 7:15 - 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Baljit Singh (USASK VP Research) • Nickson Joseph (GSA VP Academic) • Elected GSA President



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GSA Executives Meeting on March 18, 2025

Time: 3:00 PM to 4:30 PM

Attendance: David Ohene-Amoako, Lindsay Carlson, Nickson Joseph, Reza Golpayegani.

Regrets: Jennifer Amarualik-Yaremko

All executives approved all of these actions.

VP Finance:

1. Debrief/discussion on first round of interviews in Operations Manager search. Noted that Lindsay and Jen are meeting with our HR Consultant on March 19.

2. Received a request from Ali for a short phone call last week. He wanted to warn us about an upcoming change that will be announced next week (my prediction is some sort of merger), that will not impact students and is “good news” but he could not reveal details at this time.
3. Discussed planning for a Town Hall to discuss changes to H&D plan fee in April. Ali from Studentcare agreed to attend to help explain the changes in the plan.
4. Sought executive approval to give bursary selection committee each a \$10 coffee gift card as a thank you for their dedication this academic year. - Approved
5. Some discussion about next steps to how to proceed with further revisions to the bylaws given the Governance Committees reluctance to participate in further meetings.

VP Academic:

1. Updated executive board about the planning of the elevator pitch competition.

VP External:

1. Moved to approve February 2025 executives' meeting minutes. **(Approved)**
2. **GALA 2025:**
 - a. **Sale of Remaining GALA 2025 Tickets**
 - i. The Executive Board approved the sale of the remaining approximately 35 GALA 2025 tickets to graduate students at a price of \$30 plus tax.
 - ii. To ensure only graduate students purchase these tickets, buyers must use their USASK email to receive the ticket.
 - iii. A maximum of two tickets may be purchased per graduate student.
 - b. **GSA Staff Complimentary Ticket Policy**
 - i. The Executive Board decided not to provide a complimentary +1 ticket to GSA staff, as they are compensated for their time at the GALA.
 - c. **Complimentary Tickets for Awardees**
 - i. Each award recipient will receive three complimentary guest tickets.
 - ii. The Advising Excellence Award recipient requested two additional tickets, which were granted at no cost to avoid charging an awardee for attending their recognition ceremony.
 - d. **Invitations to External Representatives**
 - i. The Executive Board approved invitations for four representatives from the USSU (current executives) and two representatives from ISSAC to attend the event.
 - e. **Complimentary Ticket for Former GSA VP External**

- i. The current GSA VP External (Reza) informed the Board that a complimentary +1 ticket was offered to Abbas (former GSA VP External) in appreciation of his support during the current fiscal year.
- f. Reimbursement for Canva Premium Subscription**
 - i. The Executive Board was informed that the certificate file contained premium content, requiring Reza to activate Canva Premium to access the file.
 - ii. Reza will submit a reimbursement request at the end of April 2025.



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GSA Awards Committee Meeting on March 3, 2025

Time: 5:00 PM to 6:00 PM

Attendance: Reza Golpayegani (Chair, VP External), Shabnam Abdi, Adam Luchkanych, Zohreh Sadati, Kiegan Lioyd, Minha Batool, Yesu Ramya Kandregula, Stella Aluko

Regret: David Ohene-Amoako, Meherun Nahar, Naznin Jahan

All Committee members approved all of these actions.

Agenda:

1. Discussion Session:

The Committee members held a discussion session regarding the scores assigned to applicants. The details of this discussion have been omitted from the meeting minutes for confidentiality purposes.

2. Motion to have two awardees in Technology and Engineering (By Reza Golpayegani)

Reza stated that, since there were no applicants for the Research Excellence in Indigenous Studies category, the committee could consider awarding two recipients in a category with the highest number of applicants. The Research Excellence in STEM Technology and Engineering category received the most applications; therefore, Reza proposed that two awards be given in this category to the top two candidates with the highest scores.

3. Motion to vote on the results of categories with only one applicant (By Reza Golpayegani)

Reza proposed that the committee vote on the results for two categories that each had only one applicant: Professional Excellence Award and Research Excellence in Arts and Humanities. All committee members present at the meeting approved granting these two awards to their respective applicants.

