

Present: Ambrose Chan, Andrea Jones, Angela Zhao, Antoine Ponsard, Behzad Shoolestani, Chen Vu, Chhavi Tripathi, Christopher Roach, Coco Tang, Colúm Connolly, Daniel Wood, Elizabeth Bulaeva, Enav Zusman, Eric Becklin, Eva Choi, George Furey, Gianluca Oluic, Hamid Omid, Harry Li, Ingrid Olson, Jack Hickmott, Janice Valdez, Jenn So, Jennifer Campbell, Julienne Jagdeo, Kevin Mehr, Kreso Sola, Krish Maharaj, Mahsa Mojahednia, Mary-Anne Shonoda, Michelle Hak Hepburn, Min Xia, Naman Paul, Nayantara Duttachoudhury, Olenka Forde, Omid Nourbakhsh, Parker Jobin, Patrick Lo, Rebecca Sherbo, Renae Regehr, Sima Valizadeh, Susan Song, Tobias Friedel, Xun Zhou, Yu Guo.

Regrets: Alison McAfee, Dustin King, Inti Dewey, Jackie Davis, Keeley Ryan, Lena Patsa, Luz Angelica Caudillo-Mata, Natalie Marshall, Raphael Roccor, Shona Robinson, Suzie Maginley, Vivian Lam.

Absent: Adam Luna, Ehsan Espid, Guillaume Beaulieu-Houle, Jonathan Obst, Kathryn Knudson, Michelle Kwon, Mirza Sarwar, Robin Kim, Sarah Simon, Sarah Fernando, Tahara Bhate, Vinodha Chetty.

Guests: Anne DeWolfe, Teresa Tsang – Enrolment Services;
Neal Yonson – GSS Graduate policy researcher;
Mattias Olshausen – representative from LASSA; Department of Library, Archival and Information Studies.

Speaker announced absence of quorum and requested to hear a presentation titled “2015-2016 Administrative Fee and Acceptance Deposit Fee changes” immediately at the beginning of the meeting.

- 2015-16 Admin Fee and Acceptance Deposit fee changes

Guest speakers: Anne DeWolfe and Teresa Tsang (Enrolment Services)

- Presented the proposal of administrative fee changes that cover the services for students;
- Fees are estimated on a cost-recovery basis and are the actual cost for the services provided;
- Administrative fees are reviewed every 3 years unless there is a significant change to the cost structure, and require President’s approval. Later, the package is submitted to the Board of Governors;
- Most of the fee lines have not been changed with some only to increase by 2% to reflect the cost of delivering services;
- Fees that are subject to the 2% increase are Diploma certification, Distance Education and Tech Special examination, Duplicate Income Tax Receipt, Faxes, Parchment Replacement and Review of Assigned standing;
- Proposed fees effective date: May 1, 2015.

It was asked and answered that the most recent changes were made last year - cost of transcript increased from \$7 to \$10; as well as increase in the fees for the distance examination, postage, etc. It was further noted that it was due to the change in the cost structure of the mentioned.

Speaker announced presence of quorum.

A. Call to Order and Adoption of the Agenda

The meeting was called to order at 5:52 pm.

1. BIRT the agenda be adopted as presented.

MOVER: Antoine Ponsard

SECONDER: George Furey

Motion to amend Agenda to add Elections committee presentation to the Presentations to Council.

MOVER: Patrick Lo

SECONDER: Jack Hickmott

MOTION PASSES

Back to motion as amended.

Motion to amend Agenda to add a discussion item "US Direct loans for the students at the school of Library, Archival and Informational Studies".

MOVER: Colùm Connolly

SECONDER: Jack Hickmott

MOTION PASSES

Back to motion as amended.

MOTION PASSES

27/0/0

B. Introductions

GSS President announced a minute of silence to remember Stephanie Grothe, PhD

student of Physics and Astronomy Department; Neal Charles Mackenzie, post-doctoral

fellow and Elena Cernicka, patient safety co-ordinator with Providence Health Care, who tragically died on the trail north of Pemberton.

C. Seatings, Unseatings, and Appointments

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

Mitchell Meler to be unseated as Departmental Representative.

