

## Council Meeting Minutes

Thursday, December 11<sup>th</sup>, 2014

GSS Ballroom, 5:30 pm.



GRADUATE STUDENT SOCIETY | UBC

**Present:** Alison McAfee, Andrea Jones, Angela Zhao, Behzad Shoolestani, Christopher Roach, Colùm Connolly, Daniel Wood, Dustin King, Elizabeth Bulaeva (proxy for Enav Zusan), Remy Bargout (proxy for George Furey), Guillaume Beaulieu-Houle, Hamid Omid, Harry Li, Inti Dewey, Janice Valdez, Jenn So, Jennifer Campbell, Julienne Jagdeo, Kevin Mehr, Keying Tang, Kreso Sola, Krish Maharaj, Lena Patsa, Kaleb Boucher (proxy for Luz Angelica Caudillo-Mata), Mary-Anne Shonoda, Michelle Hak Hepburn, Min Xia, Mirza Sarwar, Mitchell Meler, Natalie Marshall, Nayantara Duttachoudhury, Omid Nourbakhsh, Patrick Lo, Christina Wiesmann (proxy for Raphael Roccor), Sarah Simon, Shona Robinson, Sima Valizadeh, Sneha Balani, Susan Song, Suzie Maginley, Tahara Bhate, Tobias Friedel, Vivian Lam, Yu Guo.

**Regrets:** Antoine Ponsard, Chen Vu, Julia Varela, Naman Paul, Rebecca Sherbo, Renae Regehr, Xun Zhou.

**Absent:** Adam Luna, Ambrose Chan, Ehsan Espid, Eric Becklin, Eva Choi, Gianluca Oluic, Jonathan Obst, Kathryn Knudson, Keeley Ryan, Michelle Kwon, Olenka Forde, Parker Jobin, Robin Kim, Vinodha Chetty.

### A. Call to Order and Adoption of the Agenda

The meeting was called to order at 6:50 pm.

1. BIRT the agenda be adopted as presented.

**MOVER: Kevin Mehr   SECONDER: Krish Maharaj**  
**MOTION PASSES**

### B. Introductions

### C. Seatings, Unseatings, and Appointments

2. Notice of unseatings (*no vote necessary*)

**Julia Varela** to be unseated as AMS Council Representative.

**Luz Angelica Caudillo-Mata** to be unseated as Executive Oversight Committee Representative.

**Guillaume Beaulieu-Houle** to be unseated as Executive Oversight Committee

**Guillaume Beaulieu-Houle** to be unseated as Chair of the House Finance Committee

**Guillaume Beaulieu-Houle** to be unseated as House Finance Committee Representative.

3. BIRT the following seatings are approved:

**Mirza Sarwar** be seated to the House Committee.

**Sarah Fernando** be appointed to AMS Council.

**MOVER: Kreso Sola**

**SECONDER: Colùm Connolly**

**MOTION PASSES**

4. BIRT the following seatings are approved:

**Kevin Mehr** be appointed as Chair of the House Finance Committee.

**MOVER: Tobias Friedel**

**SECONDER: Jack Hickmott**

**MOTION PASSES**

#### **D. Presentations to Council**

*(10 minutes, 5 minutes for questions)*

- **Emergency Fund report**

Presenters: VP Academic and External, and AcEx Committee representative.

- At October Council meeting AcEx Committee was asked to report to Council on the GSS Emergency Fund usage;
- Fund has existed for almost 10 years;
- Meant to be a fund of last resort and to ensure students close to completion can finish degree;
- Applications are confidential and undergo through a multi-step evaluation process.
- All applicants must provide documents to demonstrate financial need;
- Applications are processed by Advocacy officers and presented to AcEx Committee which makes decision on whether to grant request;
- In 2011/12 and 2012/13 budget was \$12,000; 2013/14 and 2014/15 budget was only \$8,000. Actual spending was less than budgeted amount in all of those years. In October 2014 Council increased budget by \$4,000, total at \$12,000.
- UBC GSS is one of only 3 student societies in the U15 to have emergency funding program fully funded from the Society's budget; most others receive significant institutional funding.
- Presented series of discussion points: maximum grant amount, application schedule, fixed awards, loan vs. grant and the potential external funding sources.



It was asked the number of applications throughout the existence of the Emergency Fund, to which the answer was that over the years a number of applications kept increasing. It was further remarked that there is no full statistical data available for the past 4 years, only the record of the award amounts and no records of the rejected applications.

It was further asked whether there is any academic merit during the evaluation process, to which the answer was that the academic supervisor of an applicant has to sign off the document that the graduate student is in a good standing and close to completion.

It was further asked and answered that the Emergency Fund is not currently advertised as it is meant to be a last resort fund. It was further noted that there is no certain position whether this Fund should be advertised or not.

It was further asked whether there was an initiative to find an external funding, to which the answer was that after search done in this direction, it was found that AMS and SFU have been receiving government funding for their emergency programs.

It was further asked and answered that at the end of the budget year any extra unused funds go back to GSS.