4. Award Confirmation Process

The awards committee chair, Reza Golpayegani, informed members that an email would be sent after the meeting listing the exact names of the awardees for each category. Committee members were required to either confirm or reject the results by replying to that email. All responses from committee members were received and are available in the VP External GSA email under the GALA 2025 folder. All committee members confirmed that the results align with the scores recorded in the Google Sheet.

5. Final Awardees:

- a. **Advising Excellence:** Prof. Banani Roy
- b. **Excellence in Community Service:** Jeremy Irvine
- c. **Mark Kroeker Exceptional Student Leadership:** Nima Khalili Tanha
- d. **Research Excellence in Humanities, Arts, Social Sciences, Law, or Education:** Hamid Yari
- e. **Professional Excellence:** Seyedeh Zahra Sadati
- f. **Research Excellence in Interdisciplinary Studies:** Asmaa Fadl
- g. **Research Excellence in STEM – Medical Science and Public Health:** Andrea Escalante
- h. **Research Excellence in STEM – Natural Sciences:** Emilio Enrique Tellarini Prieto
- i. **Research Excellence in STEM – Technology and Engineering:** Keyhan Najafian and Palash Ranjan Roy



1) Appeal to GSA Council: Proposal to Remove the Governance Committee Policy (discussion and approval)

The Governance Committee is currently one of the GSA's sub-committees, as outlined in Policy 15.1.4. It consists of the GSA President, VP Academic and Student Affairs, the GSA Chair, at least one council member, and one regular member.

Under the current system, any amendments or changes to GSA governing documents must first go through this committee, and only after approval are they presented to the GSA Council — the ultimate decision-making body.

While the intention of this committee was to add structure, the current executive team has found that it often slows down meaningful changes rather than facilitating them. Moreover, the timeline for forming this committee — typically toward the end of fall — places additional strain on executives and the chair to recruit members with a high level of knowledge and commitment.

The work of the governance committee is highly technical, requiring an in-depth understanding of GSA operations and governing documents. Experience has shown that expecting volunteers to handle such complexity is neither realistic nor sustainable.

Therefore, in the interest of efficiency, clarity, and reducing bureaucratic delays, the current executive team strongly urges the council to remove the GSA policy and terms of reference from the policy manual that define the nature and role of the GSA Governance Committee.

We believe this change will streamline processes and empower the council to make timely and well-considered decisions.

Nickson Joseph

VP Academic and Student Affairs

EXECUTIVE REPORTS



University of Saskatchewan Graduate Students' Association Presented by the GSA President Report to the GSA Council: March 2025

Dear Council Members,

I present to you the activities I participated in as **GSA President** in the month of March. Thank you all for your service to GSA.

CFS National Graduate Conference

From March 7th to 9th, I represented the University of Saskatchewan Graduate Students Association at the National Graduate Caucus of the Canadian Federation of Students (CFS) in Ontario. The meeting featured a session on Anti-Oppression by Nita Badaiki, aimed at fostering spaces of equity and empowerment among NGC members. Additionally, there was a Science Connect workshop led by Prativa Baral, PhD, MPH, and Jasmine Mah, MD, PhD, which focused on communication and information management an important topic for student leaders in today's world. The event ended with the election of new executives for the NGC, marking a successful and impactful gathering.

BRT Nutana Stakeholder Committee Meeting

This month, on behalf of the VP finance, I had the opportunity to represent the student body at the BRT Nutana Stakeholder Committee Meeting, where we discussed the implementation of new heated bus stops. This initiative aims to enhance the comfort of bus riders, particularly during the winter months. The proposal is still under discussion, and its rollout will be carefully planned to ensure a smooth implementation and address any potential challenges.

GSA Childcare Update

In my ongoing efforts to realize the vision of providing childcare for our graduate student parents, I have developed a proposal outlining a short-term plan to get the childcare service up and running. This initiative has led to several engagements and presentations to gather feedback and build support. As part of this process, I had the opportunity to meet with Vice Provost Jerome Cranston PhD from Students and Learning for an extensive discussion. He expressed strong support for the idea, offering valuable input and assuring us that he would stand with us and help within his capacity. Additionally, Jennifer, VPiE, has also been highly supportive of the initiative, sharing in the vision and offering her ongoing support. Our goal is to leave behind a working document that will guide a task force in continuing the implementation of this project.