Julia Varela to be unseated as Departmental Representative.

Mitchell Meler to be unseated as Human Resource Committee Representative.

Michel Kwon to be unseated as Human Resource Committee Representative.

Sarah Simon to be unseated as Elections Committee Representative.

Adam Luna to be unseated as Academic and External Committee Representative.

Tobias Friedel to be unseated as Code and Policy Committee Representative.

3. BIRT the following seatings are approved:

Parker Jobin be seated to the Code and Policy Committee.

Jennifer Campbell be seated to the House Committee.

Hamid Omid be seated to the Academic and External Committee.

MOVER: Kreso Sola

SECONDER: Omid Nourbakhsh

MOTION PASSES

25/0/1

D. Presentations to Council

(10 minutes, 5 minutes for questions)

- 2014 GSS Student Satisfaction Survey;

Guest speaker: Neal Yonson

- Neal Yonson, Graduate policy researcher joint GSS in September 2014;
- The role entails close work with the Vice-President, Academic and External, Advocacy office and Academic and External committee, as well as ad hoc research done upon GSS President's request;
- Involved in various existing policy consultations and academic aspects at UBC;
- In March 2014 GSS held first Student Satisfaction Survey, later data were interpreted in the report to highlight key trends;

- It was suggested to hold annual survey among the graduate students separately from the AMS due to a large number of irrelevant to grads questions and the length of the survey itself;
- Survey data received are very representative with a good response rate. It is planned to conduct GSS Survey on a regular basis;
- Students were surveyed on a number of topics, such as funding, ability to cover expense, stress levels, etc.
- It was found that the majority of students are satisfied with their funding; however, not enough to cover the high cost of living in Vancouver; therefore, significant number of students feel stressed about their financial stability.
- It was also established that the minimum stipend is essential to the basic support and should be #1 lobbying priority;
- The results of the survey are to be used for official reference in communication with the University and at the other levels;

It was asked if students were surveyed on the length of their programs, to which the answer was that this information is available from the UBC data. It was remarked that students were asked which year they had started their studies. It was further noted that it is not the funding issues, rather than the certainty and consistency in the funding is being targeted in relation to the ability to cover living expense and stress levels.

It was further asked and answered that the results and the interpretation report are available to public and for reference within UBC departments.

- Elections committee presentation

Speaker: Patrick Lo, Chief Electoral officer

- Confirmed the dates for 2015 Elections in coordination with the AMS;
- Elections seminars: 2- 12 February, 2015;
- Nomination week: 10-26 February, 2015;
- All candidates meeting: February 26, 2015;
- Campaigning: 2-13 March, 2015;
- 2015 Elections voting week: 9-13 March, 2015;
- GSS President's info session (Chris Roach, GSS President 2013-2014 and Colúm Connolly, GSS President 2014-2015), the date to be determined.

It was noted that there will be a party at the end of the elections week.

E. Approval of Minutes

4. BIRT the minutes of the GSS Council meeting dated "*December 11, 2014*" be approved as presented.

MOVER: George Furey

SECONDER: Antoine Ponsard

Motion to amend Minutes to remove “Nuclear Energy Graduate Student Association” from the list of the Affiliate Organizations, deemed friendly.

Back to motion as amended.

MOTION PASSES

31/0/8

5. BIRT the following committee minutes be approved as presented.

Academic and External Committee September 3
Academic and External Committee September 17
Academic and External Committee October 1
Academic and External Committee October 15
Academic and External Committee October 28
Academic and External Committee November 4
Academic and External Committee November 19
Academic and External Committee December 3
Executive Committee September 30
Executive Committee October 14
Executive Committee November 4
Executive Committee November 25

MOVER: Patrick Lo

SECONDER: Colúm Connolly

MOTION PASSES

24/0/0

F. Executive Remarks

(3 minutes)

President – Colúm Connolly

- Thanked everyone for attending SGM and voting on the new Bylaws;
- Involved in the UBC life building project, new SUB;
- Working on the well-being initiatives, how to better support grads;
- Working with the Communications and Marketing Director, presentation next month;
- Working on 3 Centennial Fund applications: Acadia Park resources for children, “Transcendence” renovation, GSS alumni event.

