



GSS Council Meeting Agenda

Thursday December 12, 2013

GSS Ballroom

Present:

Arni Thrastarson, Barak Caracheo, Brett Kolesnik, Christopher Roach, Christopher Quick, Colum Connolly, Conny Lin, Cynthia Min, Dan Cohen, Daniel Wood, Ehsan Espid, Eric Becklin, Gabriela Badica, Guillaume Beaulieu-Houle, Hafizur Rahman, Hamid Omid, Jack Hickmott, Jahidur Rahman, Jeff Abeysekera, Jon Newell, Julie Zhang, Julienne Jagdeo, Kreso Sola, Kristan Marchak, Laura Bohachyk, Lena Patsa, Lili Meng, Mahsa Mojahednia, Michael Firmin, Michael Ries, Min Xia, Nayantara Duttachoudhury, Omid Nourbakhsh, Paul Save, Richard Sandlin, Sima Valizadeh, Sneha Balani, Tobias Friedel, Vincent Chan, Vivian Lam, Yifei Zhuang.

Regrets:

Alexis Black, Bethany Schmidt, Carolyn Beaumont, Christopher Dickman, Craig Kerr, George Furey, Ingrid Olson, Inti Dewey, Martina Volfova, Mitchell Meler, Pooya Hosseini, Shona Robinson, Sofiya Lazarova, Yuanyuan Liu, Yvonne Dzal.

A. Call to Order and Adoption of the Agenda

The meeting was called to order at 5:36pm.

1. BIRT the agenda be adopted as presented.

MOVER: Gabriela Badica **SECONDER:** Arni Thrastarson

PASSES

B. Introductions

C. Presentations to Council

(10 minutes, 5 minutes for questions)

- **AMS Referendum, Joaquin Acevedo, AMS**

The AMS is in structural deficit and therefore is in need of reform. The aim of the referendum is to consolidate AMS fees. The net change to fees would be zero dollars and this is simply a means to move funds around. The referendum will merge two funds and lower the amount needed in assets from 25 per cent. There will also be a liquidation of some assets including the Whistler Lodge. There will be some bylaw changes surrounding the budget and staff members.

The Student Services fund has accumulated over the years and the AMS would like to merge this with the Student Spaces fund which, normally used for renovations and repairs at the Lodge, will not be needed once the new SUB has been built and the Lodge has been sold.

It was asked whether the U-Pass fee would be affected to which the response was 'No', U-Pass will not be affected.

It was asked what the purpose was of bundling some of the AMS fees and not all?

It was answered that some funds, such as advocacy will always be available. Funds that are not being used can be reallocated and used in other areas. The funds that are exhausted will not be merged and that the proposed changes focus solely on those funds which are underutilized. The change will be to how funds are collected and allocated.

GSS Council Meeting Agenda

Thursday December 12, 2013

GSS Ballroom

There are only four which will be affected including the Student Services Fund, the Student Spaces Fund and the Refugee Fund.

- **Elections Committee, Gabriela Badica, Chief Electoral Officer**

The Elections Committee have set the following dates:

Nomination period: December 16 – January 15.

Campaigning: January 20 – 24

The February Council Meeting (February 20) will be the period for complaints and the acceptance of election results, after which results will be announced.

The Elections Committee have suggested the following changes; that attendance be mandatory for all candidates at all debates and meetings, that the number of signatures needed on the Nomination form be increased from 3 to 10, that candidates collect the form in person from the GSS office and that the GSS devise an official slates with this being that Council vote to not allow slates for the 2014 election.

The Elections Committee feel that this is a more equitable system.

The Elections Committee also propose that endorsements be set at a maximum of two.

The motions put forth will be to change code and policy relating to elections to reflect the above.

It was asked what the rationale was for increasing the number of signatures on the nomination form to which the response was that it is to ensure that candidates are committed to both the election process and the responsibilities of the role.

It was asked whether debates are relevant if there is no audience participation.

It was answered that the Elections Committee will be working towards increased audience participation and voter apathy.

D. Executive Remarks

(3 minutes)

- **President – Christopher Roach**

- Finalized the Council Retreat summary.
- Have been gathering background material for the Student Health Report.
- The proposed timeline for the Strategic Plan is finished.
- Have attended numerous convocation ceremonies during the recent Fall Convocation.
- Have been working on a lot of President and Chancellor Search Committee related items.
- A public congratulations to Susan Porter who was officially named the Dean of the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (previously she was pro-tem) AND the Associate Provost Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies. The fact that we finally have an official Dean and now someone on the Provost side is a big step for the GSS being able to advocate on graduate related issues outside of the Faculty Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies.