In all, the month of March was marked by significant progress and impactful engagements. I am grateful for the support and collaboration from all members. As Martin Luther King Jr. once said, "*The time is always right to do what is right.*" Let us keep pushing forward with purpose and unity. Thank you

Meetings Attended

03/01/2025 BRT Nutana Stakeholder Committee Meeting - March 1st
03/05/2025 CGPS Executive & Coordinating Committee
03/06/2025 PEC and Student Executive meeting
03/06/2025 Graduate Student Career meeting
03/07-09/2025 CFS NGC meeting
03/11/2025 Governance Committee Meeting

03/11/2025 Office manager interview
03/17/2025 CGPS Distinguished Graduate mentor Adjudication
03/17/2025 Childcare discussion meeting
03/18/2025 Tax information meeting

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



Dear GSA Councilors,

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

1. Tax Information Session at GSA Commons

I collaborated with USSU President Krupal Chavda and USSU VP Finance Moses Ahiabu to host a Tax Information Session for students at the GSA Commons on March 18. Dr. Devan Mescall, an Assistant Professor at the Edwards School of Business, gave a presentation packed with useful information, and then answered individual questions for nearly an hour. Fifty undergraduate students, graduate students, and postdocs joined the session to better understand the Canadian tax system, how to file their own taxes, and what potential tax deductions they could claim. We are grateful to USSU for their collaboration and for providing pizza for the event. Students who wish to file taxes themselves are able to file for free through CFS using the UFile program by entering "Free for Students" special offer code CFS1981. Further directions can be found on the UFile [website](#).

2. Community Volunteer Income Tax Program (CVITP)

Graduate students who wish to seek additional assistance with filing their income tax can search for free tax clinics offered through the CVITP program. Please make sure the free clinic is registered through the Government of Canada [website](#) to avoid potential scams. GSA is working to plan a CVITP event at the GSA Commons in April, but details will be announced at a later date.

3. Elevator Pitch Competition at GSA Commons

I supported VP Student Affairs in the planning and with day-of-event coordination of the GSA's second annual Elevator Pitch competition. Though we did not have the bandwidth to organize a full GSA Research Conference this year, we did want to give students an opportunity to share their research, practice their public speaking skills, and win some prize money.

4. Upcoming Town Hall on Health and Dental Fee Change

I am working to plan a Town Hall on the Health and Dental Plan in April, following the Board of Governors meeting, at which the USask tuition and fees for next academic year will be made

public. The goal is to help graduate students understand why the fee is changing, inform students so that they can prepare financially, as well as to help them get the most out of their plan and benefit both now and in the future.

5. Operations Manager Hiring Update

The GSA Executives interviewed seven individuals for the Operations Manager position during the week of March 10-14. We have excellent candidates interested in the position, and we are in the process of checking references, with the hope of making an official offer to the best candidate by March 21.

VP Finance Meetings Attended

3/5/2025	Fee Review Committee Meeting
3/5/2025	VP Finance/Treasury Dept Meeting
3/5/2025	GSA Council Meeting
3/6/2025	President's Executive Committee
3/6/2025	All Staff Meeting
3/10/2025	Operations Manager Interview
3/11/2025	Operations Manager Interview
3/12/2025	Indigenous Engagement Week Grad Celebration
3/13/2025	Operations Manager Interview
3/13/2025	Auditor FY24 Review Meeting
3/13/2025	Planning Meeting for Elevator Pitch Competition
3/14/2025	Operations Manager Interview
3/18/2025	Tax Information Session Event
3/18/2025	GSA Executive Meeting
3/19/2025	Planning and Priorities Committee
3/19/2025	HR Consultant Meeting
3/24/2025	Bursary Selection Committee Meeting
3/25/2025	Bookkeeper Meeting

As always, please feel free to contact me with questions or concerns.