Vice-President Academic & External Affairs – Daniel Wood

- Have been involved in the work of TELF committee which has \$2.5 million in awards; encouraged all grads to see if eligible;
- Participated in 3 tuition consultations;
- Planning to have VP Academic and External information session for the candidates within 2015 Executive Elections.

Vice-President Administration – Kevin Mehr

- Has been involved in the hiring process of the General Manager for the Society; with a new staff member to start on Feb 10th. General Manager will attend Council meeting on February 19th to meet with the Councillors;
- Working on the building renovations;
- More CPIF projects are to come soon, including the renovation of the fountain outside.

Vice-President Finance – Tobias Friedel

- Nothing much to report beyond the day to day routine;
- Late February ABCS lobby days.

Vice-President Services – Min Xia

- Winter orientation has been completed;
- Working on the events for this term;
- Registration for Ski Trip to Whistler is almost over with the last day on January 19th, 2015;
- Working on two workshops: Tax reporting and Permanent residency;
- Planning for the next coffee socials; encouraged Councillors to provide feedback and propositions.

G. Committee, Taskforce, and Operations Reports

(3 minutes)

Academic & External Affairs Committee – Enav Zusman

- The Committee met once this month;
- Has received another Emergency Fund request;
- Has discussed alternative sources of funding;
- Has discussed pulling of the US student loans for SLAIS;

Code and Policy Committee – Julienne Jagdeo

- No report

Executive Oversight Committee – Christopher Roach

- No report

House-Finance Committee – Kevin Mehr

- No report

Human Resources Committee – Jack Hickmott

- No report

Services Committee – Sima Valizadeh

- Video clip competition is likely to become an international celebration dinner;
- GSS Classes start on January 20th, 2015.

Off-campus Outreach Task Force – Jack Hickmott

- No report

Elections Committee – Patrick Lo

- 2015 Elections schedule as provided in the presentation.

H. Representative Reports

(3 minutes)

AMS Council – Christopher Roach

- Transit referendum;
- Has finished the work on the Academic and Student Experience data.

Graduate Council – Suzie Maginley

- No report

Senate – Julienne Jagdeo

- No report

I. Council Motions

6. GSS strategic planning taskforce

Terms of Reference:

The “GSS Strategic planning taskforce” shall develop a strategic plan to guide the activities of the Society over a period of not less than 5 years. The strategic plan should include, but not be limited to:

- An outline of the pillars of the GSS, and core areas of GSS competency;

- Identification of areas in which the GSS should improve its organizational structure or operational activities;
- Identification of areas in which the GSS should focus its efforts to better the graduate students' experience at UBC;
- A list of high level goals for each department;
- A list of additional goals outside of the existing departmental structure that will better enable the GSS to fulfill its mission;
- Any other issue as directed by Council,

In the development of the strategic plan, the committee shall consult materials including, but not limited to:

- The Mission Statement, Constitution, Bylaws, and Policy Manual of the Society;
- Data and materials from the past GSS Council retreats;
- Data from the GSS Student Satisfaction Survey;
- 2010 External Review of the GSS;
- Focus groups designed and implemented by the committee to deeper understand the priorities of graduate students at UBC.

The committee shall:

- Be composed of 9 voting members: the President (ex-officio), 5 councillors, and 3 members of the Society;
- Elect a Chair from the members at the first meeting;
- Contain an unlimited number of non-voting positions;
- Have a quorum of 5 voting members, regardless of committee size;
- Present at March 2015 council on the activities and timelines for completion of the Strategic plan and subsequent submission to a general meeting assembly;
- Make a monthly report on activity at Council meetings.

BIRT the GSS Council adopts the Strategic planning taskforce terms of reference as outlined above.

MOVED: Colúm Connolly

SECONDED: Antoine Ponsard

MOTION PASSES

38/0/1

7. Seating to the Strategic Planning taskforce.

BIRT **Antoine Ponsard, Eric Becklin, Nayantara Duttachoudhury, Tobias Friedel, Angela Zhao** be seated to Strategic planning taskforce.