#### **E. Approval of Minutes**

5. BIRT the minutes of the GSS Council meeting dated “November 13<sup>th</sup>, 2014” be approved as amended.

**MOVER: Kreso Sola**  
**MOTION PASSES**

**SECONDER: Tobias Friedel**

6. BIRT the following committee minutes be approved as presented:

Code and Policy Committee October 20  
Code and Policy Committee November 10

**MOVER: Colùm Connolly**  
**MOTION PASSES**

**SECONDER: Jack Hickmott**

#### **F. Executive Remarks** *(3 minutes)*

- President – Colùm Connolly



- CASA Advocacy week, meeting politicians and lobbying on the student issues;
- Met with PM Harper;
- Lots of HR related work;
- Preparing for SGM.
  
- Vice-President Academic & External Affairs – Daniel Wood
  - Reviewed TLEF applications;
  - Hired 2 new advocacy officers;
  - Tuition consultations;
  - Emergency fund report.
  
- Vice-President Administration – Kevin Mehr
  - Building projects –Penthouse, elevator renovation;
  - Hiring new General Manager, reached final stage of that process;
  - Hired new advocacy coordinators.
  
- Vice-President Finance – Tobias Friedel
  - Second Quarter actuals are in - every budget line is on track.
  
- Vice-President Services – Min Xia
  - 5<sup>th</sup> Coffee Social event, off campus, received positive feedback;
  - Polar Express party in Acadia Park;
  - Planning for January Orientation, similar to September Orientation but smaller;
  - Planning for upcoming semester – ski trips, video clip competition, etc.

## **G. Committee, Taskforce, and Operations Reports**

*(3 minutes)*

- Academic & External Affairs Committee – Enav Zusman
  - Has met twice, evaluating emergency fund applications;
  - Prepared a report on the Emergency Fund usage;
  
- Code and Policy Committee – Julienne Jagdeo
  - Worked on new Section 5, almost halfway done full review of policy manual;
  
- Executive Oversight Committee – Christopher Roach
  - No report
  
- House-Finance Committee – Guillaume Beaulieu-Houle



- Evaluating applications for funding to go to GSAs.
- Human Resources Committee – Jack Hickmott
  - Basically, turned into the hiring committee – held advocacy coordinators, Marketing & Communications, General Manager interviews;
- Services Committee – Sima Valizadeh
  - Video competition – short videos about your country to celebrate cultural diversity;
- Off-campus Outreach Task Force – Jack Hickmott
  - Gathering information from the graduate students about where and what kind of events they'd like.
  - Looking at holding one large off-campus gala.
- Election Committee – Patrick Lo
  - In touch with AMS elections coordinator about setting the dates.

## **H. Representative Reports** *(3 minutes)*

- AMS Council – Christopher Roach
  - Previous meeting didn't get quorum.
- Graduate Council – Suzie Maginley
  - No meeting since October.
- Senate – Julienne Jagdeo
  - November Senate: Master's of Public Policy and Global Affairs program has been approved with some odd enrolment and tuition issues.

## **I. Council Motions**

### 7. Policy Manual Section 5

WHEREAS policies regarding Councillor seatings, unseatings, and responsibilities were located throughout the policy manual.

WHEREAS the creation of a new section containing all of these policies creates a more properly organized policy manual.

BIRT Council approves the addition of the proposed section titled “Councillors” to the policy manual as presented as section 5.

BIFRT the position of the current section 5 and all subsequent sections of the policy manual shifts down one section number.

**MOVER: Daniel Wood                      SECONDER: Jack Hickmott**  
**MOTION PASSES**

#### 8. Policy Manual Section 19

WHEREAS Section 19 was added to the policy to enforce sustainable purchasing when the Society was responsible for the pub.

WHEREAS the Society is no longer responsible for the pub operations and this section of the policy manual is no longer useful.

BIRT Council approves the removal of Section 19 from the policy manual.

**MOVER: Colùm Connolly                      SECONDER: Daniel Wood**

Motion to amend all mentions “Section 18” to say “Section 19”, deemed a friendly amendment.

It was asked a long term plan for the Koerner’s Pub, to which the answer was that the Pub is currently on a 5-year lease which ends in 3.5 years from now. Before that time no changes will be put forward.

**MOTION PASSES**

9. WHEREAS the Three Minute Thesis (3MT) is an academic competition that assists current graduate students with fostering the 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 the graduate student career development programs and initiatives;

WHEREAS the GSS donated \$1000 to the 3MT competition in 2014;

BIRT Council allocates an additional \$1000 from the budget line 14-740 to the budget line 16-802 for a donation to the 3MT Competition.



**MOVER: Daniel Wood**

**SECONDER: Kreso Sola**

Motivation. GSS has been sponsoring 3MT competition in the past and should continue to do so. Going forward, this expense shall be incorporated into the budget.

It was asked and answered that the funds are moved from the Executive Conference & Travel budget line to Donations' line for 3MT competition.

It was further asked whether GSS will be informed how funds are used, to which the answer was that the donation goes towards the prizes and travel expense for a UBC 3MT winner going to a regional or higher-level of the 3MT competition.

It was further remarked that GSS inquired about being acknowledged as a sponsor, to which received a negative response.