Regards,

Lindsay G. Carlson (she/her)

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

PhD Candidate, Department of Biology University of Saskatchewan



Dear GSA Councilors,

I am writing to provide you with an update on my March activities as the **Vice-President External** at GSA.

1) GALA 2025 Update

Initially, I booked the Exeter Room at Marquis Hall for GALA 2025, which has a maximum capacity of 180 seats, as I was unaware of the availability of other rooms. Although I asked Marquis staff over email, they did not inform me about the availability of other rooms. However, after recently inquiring about additional seating, I was informed that we could move to the Garry Room, which has a maximum capacity of 250 seats. Garry room does not have a built-in projector and screen, so I rented a projector and screen from a regular Marquis contractor for the amount of \$2633.48. The package that they provide includes an AV system as well as a dual-screen setup.

All awardees will receive three complimentary seats for their guests, except for the Advising Excellence awardee, who will receive five complimentary seats. This adjustment was discussed and approved in an Executive Meeting on March 18th.

Additionally, all GSA representatives have been invited and should have received a calendar invitation from me for GALA 2025.

2) Operations Manager Interview

On March 13th, I participated in two interviews for the Operational Manager position that we are currently hiring for. I interviewed two candidates and carefully assessed their qualifications, experience, and suitability for the role. Following the interviews, I provided my detailed evaluation and feedback to the VP Finance to assist in the decision-making process.

3) Second Awards Meeting Minute

This meeting minute is included in the agenda package for the upcoming GSA Council meeting and outlines the decisions and matters that the Awards Committee voted on. Additionally, the committee held a confidential discussion session for half an hour to review and deliberate on their respective scores for each awardee. While the entire meeting was recorded, the details of the discussion session have been omitted from the meeting minutes to respect the privacy of individual applicants and their backgrounds.

4) Executives Meeting minutes

February executives' meeting minutes are posted on the website and executives board had one meeting in February on 28th.

5) Meetings Attended

02/28/2025	GSA Executives Meeting
03/03/2025	Second Awards Committee Meeting
03/05/2025	GSA Council Meeting
03/13/2025	Operations Manager Interview
03/14/2025	Meeting with Zohreh Sadati (Current coordinator) regarding Gala 2025
03/18/2025	GSA Executives Meeting
03/19/2025	Meeting with GALA 2025 MC

Please feel free to contact me with questions or concerns. (gsa.external@usask.ca)

Best,

Reza Golpayegani (He/Him)

Vice-President of External Affairs, Graduate Students' Association (GSA)

M.Sc. Student, Department of Computer Science



Dear GSA Councilors,

The following items listed below are either discussion items or an update.

Note: Initiatives and discussions related to confidential matters concerning individual students are not made public.

1) Elevator Pitch Competition (update)

In collaboration with the GSA VP Finance, we organized GSA Elevator Pitch Competition on March 20th, 2025, at GSA Commons. Although 26 students registered, we only had less than half of them who showed up. Even with less turnover, the students who participated and who came to see the event really enjoyed. Lunch was served and prizes were distributed to the best presenters as determined by the judging panel.

2) GSA Leadership Circle – Next Step (update)

Since the last time I made the proposal to convene a leadership circle I have had students and staffs talking to me – asking questions and giving perspectives.

To answer them all here, GSA Leadership Circle will not take away any decision-making power from the GSA Council. The only purpose of the circle is to try to create and stabilize institutional knowledge for the long-term projects of GSA. I am planning to propose this at the AGM next month and I request the support of all councilors in approving this. Please see the meeting minutes from January Council meeting for reference.

Meetings Attended

3/6/2025 Meeting with PEC

3/11/2025 OM Candidate Interview

3/12/2025 Graduate Programs Committee

3/13/2025 Elevator pitch discussion with VP finance

3/14/2025 OM Candidate Interview

3/18/2025 GSA Executive Committee Meeting

3/19/2025 Graduate Academic Affairs Committee

3/20/2025 Elevator Pitch

3/20/2025 Meeting with George Foufas (Consumer Services)

3/20/2025 University Council

3/24/2025 GSA Bursary Selection Committee Meeting

3/26/2025 Academic Programs Committee

Please feel free to contact me with questions or concerns.

