



Graduate Students' Association

University of Saskatchewan-Graduate Students' Association (GSA)

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

Meeting Location: Online

“As Council gathers, we acknowledge that we are on Treaty 6 Territory and the Homeland of the Métis. We pay our respect to the First Nations and Métis ancestors of our gathering place and reaffirm our relationship with one another.”

Attendance: See appendix A

Chair: Shaily Tandekar

Recording Secretary: Arman Heydari

- **Call to Order**

The Chair, Shaily Tandekar, welcomed everyone to the Graduate Students Association meeting for March 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.

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 5:15 PM after the quorum was met.

- **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. 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 March 5th**

The meeting moved to accept the GSA Council Meeting Minutes for March 5th.

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 February 28th, March 18th**

The meeting moved to accept the GSA Executive Meeting Minutes for February 28th, March 18th.

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 second awards committee meeting minutes**

The meeting moved to accept second 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 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."

Presenter: President David Ohene-Amoako

David Ohene-Amoako introduced the motion, highlighting the long-standing issue of securing childcare for graduate students. He explained that previous efforts had struggled due to the difficulty of obtaining space on campus. He noted that sources indicated that if an initial childcare initiative was launched, securing a permanent space in the future would become easier.

The proposed plan involves establishing a drop-in childcare service at the GSA Commons, where parents could drop off their children for a maximum of three hours in the morning and another session in the afternoon. A formal proposal, including a terms of reference, has been developed with the goal of launching the childcare service by June of the following year.

David moved to establish a seven-member task force committee to oversee the implementation. The committee would include:

- GSA executives (VP Internal and President)
- One regular member
- One council member
- The GSA Office Manager
- The Provost (or their representative) overseeing learning initiatives

The committee's mandate would be to ensure that the childcare initiative is successfully implemented within one year.

Sunny Bui (CKGS) asked for clarification on space availability challenges.

- David explained that graduate students currently lack dedicated childcare spaces, with the existing undergraduate USSU childcare center having a waitlist of approximately 700 students.

- He further noted that securing a new space on campus has been difficult, despite ongoing efforts and inquiries with the Vice Provost and university administration.
- While university officials have not explicitly refused space, they have cited a lack of availability.

Jordan Sherstobitoff (NGSA Principal Chair) inquired about the expected costs and services.

- David responded that the Student Wellness Center has identified potential financial partners to assist with setup costs.
- The task force will work with the Student Wellness Center to determine the final cost and operational details.
- The childcare service will operate on designated days rather than being a permanent facility, allowing the GSA Commons to continue its usual activities.

Sunny Bui (CKGS) asked if collaboration with USSU was considered and whether CGPS (College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies) would provide financial support.

- David clarified that while collaboration with USSU had not been a primary focus, the GSA had engaged with CGPS, which has provided individuals to assist in securing space.
- CGPS has committed human resources but has not yet provided financial support. However, they remain engaged in discussions and are aware of the initiative.

The motion to establish the task force committee was put to a vote. The majority of votes were in favor; the motion is carried.

- **Agenda: Appeal to GSA Council: Proposal to Remove the Governance Committee Policy**

Presenter: VP Student Affairs, Nickson Joseph

Nickson Joseph introduced the motion, explaining that the Governance Committee, as outlined in GSA policy 15.1.4, consists of the GSA President (Chair), 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 before being presented to the Council for a final decision.

While the committee was originally intended to add structure, the current executive team has found that it often causes delays in implementing meaningful changes. The timeline for forming the committee, usually towards the end of the fall term, places additional strain on executives and the Chair, making it difficult to recruit committed members with the necessary expertise. Additionally, the highly technical nature of the committee's work makes it unrealistic to rely on volunteers.

In the interest of efficiency and reducing bureaucratic delays, the executive team proposed removing the GSA Governance Committee policy and its terms of reference from the policy manual. This change would allow policy amendments to go directly from the proposer to the Council, streamlining decision-making processes.

David Ohene-Amoako (GSA President) supported the motion, adding that as a former committee chair, he experienced difficulties coordinating with members. A lack of commitment from volunteers often

caused delays, preventing executives and the Council from proceeding with necessary changes. Removing the committee would help eliminate these obstacles and allow for more effective governance.