It was further clarified that the donation goes towards the upcoming 3MT competition.

### **MOTION PASSES**

#### 10. Affiliate Organization Recognition

WHEREAS the following organizations have submitted a petition for recognition as an Affiliate Organisation.

BIRT the following organizations be recognized as Affiliate Organizations for one year, ending at the meeting of Council in December 2015.

- a. Forestry Graduate Student Association;
- b. Graduate Law Students' Society.**
- c. Civil Engineering Graduate Student Society.
- d. Curriculum and Pedagogy GSA.**

**MOVER: Sima Valizadeh**

**SECONDER: Jack Hickmott**

Motion to amend Law Graduate Student Association to Graduate Law Students' Society, deemed friendly.

Motion to amend to add Curriculum and Pedagogy GSA to the list of Affiliate Organizations.

**MOVER: Tobias Friedel**

**SECONDER: Jack Hickmott**

## **MOTION PASSES**

It was asked the reason behind extending the recognition to one year only, to which the answer was that this allows to maintain constant communication with the leaders of the graduate student associations.

It was further asked the benefits of being affiliated with GSS, to which the answer was that the funding model has been recently changed, this way GSAs can receive funding from GSS.

Motion to amend to remove the recognition for one year to indefinite period.  
No seconder, amendment fails.

## **MOTION PASSES**

### **J. Other Business and Notice of Motions**

### **K. Discussion Period**

- Emergency Fund

Mary-Anne: Concerned that some departments might know about the fund and others might not due to lack of advertising. How can we be sure that all grad students know about this?

Daniel: Applications go to Ac/Ex in anonymous fashion, we don't know which departments applicants come from. We've debated advertising many times, but always reach the conclusion that it should not be advertised.

Tahara: Had never heard of the fund previously. Understand the role as a last resort and want students to go to other funding sources first. GSS does suffer a lack of visibility with students and those with the most need may not have good support networks in place where they'd get to find out about it.

Colum: Usually more international students apply, but in the last year seen more domestic applicants. In GSS survey, 82% said they wanted to continue to program. Have advertised this to grad secretaries, places like Brock Hall, Ombuds, so they should be able to refer.

Inti: Councillors should also feel free to tell people in their departments if you hear of students in trouble.

Colum: Yes, you should tell your constituents, but at the same time not every department is at Council. By working with Ombuds, faculty, brock hall, we can reach all students looking for help.

Jack: What efforts are we doing to make this fund obsolete?



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Daniel: The range of issues people face causing them to apply for the fund are extremely varied. We'd have to be lobbying for pretty much everything because emergency could be due to housing, accidents, etc. Can't target just one issue.

Tobias: Isn't this better spent on advocacy campaigns to help make the fund obsolete?

Elizabeth: How many applications are being received now? Wouldn't limiting the applications to 2-3 times per year undermine the emergency aspect of it?

Daniel: It's about administration of the fund. Frequency of applications is random, but we tend to see 1-2 per month. In response to whether to spend it on lobbying, we wouldn't be able to help students coming to us with emergencies.

Angela: Restricting fund payouts might be hard if you pay out all the money and then have none left for further applicants. How can we ensure equal treatment? What's the role of UBC in this emergency fund?

Daniel: To date, we've never gone over the budget. We determine whether they have merit and then decide how much funding to give them. Committee wants to make sure people make it to graduation, so we have supervisor have to sign off on completion timeline. We can also give partial award and allow them to re-apply later for more showing progress towards completion. UBC has policy 72.

Sarah: 1-2 applications per month doesn't seem like a big administrative burden.

Daniel: Each application is time not spent on lobbying.

Lena: If it's not open for ad hoc applications, not really responsive to emergencies. Would you say it's a first-come, first-served fund?

Daniel: It's not first-come, first-served at present, but only if enough funding is granted. If not, then it is bound to run out and will be like that.

Lena: This is not for academic expenses right? Only emergency living expenses?

Daniel: Yes.

Bahzad: If there's an emergency, why does it have to be near graduation? Not the only time emergency can come up.

Daniel: Not sure, since wasn't around when fund was created.

Bahzad: Would like to suggest that it's open to all students in need to apply at any time.

Colùm: Reason it's for the end of degree is because we're giving money collected from all students and giving lots to one person. If you do it during the degree, you don't know if there's an outcome involved, they might still not graduate. We have a problem where we don't track outcomes of grantees. We should maybe look more in depth at how other students do it, maybe have a dedicated student fee that goes into this. Should also have UBC administer it – have been on Ac/Ex a long time but committee membership changes and have seen different people make very different decisions. We do need to look at number of applicants and track them better. Policy 72 only applies to domestic students, 30% of UBC grad students are international.

Elizabeth: Instead of accepting applications all the time, why not 12 times per year?

Lena: The further you are into your degree, the less funding you have available. People past year 4 might be more desperate.

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**L. Submissions**

**M. Next Meeting**

Thursday January 15<sup>th</sup>, 2014

**N. Adjournment**

BIRT there being no further business the meeting be adjourned at 8:15 pm.

**MOVER: Jack Hickmott**  
**MOTION PASSES**

**SECONDER: Patrick Lo**