University of Saskatchewan Graduate Students’ Association

University Council Report, June 2019

The executives of the graduate students’ association had a very busy month continuing the previous initiatives left to us and familiarizing ourselves with the policies and bylaws of the university critical for the continuity of the work we do to benefit our graduate students. We continue our efforts to find new ways to prepare our graduate students to become the future leaders and benefactors of our society. Moreover, the GSA continues its efforts to engage partners, both on campus and outside the university, in discussions on creating and developing new initiatives. Following our mission, we are focusing on two main areas:

1. **Strengthening our student relationships and engaging our professional partners around campus**

We will continue cultivating ideas that impact the future and better the health of our graduate students. We promote, incentivize, and support collaborations for research, learning, and networking among members of our university and our community as a whole, therefore, increasing and fusing our strengths. We have met with executives of International Student and Study Abroad Centre (ISSAC), which is a central support unit for everyone on campus that seeks the needs of our international students. In fact, our graduate student body consists 38% of international graduate students, but this number is roughly 20% and 10% higher for masters and PhD students, respectively, when compared to the national average for 2013 [https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/81-599-x/81-599-x2016011-eng.htm]. As such, here at the University of Saskatchewan, there is a tremendous level of diversity typically not seen elsewhere in Canada. Academically speaking, this diversity is paramount as it nurtures the contrasting ideas and thoughts that make the experience of our graduate students so great, both here at the university and out in our community. Therefore it is important for the GSA and ISSAC to work
closely to address graduate student queries and to cultivate such experiences by continuing to learn one another’s identities, working on transitions events, and building multicultural relationships. By continuing to meet with ISSAC, the GSA will continue working to promote diversity and support our graduate students towards better learning experiences. We met with the Director of Student Affairs and Services as well as members of the Student Wellness and Student Outreach teams, to tighten and strengthen the relationship with the GSA executives. We will work as a team to continue promoting awareness of mental health issues and disseminate effective practices to prevent those issues. We met with the executives of the University of Saskatchewan Students' Union (USSU), and discussed having a greater prospects to network with the community and working as a team on benefit of all our students around campus. I met with the Dean of the College of Graduate and Postdoctoral studies (CGPS) to discuss possible future funding for existing and future initiatives. The Dean, Trever reassured me of his support to the graduate students and committed to receiving a funding request for new and previous initiatives that will benefit our graduate students. We will continue our discussions with our partners around campus to improve the tools and services for all our graduate students.

2. **Looking for opportunities towards better research and life experiences**

We will continue developing new initiatives and activities that will ensure that our graduate students will continue having a good student experience while growing both academically and socially. The GSA has opened applications for 2019 spring/summer bursaries for our students who are in need and are having financial issues that influence their academic performance and life in general. We will continue working on planning future events for our graduate students as well as supporting them to enhance our graduate students’ experience here at the University of Saskatchewan.

Overall, we will strive to promote the health and wellbeing of our graduate student population as well as support them through their career. We hope to work closely with our partners around campus and continue our discussions on what supports we can provide and how we can engage our graduate students.