Jordan Sherstobitoff (NGSA Principal Chair) asked whether removing the committee would change the process for policy amendments.

- Nickson clarified that the only change would be that policy amendments would go directly to the Council without requiring prior approval from the Governance Committee.

The motion was put to a vote. The majority of votes were in favor; the motion is carried.

- **Agenda: Motion to approve Humaira Anjum in the Elections and Referenda committee**

Presenter: Shaily Tandekar

Shaily Tandekar introduced the motion to approve Humara Anjum as a member of the Elections and Referenda Committee. She explained that initially, Samshuddin Maru was considered for the position as a regular member. However, during the committee meeting, it was discovered that he is a council member representing the School of Public Health, which affected the committee's quorum.

To address this issue, Shaily reached out to students who had previously applied for the position and expressed interest. Humara Anjum agreed to step in, and Shaily sought the council's approval for her official appointment.

Shaily also informed the council that the committee had already ratified the election schedule and made the necessary announcements. Due to time constraints, they could not wait for a new member before proceeding, as ensuring an effective election process was a priority.

She opened the floor for questions and then called for a mover and a seconder to approve the agenda.

A vote was held in the chat box. The majority voted in favor, motion carried.

- **Agenda: GSA Executive Reports**

➤ **President**

David Ohene-Amoako briefly reported on his activities, stating that he attended the CFS National Graduate Conference from March 7th to 9th, where new executives were selected for the National Graduates Caucus. Additionally, he represented the Graduate Student Association at the BRT Nutrina Stakeholder Committee meeting on behalf of the VP Finance. During this meeting, discussions focused on the operational system of the new bus stop that the city is working on and ways to improve it. He also mentioned that updates on GSA childcare had already been provided. He concluded by noting that March was a significant month with several meetings and activities, which were highlighted in his report.

➤ **VP Finance and Operations**

Lindsay Carlson reported on her activities, noting that March was a particularly busy month. She collaborated with USSU to host a tax information session at the GSA Commons on March 18th, where a professor from the School of Business provided a presentation and spent an additional hour answering individual tax-related questions. She also co-led the elevator pitch competition with Nickson, with David assisting in coordination. While 26 students signed up, only 10 attended to present, despite the availability of cash prizes and food. She acknowledged the ongoing challenge of student engagement and suggested improving advertising efforts.

Lindsay also mentioned plans for a town hall on health and dental fee changes but stated that the announcement must wait until after the board meeting on April 16th. Additionally, she highlighted the extensive efforts put into hiring a new operations manager, formerly the office manager role. Seven candidates were interviewed, with two advancing to a second round. The selected candidate has formally accepted and will begin on April 14th. She expressed optimism that this hiring will allow executives to focus more on initiatives like conferences rather than daily operational tasks.

➤ **VP Academic and Student Affairs**

Nickson Joseph provided a brief report, first addressing the elevator pitch competition, with details included in his report and key points already mentioned by Lindsay. He then discussed the GSA Leadership Circle, noting that since the last discussion, he has received questions and feedback from students, staff, and counselors. He clarified that the Leadership Circle would not take away any decision-making authority from the GSA Council but is intended to preserve institutional knowledge for long-term projects. He plans to propose this initiative at the AGM, as it requires a bylaw change, and requested the support of all counselors.

Additionally, Nickson mentioned his involvement in the interview process for the new operations manager and referred to his report for details on other meetings he attended. He encouraged counselors to reach out with any concerns.

➤ **VP External Affairs**

Reza Golpayegani provided an update on the upcoming gala, announcing that the venue has been changed from the Exiter Room to the Gary Room in Marquis Hall. He noted that the new room lacks a built-in screen and AV system, requiring coordination with a contractor to provide these services, with cost details included in his report. The new venue accommodates 250 seats, allowing for three guest seats per awardee and five complimentary seats for the Advising Excellence Awardee. An additional 40 seats are available for purchase at a subsidized price of \$30 plus tax.

Reza also reminded Council members that he had sent calendar invitations two months ago and requested those unable to attend to notify him via email so their spots could be reassigned. He emphasized the importance of having sufficient Council representation at the gala. He concluded by directing members to his report for further details, including executive meeting minutes and the second awards meeting minutes.

- **Agenda: Adjournment**

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 5:53.