- **Vice-President Academic & External Affairs – Colúm Connolly**

GSS Council Meeting Agenda

Thursday December 12, 2013

GSS Ballroom

The advocacy group has been very active; in the past month the GSS has been involved in the CASA conference; have been lobbying for a Tri Council student representative, and multiple entry visas for international students. The ABCs held their inaugural meeting and elected Colum Connolly as Chair.

- **Vice-President Administration – Tobias Friedel**

Current projects include the design of the new website, which should be finished by January, research and implementation of an electronic archival system, and improving the bookings system to make this more affordable for graduate students.

- **Vice-President Finance – Lili Meng**

Finance has processed GrasPos funding, funds for the Pharmaceutical Graduate Society, as well as working on actuals, distributing the fund reform survey, and general financial housekeeping.

- **Vice-President Services – Yuanyuan Liu**

E. Committee, Taskforce, and Operations Reports

(3 minutes)

- **Academic & External Committee – Colum Connolly**

James Ferguson has been appointed as the new Advocacy Coordinator. The committee has been working on external policies.

- **Code and Policy Committee – Julienne Jagdeo**

The main focus has been on the Policy Manual, specifically on the language used. The first 2-3 sections should be ready for approval at the January Council Meeting.

- **Executive Oversight Committee – Jeff Abeysekera**

The EOC have been conducting executive performance reviews, individual meetings and feedback sessions.

- **Health and Dental Plan Committee – Colum Connolly**

- The committee has been discussing items relevant to last month's Council conversation on this topic.
- We are investigating new items to add to the Administration Agreement which will help with the operations of the plan.

- **House Finance Committee – Guillaume Beaulieu-Houle**

The House-Finance Committee has been working on the Business Plan, which will be presented at the January Council Meeting.

- **Human Resources Committee – Tobias Friedel**

The main focus has been on staff performance reviews.

- **Internal Review Task Force – Tobias Friedel**

Nothing to report in lieu of no meeting.



GSS Council Meeting Agenda

Thursday December 12, 2013

GSS Ballroom

- **Services Committee – Min Xia**

The Services Committee have been working on the January Orientation. This will be much smaller than the September intake but the GSS, in conjunction with G + P S would like to offer new graduates a range of events and activities. Councillors are more than welcome to volunteer / participate in the welcoming of new graduates. A ski trip is also being planned for January.

F. Representative Reports

(3 minutes)

- **AMS Council – Colum Connolly**

- The AMS is planning on launching a referendum (refer to the presentation) - this is a VERY important referendum as we need to pass the financial restructuring of it in order fix the massive structural deficit.
- AMS Elections are about to start - if you're interested in running for a position check out their website ASAP as nominations close on January 10th. An email will be sent out about it following the meeting about it.
- There was ongoing discussion about whether the AMS should, through Student Spaces Fees, create an AMS Brewery out at the UBC Farm at the cost of 1.2 million - the AMS Council decided to put this to referendum.

- **Graduate Council – Kristan Marchak**

Nothing to report in lieu of no meeting.

- **University Sustainability Initiative – Paul Save**

The USI is working towards a World Café-style sustainability event in January. If you would like to participate or would like more information, please contact Paul Save.

- **Senate – Julienne Jagdeo**

Nothing to report as the next meeting will be held on Wednesday (December 18).

G. Approval of Minutes

2. BIRT the minutes of the GSS Council meeting dated “November 21st, 2013” be approved as presented.

MOVER: Tobias Friedel, **SECONDER:** Arni Thrasraston
PASSES

3. BIRFT the following committee minutes be approved as presented:

Academic and External Affairs Committee – October 10, 2013
Academic and External Affairs Committee – October 24, 2013
Academic and External Affairs Committee – November 14, 2013

Executive Committee – October 15
Executive Committee – October 29
Services Committee – November 13

MOVER: Jeff Abeysekera, **SECONDER:** Arni Thrasraston
PASSES



GSS Council Meeting Agenda

Thursday December 12, 2013

GSS Ballroom

H. Seatings, Unseatings, and Appointments

Notice of unseatings (*no vote necessary*)

Valeria Castellanos has been unseated from Council as a Departmental Representative.

Seatings and Appointments

4. BIRT the following seatings are approved:

Julie Zhang be seated to the Executive Oversight Committee.

Michael Firmin be seated to the Internal Review Task Force.

Daniel Wood be seated as GSS representative and director to the Alliance of British Columbia Students.

