University Council Report, March 2021

Dear Members of Council,

The GSA Executives are preparing for the end of the fiscal year and have been focusing on the following initiatives:

1. Tuition
2. Three Minute Thesis Competition
3. GSA Annual Awards
4. Winter 2021 Bursaries
5. Graduate Professional Skills

1. Tuition

On behalf of the GSA Executives, I would like to express my disappointment in regard to the tuition consultation for the 2021-2022 academic year. As of today, March 3, 2021, the GSA Executives did not have any tuition consultations with the Provost’s team to discuss the content of the tuition proposal. Additionally, after asking for the tuition proposal for the past 2-3 months, the GSA Executives only learned of specific numbers very recently, when the deadline for Council is fast approaching. This process is far from being transparent, clear, and consultative. The GSA Executives have no place to properly advocate for our graduate students and provide input and feedback in the tuition proposal. We will continue to seek to be included in the conversation and implore senior administration to open the door for conversation.
2. Three Minute Thesis Competition
The Three Minute Thesis Competition is an essential event that allows students to share their outstanding research interests and celebrates our graduate students at the UofS. Therefore, this event will take place virtually on March 26, 2021. Videos will be recorded and shared with judges for further evaluation. Unfortunately, due to COVID-19, there will be no live presentations; however, we will release the 3MT videos on the GSA website once the process has been completed. We would also like to thank the College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies for their financial support in making this event possible.

3. GSA Annual Awards
Due to the ongoing pandemic situation, the GSA Executives have decided not to hold the Annual Awards Gala in-person this year, which would have been taking place at the Remai Modern Museum under normal circumstances. The GSA will be hosting a virtual event where we will be announcing award winners and delivering or mailing their awards to their place of residence.

4. Winter 2021 Bursaries
The GSA bursary applications closed on February 25, 2021 and successful bursary applicants will be informed by March 10, 2021. We received over 100 applications this term, and we would like to thank the College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies for continuing to support our students financially through these bursaries during this difficult time.

5. Graduate Professional Skills
One of our goals this academic year was to provide initiatives that will enhance professional skills and assist graduate students in the working world after graduation. We hosted another “Financial Literacy Seminar” this term where we invited Professor Brian Lane back from the Edwards School of Business. Additionally, we will be hosting a “Resume and Cover Letter Writing” workshop in collaboration with the Student Employment and Career Centre on March 10, 2021, as well as two additional workshops that will focus on interviews, networking, and job search on March 17 & 24, 2021 respectively.
The GSA continues its role to advocate on behalf of graduate students in order to support student success and relay student concerns, organize events to engage students, and collaborate with the USask community to foster an environment of positivity.

Humaira Inam

President

Graduate Students’ Association