

GSA needs more student participation



STUDENT BEAT

Carson Butts

The UNB Graduate Student Association represents graduates at the departmental level, to Faculty and UNB Administration, and to Municipal, Provincial and National Governments – wherever you need us.

But we rely on student participation. We need every graduate program to appoint or elect Councillors and Alternates who will attend the GSA Council Meeting every month. These Council Meetings require a minimum number of Councillors in attendance (quorum) in order to constitutionally proceed and pass proposals and motions to take action.

There are plenty of Councillor positions to make quorum and make valuable, much-needed progress; however, we have become slack and our actively participating numbers are dwindling.

The GSA Executive is also in dire need of grad student participation. We have only three of nine positions filled.

Allow me to explain once and for all that no one VP position is too much commitment for a grad student of any program to take on. Most of the empty positions require six hours per week on average. Two or three of those hours will be set meeting times, the remainder is your own commitment during the week. We need grad students from all departments to take active part. This is an opportunity to show what your program is all about and display your skills as leaders.

The six empty VP positions are placing incredible strain on the three existing Executive members who must fulfill their own responsibilities and also cover as much of the rest as is manageable. Only with nine executives can we guarantee that duties do not become time gobblers and overly stressful. The positions are in fact enjoyable and indispensable, and the experience is one of a kind.

Some of the things we are scrambling to set up despite being under-staffed include setting up a Universal Bus Pass referendum, writing the new budget, evaluating our health and dental plan, revising and tightening up our constitution and by-laws, creating contracts for our staff, and managing a smooth transition from the recently past to the new Executive Committee. We need your help now more than ever.

The GSA operates so that issues and concerns raised by any and all graduate students are given the attention of

UNB's graduate student body as a whole through democratic GSA representation. We actively seek constitutionally lawful solutions that benefit and assist not only the students of the department where an issue or concern originates, but also students of all departments and campuses of UNB.

We all learn and grow together. We are students working for students. We have strength in numbers – the adage of our national Canadian Federation of Students.

I encourage you all and hope that you will consider taking an active role in the GSA in whatever capacity you are able; any time you can give us is greatly appreciated and very useful. Council meetings are open to everyone, as is the Grad House and all of its services. Email the GSA President or any VP or Councillor for information on how you can take part.

I recently heard Maude Barlow, a lifelong activist, say that such active participation in something larger than yourself keeps you healthy in body and mind; your focus on this larger purpose supports you in turn when your personal life and work are giving you trouble or doubt. I've noticed this myself and couldn't agree more.

Carson Butts is the Past Executive Advisor for the Graduate Student Association. Student Beat is a weekly column by UNB's student leaders examining issues pertinent to students. The GSA can be reached at gsa@unb.ca.

Beware the Ides of March



SINCERELY, SARAH MAY

Sarah Farquhar

The Ides of March are upon us.

My high school math teacher always used to warn us about the Ides, which is supposed to bring bad luck. Historically, the Ides (or the 15th of March) represents the day Julius Caesar was murdered. A seer warned him to "Beware the Ides of March," but he ignored her, and was consequentially stabbed 23 times by those he thought were his friends.

And you thought March was about leprechauns and mini eggs.

I don't know about bad luck, but I certainly feel as though my Science midterms are assassinating me. In fact, I think in Shakespeare's Julius Caesar my mother could have played the seer.

"Beware the midterms of Biology," she said, but did I heed her warning? No.

She also warned me about the dangers of tubing this past March break, when myself and some of my braver friends decided to give it a go. (Note: for those not familiar with tubing, this is an activity similar to sledding, only on an inflatable tube and with the added fun of the risk of hurtling to your death.)

At the top of the hill (several panic attacks later) I was paid \$20 by my friend James to actually go down the hill, which resulted in me bailing out of the tube and sliding what felt like a kilometer with nothing to keep me sane but cursing at the top of my lungs.

But I digress.

March 15th has coincidentally (or not) been the date of many not-so-nice events. March 15th, 1990: Iraq executes a journalist from London. March 15, 1976: A UK subway driver is shot after a terrorist detonates a bomb on his train. March 15, 1877: The first ever cricket match.

The evidence is irrefutable.

I'm no seer, but I'd like to make a prediction for your March 15. Beware not the Ides of March, but instead three days after. It will be then that you nurse a St. Paddy's hangover.

Sarah Farquhar can be reached at h38w1@unb.ca and is open to comments and/or suggestions but not stalkers or pornographic emails.



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