MOVER: Michael Firmin **SECONDER:** Jahidur Rahman

PASSES

I. Council Motions

1. Graduate Student Tuition Policy

Summary: *The GSS opposes any annual increase if UBC student tuition in excess of 2%, including tuition paid by international students. The GSS also supports tuition reductions, as long as they are compensated by funds from non-student sources and do not reduce academic quality. The GSS requests that the UBC Board of Governors consider any proposed increases to tuition fees in light of the financial burden that they represent to graduate students and seek to minimize this cost.*

WHEREAS one third of graduate students at UBC Vancouver are international students;

WHEREAS the cost of education often makes undertaking graduate studies at UBC inaccessible;

WHEREAS UBC graduate students have a vested interest in maintaining the quality of their university, their education and their degree;

WHEREAS the GSS must balance its advocacy to reflect both its members' interest in a lower cost burden to pursuing academic studies and its members' interest in a quality academic experience;

BIRT the GSS oppose any annual increase that would be in excess of 2%;



GSS Council Meeting Agenda

Thursday December 12, 2013

GSS Ballroom

BIFRT the GSS oppose any percentage annual increase of UBC international student tuition greater than that of UBC Vancouver domestic student tuition;

BIFRT the GSS support in principle the reduction of UBC student tuition, when such a reduction would be met with an equal or greater supply of funds to UBC from non-student sources, such that UBC's academic quality would not be diminished; and

BIFRT the GSS respectfully request the UBC Board of Governors to consider the cost burden that tuition represents for graduate students when discussing potential increases to tuition and seek to, whenever possible, minimize tuition costs.

MOVER: Tobias Friedel, **SECONDER:** Colum Connolly
PASSES

Discussion:

Motion to move to camera for all members and staff.

MOVER: Colum Connolly **SECONDER:** Tobias Friedel
PASSES

It was asked where a tuition cap of 2 per cent applies to all graduate courses, as the Master of Software Systems program increased fees by more than 2 per cent, to which the response was, 'No', the cap does not apply to all programs.

It was asked whether, should the GSS oppose tuition increases of more than 2 per cent, can these tuition fees be increased regardless to which the response was 'Yes', this may still happen but it is important that the GSS takes a position on the matter.

It was stated that at this stage, the cap only applies to domestic students and the aim is to amend this to include international students also.

2. Graduate Students of Nursing Referendum

WHEREAS, the Graduate Students in Nursing (GSNA) is the recognized Departmental Organization for graduate students in the Department of Nursing;

WHEREAS, the GSNA held a referendum to implement an annual Nursing Graduate Student fee of \$25.00 between October 7th – 14th 2013;

WHEREAS, 48 out of 200 eligible voters (24%) cast ballots and 34 voted YES and 14 voted NO;

BIRT Council, pursuant to the University Act and the GSS Bylaws, give notice to the University Board of Governors to implement a \$25.00 fee for graduate students the department of nursing starting no earlier than January 2014, and that the President send this notice to the Board of Governors; and

BIFRT the Graduate Student Society of UBC Vancouver shall collect the aforementioned fee on behalf of the GSNA and transfer the amount received to the aforementioned group.



GSS Council Meeting Agenda

Thursday December 12, 2013

GSS Ballroom

MOVER: Jeff Abeysekera **SECONDER:** Nayantara Duttachoudhury
PASSES

Discussion:

It was asked and answered 'What is CPI?' to which the response was the 'Consumer Price Index'.

3. GSS Election Nomination Form

WHEREAS the Elections Committee feels that the current required number of graduate student supporting signatures (3) is too low and does not accurately reflect the candidate commitment that is needed for an active campaign and overall elections process;

WHEREAS the Elections Committee recommends increasing the required number of graduate student supporting signatures to 10 in order to help properly reflect the level of candidate commitment that is conducive to an active campaign;

WHEREAS candidates are to pick up (and return) the form in person from the GSS Office from the Executive Assistant so that they may receive detailed instructions on how to properly fill out the form;

BIRT Council approves the updated Policy Manual Appendix III form as presented.

BIFRT Council approves the amendment to section "9.3. Nominations" of the Policy Manual as following:

9.3. Nominations

9.3.1. The nomination form shall follow the format in Appendix III. It may be incorporated as a part of other materials. The form shall be picked up in person and returned in person by the candidates from the GSS office.

MOVER: Michael Firmin, **SECONDER:** Jack Hickmott
FAILS
(9/18/4)

Discussion:

It was asked whether changes to Policy need to be reached by special resolution or majority vote.

Motion to **Recess** for 2 minutes to clarify Policy.