Thanks,

Nickson Joseph

Vice-President Academic and Student Affairs

Graduate Students' Association

University of Saskatchewan

Appendix A

Academic Council	Name of Councilors and (alternates)	Oct 2024	Nov 2024	Dec 2024	Jan 2025	Feb 2025	Mar 2025	Apr 2025	May 2025
Biology Graduate Student Association	Portia Mohrbutter Ayicia Nabigon (Alternate)	P	P	P	P	P			
Chemistry Course Council	Marco Justino Loza Taghavi (Alternate) Ozra	P	A	P	A	A			
College of Medicine Graduate Students Society – Biochemistry, microbiology & Immunology	Andy Kim - Councilor Shirley Yu - Councilor Samiul Chowdhury - Councilor Sara Dalkilic - Councilor Rylan Bahrey (Alternate) Adrielle Souza (Alternate)	P	P	P	P	P			
Computer Science Graduate Council (CSGC)	Thulani Hewavithana Norah Ridley Mary Fidelma Ndupu Mumtahina Ahmed (Alternate)	P	P	P	P	P			
Engineering Graduate Community Council (EGCC) – Biological	Sumana Majumder Emmanuel Ezechinyelu (Alternate)	A	P	P	A	P			

Engineering Graduate Community Council (EGCC) – Biomedical	Danyil Dmytriiev Bashu Gautam (Alternate)	P	P	P	P	P			
Engineering Graduate Community Council (EGCC) – Chemical	Parvaneh Koranian Sara Nath (Alternate)	A	A	A	A	A			
Engineering Graduate Community Council (EGCC) – Civil, Geological & Environmental	Anukul Basnet Bashu Gautam (Alternate)	P	P	P	P	P			
Engineering Graduate Community Council (EGCC) – Electrical & Computer	Deepa Upadhyaya Subedi Bashu Gautam (Alternate)	A	P	P	A	P			
Engineering Graduate Community Council (EGCC) – Mechanical	Kiranbir Kaur Faizan Ansari (Alternate)	A	A	P	A	P			
English Course Council	Lydie Hua Gwen Rose (Alternate)	P	P	P	P	P			
Geography & Planning Graduate Council	Emily Ireland Prakash Sapkota (Alternate)	A	A	A	P	P			
Kinesiology Graduate Student Council	Matthew Chapelski Karissa Johnson (Alternate)	P	P	P	P	P			

Nursing Graduate Student Association (NGSA)	Jordan Sherstobitoff Ewurabena Sacky-Forson Hayen Chei Luri (Alternate) Stella Aluko (Alternate) Kristen Witter (Alternate)	P	P	A	P	P			
Plant Science	Luke Dojack	P	P	P	P	P			
Physical Therapy Student Society (PTSS)	Patrick Janzen-Brown Taya Stang (Alternate)	P	A	A	P	A			
SENSSA	Jethro Opara Chelsea Ohenewaa Nyarko (Alternate)	P	P	P	P	A			
School of Public Health (SPHSA)	Wasim Al-Khanati Omar Bardouh Theresa Agbeyei Isfar Chowdhry (Alternate)	A	P	P	P	P			
Sociology GSA	Meaghan Boily Leah PHouseman (Alternate)	P	P	A	P	P			

Soil Science Graduate Student Association	Andrea Cline Chloe Canning (Alternate) Levi Lundell	P	P	P	P	A			
Animal and Poultry Science GSA	Megan Dubois Gus Halibert (Alternate)	P	A	P	P	P			
Toxicology Graduate Student Association (TGSA) Academic Councilor	Chantel De Lange Summer Selinger (Alternate)	A	P	A	A	A			
History Graduate Student Association	Kiegan Lloyd Catlin M. Woloschuk	P	A	A	P	A			
Physics & Engineering Physics (PEGASUS)	Jeisson A. Vanegas Carranza Nicholas Simonson	P	A	A	A	P			
Johnson Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy Student Association	Harjot Tur-harjot Bazal Khalid (Alternate)	A	A	A	A	A			

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