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



Appendix A

Academic Council	Name of Councilors and (alternates)	Oct 2024	Nov 2024	Dec 2024	Jan 2025	Mar 5, 2025	Mar 26, 2025	Apr 2025	May 2025
Biology Graduate Student Association	Portia Mohrbutter Ayicia Nabigon (Alternate)	P	P	P	P	P	P		
Chemistry Course Council	Marco Justino Loza Taghavi (Alternate) Ozra	P	A	P	A	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	P		
Computer Science Graduate Council (CSGC)	Thulani Hewavithana Norah Ridley Mary Fidelma Ndupu Mumtahina Ahmed (Alternate)	P	P	P	P	P	P		
Engineering Graduate Community Council (EGCC) – Biological	Sumana Majumder Emmanuel Ezechinyelu (Alternate)	A	P	P	A	P	P		
Engineering Graduate Community Council (EGCC) – Biomedical	Danyil Dmytriiev Bashu Gautam (Alternate)	P	P	P	P	P	P		
Engineering Graduate Community Council (EGCC) – Chemical	Parvaneh Koranian Sara Nath (Alternate)	A	A	P	A	A	P		

Engineering Graduate Community Council (EGCC) – Civil, Geological & Environmental	Anukul Basnet Bashu Gautam (Alternate)	P	P	P	P	P	P		
Engineering Graduate Community Council (EGCC) – Electrical & Computer	Deepa Upadhyaya Subedi Bashu Gautam (Alternate)	A	P	P	A	P	P		
Engineering Graduate Community Council (EGCC) – Mechanical	Kiranbir Kaur Faizan Ansari (Alternate)	A	A	P	A	P	P		
English Course Council	Lydie Hua Gwen Rose (Alternate)	P	P	P	P	P	P		
Geography & Planning Graduate Council	Emily Ireland Prakash Sapkota (Alternate)	A	A	A	P	P	P		
Kinesiology Graduate Student Council	Matthew Chapelski Karissa Johnson (Alternate)	P	P	P	P	P	A		
Nursing Graduate Student Association (NGSA)	Jordan Sherstobitoff Ewurabena Sacky-Forsen Hayen Chei Luri (Alternate) Stella Aluko (Alternate) Kristen Witter (Alternate)	P	P	P	P	P	P		
Plant Science	Luke Dojack	P	P	P	P	P	P		
Physical Therapy Student Society (PTSS)	Patrick Janzen-Brown Taya Stang (Alternate)	P	A	A	P	A	P		
SENSSA	Jethro Opara	P	P	P	P	A	A		

	Chelsea Ohenewaa Nyarko (Alternate)								
School of Public Health (SPHSA)	Wasim Al-Khanati Omar Bardouh Theresa Agbeyei Isfar Chowdhry (Alternate)	A	P	P	P	P	P		
Sociology GSA	Meaghan Boily Leah PHouseman (Alternate)	P	P	P	P	P	P		
Soil Science Graduate Student Association	Andrea Cline Chloe Canning (Alternate) Levi Lundell	P	P	P	P	A	A		
Animal and Poultry Science GSA	Megan Dubois Gus Halibert (Alternate)	P	A	P	P	P	P		
Toxicology Graduate Student Association (TGSA) Academic Councilor	Chantel De Lange Summer Selinger (Alternate)	A	P	P	A	A	A		
History Graduate Student Association	Kiegan Lloyd Catlin M. Woloschuk	P	A	A	P	A	P		
Physics & Engineering Physics (PEGASUS)	Jeisson A. Vanegas Carranza Nicholas Simonson	P	A	P	P	P	P		
Johnson Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy Student Association	Harjot Tur-harjot Bazal Khalid (Alternate)	A	A	A	A	A	A		

Executive member	Name of executive member	Oct 2024	Nov 2024	Dec 2024	Jan 2025	Mar 5, 2025	Mar 26, 2025
Exec. President	David Ohene-Amoako	P	P	P	P	P	P
Exec. VP Finance and Operations	Lindsay Carlson	P	P	P	P	P	P
Exec. VP Academic and Student Affairs	Nickson Joseph	P	P	P	P	P	P
Exec. VP External Affairs	Reza Golpayegani	P	P	P	P	P	P
Exec. VP Indigenous Engagement	Jennifer Amarualik-Yaremko	P	P	P	A	P	A