MOVER: Tobias Friedel **SECONDER:** Gabriela Badica
PASSES

Recess

Meeting Reconvenes at 7:31pm

Changes to Policy require 2/3 of the vote (special resolution).



GSS Council Meeting Agenda

Thursday December 12, 2013

GSS Ballroom

It was suggested that it is unnecessary to have to collect the form in person as in previous years, the forms were available online.

It was brought to Council's attention that in order to amend the policies surrounding elections, changes need to be sent at least 15 days prior to the Council meeting.

It was stated that this form may discourage candidates and it was asked what problem this motion addressing?

It was answered that ten signatures, as opposed to 3 is a show of commitment.

In order to move ahead with this motion, code would need to be temporarily suspended.

Motion to amend the agenda and insert:

BIRT council suspend code, specifically 1.2.1 of the policy manual.

If code is suspended, it can only be suspended for 30 days which does not cover the entire election period.

We have suspended the policy whereby it specifies the 15 day notice period.

MOVER: Arni Thrasraston **SECONDER:** Tobias Freidel

27/7/3

Colum Connolly voted twice.

Tobias Friedel's iClicker is not working.

The iClicker software is not working correctly.

Move to card voting on suspension of the code.

MOVER: Jack Hickmott, **SECONDER:** Tobias Friedel

PASSES

30/6/4

Move to split the motion:

BIFR there be a second motion so we vote on them separately.

Chair approved it.

Motion to adjourn:

MOVER: Tobias Friedel, **SECONDER** Jack Hickmott

10/21/4

FAILS

4. Slates and Endorsements

WHEREAS the term "slate" refers to a group of candidates who run for elected office on a similar platform for mutual advantage (included but not limited to Executive positions and positions in the Senate), while the term "endorsement" refers to the action of publicly declaring one's support of a candidate for elected office.

WHEREAS the practice of running in slates may provide an advantage to some candidates and not to others

BIRT that Council approves the amendment of section "9.6. Campaigning of the" to include the following:



GSS Council Meeting Agenda

Thursday December 12, 2013

GSS Ballroom

9.6.7. Candidates may not run in slates, real or apparent, or share expenses for campaign materials. A slate means a group of candidates who run for elected office (included but not limited to Executive positions and positions in the Senate) on a similar platform for mutual advantage.

9.6.8. For further clarity, but without limiting the generality of 9.6.7. above, the following slate activities are prohibited:

- (a) appearing on another candidate's campaign materials, including but not limited to posters, banners, flyers, handouts, and websites;
- (b) producing posters or other campaign materials that resemble those of another candidate in design, colour, branding or appearance; and
- (c) using the same slogan or slogans as one or more other candidates.

9.6.9. At its discretion, the Elections Committee may prohibit other activities that resemble a slate.

9.6.10. Candidates are expected to campaign independently, but if joint campaign activities, including but not limited to classroom announcements and leafleting, do occur, they must be reported to the Elections Committee. Such reports must be made within seventy-two (72) hours. At its discretion, the Elections Committee may approve such activities or order them to cease.

9.6.11. Notwithstanding the rules against slates in sections 9.6.7. through 9.6.10 above, candidates may endorse a maximum of two other candidates.

MOVER: Jeff Abeysekera, **SECONDER:** Tobias Friedel

FAILS

(13/22/3)

Discussion:

It was stated that candidates receive a substantial budget for campaigning for the election and that slates are unnecessary. Further, 9.6.7 whereby candidates may not run in slates ensures that those who are not part of a slate are not at a disadvantage.

Point of information: It was asked that 9.6.10 be further explained.

Motion to postpone this motion:

MOVER: Arni Thrastarson, **SECONDER:** (None)

FAILS

This motion supports an election based on individual candidates, rather than slates.

It was commented that there should not be a limit to the number of endorsements (to only 2) as every graduate has the right to endorse as many candidates of their choosing.

Motion to amend 9.6.10 to 'such reports must be made within 72 hours'.

MOVER: Vincent Chan, **SECONDER:** Tobias Friedel



GSS Council Meeting Agenda

Thursday December 12, 2013

GSS Ballroom

PASSES

Amend 9.6 to 'campaigning of the'.

It was commented that a slate does not guarantee election; the slate does not prohibit or enable election.

Move to refer the motion to the Code and Policy and Election Committees:

MOVER: Tobias Friedel, **SECONDER:** Arni Thrastarson

FAILS

(8/24/3)

It was commented that slates are positive in that they enable candidates to have a sense of team and support and that candidates are unlikely to run without the support of a slate.

5. All-Candidates Meeting and Debates

WHEREAS attendance at the All-Candidates Meetings and Debates is an integral part of candidates showing their commitment to the elections process and to the GSS;

BIRT that candidate attendance at the All-Candidates Meetings and Debates is made compulsory for the 2014 GSS Elections;

BIRT Council approves the amendment of section "9.6. Campaigning" to include the following:

9.6.12. Candidates are required to attend the All-Candidates Meetings and the Elections Debates. If a candidate misses an All-Candidate Meeting and/or a Debate, their name will be withdrawn from the elections by the Elections Committee, provided that they do not provide a legitimate reason for their absence to the committee. The decision of the Elections Committee in discerning the legitimacy of a reason will be final.

MOVER: Gabriela Badica, **SECONDER:** Sima Valizadeh

FAILS

(10/21/5)

Discussion:

To encourage more candidates to run, there should not be any mandates.

Candidate attendance is not usually an issue but more so with audience attendance.

It was stated that there is no reference to notifications to which the response was 'there is a 3 week notice period'.

Candidate meetings and debates provide an opportunity for constituents and other candidates to engage.

There would need to be explicit 'acceptable' reasons for not being unable to attend the debate.

It is the GSS's responsibility to encourage participation;

Legitimate reasons include illness, family emergency, etc.

There is no real need for this motion.



GSS Council Meeting Agenda

Thursday December 12, 2013

GSS Ballroom

6. GSS 3MT Sponsorship

WHEREAS the Three Minute Thesis (3MT) is an academic competition that assists current graduate students with fostering effective presentation and communication skills;

WHEREAS at the GSS Council Retreat it was indicated by Councillors that the GSS should put more of an emphasis on graduate student career development programs and initiatives;

WHEREAS the GSS donated \$1000.00 to the 3MT competition in 2013;

BIRT Council allocates an additional \$1000.00 to budget line 14-550 (Special Events) for a donation to the 3MT Competition.

MOVER: Guillaume Beaulier-Houle, **SECONDER:** Colum Connolly
PASSES

Discussion:

This initiative encourages inter-disciplinary engagement.

7. Health and Dental Plan Presentation

Whereas the last presentation on the health and dental plan did not provide sufficient breadth of information to vote on.

"BIRT Council directs the President of the GSS to provide a non-biased and big-picture presentation to council regarding options & anticipated consequences for the student the Health and Dental Plan for the January council meeting."

BIFRT that this presentation shall include both the "Health" and "Dental" portion of the plan.

BIFRT the presentation includes the issues the issues with the cap on pharmaceuticals.

MOVER: Paul Save, **SECONDER:** Eric Becklin
PASSES

8. Council Social

Whereas it is in the interests of the society to promote councillor engagement in order to develop collaborations between departments and to continue conversations about graduate student priorities after council meetings.

BIRT that Council allocates an additional \$100 per month to budget line 14-771 for the purpose of social activities after Council from December 2013 to April 2014. And that the president or their delegate shall nominate a councillor after each council meeting to pay the up to \$100 and to be later reimbursed by the GSS.



GSS Council Meeting Agenda

Thursday December 12, 2013

GSS Ballroom

BIFRT after council shall mean after council and/or SGM and AGM.

MOVER: Paul Save, **SECONDER:** Eric Becklin

FAILS

(11/16/9)

Discussion:

This motion is to encourage social interaction amongst councillors.

It was stated that serving alcohol will result in GSS being liable.

Alternatives; dinner at the end of the meeting, events on days other than the Council meeting.

It was suggested that Councillor socials should not include alcoholic beverages as this omits those who do not wish to socialise at the pub. Further, it was stated that social events are important but do not necessarily need to involve alcohol.

It was suggested that this money be taken from the catering budget.

It was commented that it is important that the GSS facilitates social events amongst councillors and to avoid the issue of liability there is potential for a waiver form.

It is noted that some people prefer non-alcoholic events.

It was stated that even if this motion fails, there will be more councillor events scheduled in the future.

The rationale behind this motion is that directly after Council is a time when all Councillors are together, that it is difficult to get everyone together on another occasion and that drinks do not need to be alcoholic.

It was commented that after council is not a time that is convenient for everyone as often they are late nights when people wish to get home.

J. Other Business and Notice of Motions

The ABCS will be seating members on committees on Friday afternoon. If any is interested in getting involved contact Academic and External @ vpexternal.gss.ubc.ca.

K. Discussion Period

L. Submissions

M. Next Meeting

Thursday January 16, 2014

N. Adjournment

BIRT there being no further business the meeting be adjourned at **8:37pm**.