MOVER: George Furey SECONDER: Colúm Connolly

Motion to amend “be nominated” to replace with “be seated”.

MOVER: Tobias Friedel SECONDER: Antoine Ponsard

MOTION PASSES

39/0/1

8. Indirect Costs Position Statement

WHEREAS research grants from the Tri-Council Agencies (NSERC, SSHRC, CIHR) do not cover "indirect costs" (e.g. administration of research, commercialization of research, libraries, computer networks, maintenance, utilities) which cannot be directly attributed to a single research endeavour, but which are crucial to facilitating high-quality research, and;

WHEREAS the Government of Canada has established a Research Support Fund (RSF) with an objective "to assist Canadian postsecondary institutions with the expenses associated with managing the research funded by the three federal research granting agencies", and;

WHEREAS reports generated by the Government of Canada suggest that indirect costs are incurred by institutions at a rate of 40-60% of the direct research costs funded by Tri-Council grants, and;

WHEREAS the RSF is currently funding indirect costs at a rate of less than 25% of direct research costs, therefore;

BIRT the GSS recommends that the Government of Canada increases funding for the Research Support Fund, so as to achieve an average rate of 40% of the value of direct research costs.

BIFRT the GSS recommends this be achieved through the following funding formula:

<i>Funding Level</i>	<i>Support Rate</i>
<i>Costs up to \$100,000</i>	<i>80%</i>
<i>Costs between \$100,000 and \$7,000,000</i>	<i>50%</i>
<i>Costs above \$7,000,000</i>	<i>37.5%</i>

MOVER: George Furey

SECONDER: Antoine Ponsard

Motivation: When schools get money from the Tri-Council the administrative costs are not covered, this also includes electricity. Research Support Fund helps finance these indirect costs. Currently, RSF is funded at about 25%, and not the 45% that the Federal government has acknowledged is more realistic.

It was asked and answered that these are the exact numbers provided by CASA.

MOTION PASSES

40/0/1

9. Affiliate Organization Recognition

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

BIRT the following organizations be recognized as Affiliate Organizations for one year, ending at the meeting of Council in January 2016.

- a. Psychology Graduate Student Council.
- b. Microbiology and Immunology Graduate Student Society.

MOVER: Janice Valdez

SECONDER: George Furey

MOTION PASSES

38/0/1

Motion to recess for 15 minutes.

MOVER: Colúm Connolly

SECONDER: Enav Zusman

MOTION FAILS

14/19/5

J. Other Business and Notice of Motions

K. Discussion Period

- US Direct Loans for the graduate students at the School of Library, Archival and Information Studies

Neal: students receive loans from the jurisdiction they are from, so U.S. students obtain loans from the U.S. lenders. On November 4th, 2014 U.S. Department of Education

issued a clarification to the existing policy stating that “the programs with mandatory Distance Education and/or Online Learning Courses (as a required component of the program in order to be granted a credential) will not be eligible for Direct Funding”. Later, on December 17th, 2014 26 affected students received an e-mail informing them that there will be no loan funding in Term 2. Given the circumstances, it is too late to do anything. If the students do not take an online course, they won’t be able to graduate; and if take, the students will be ineligible for U.S. loans. UBC has suggested to look for alternative loans and deferred the tuition for Term 2 till February with possible further extension. SLAIS students are not eligible for UBC loans and bursaries, however, may apply for the GSS Emergency Fund. The question at hand what GSS can do for these students?

Mattias: not aware of the formalities for the Emergency Fund; however, if GSS could expedite the application revision process, would help greatly as some of the US SLAIS students find themselves in the situation that they may have to drop out from the program. Even though the tuition was deferred, there are also living expenses that the students will not be able to cover without loans.

Kevin: an opportunity to do something - as far as Emergency Fund can go. Is it possible to put these students through the similar loan system?

Neal: international students are not eligible for loans in Canada. UBC will not step in to secure loans for the affected students.

Tobias: the only thing GSS can try to do now is to alleviate some symptoms. The students should look for alternatives, request changes into the conditions of the loan or class requirements. But, don’t think that GSS can carry the financial burden of 26 students; would have to find any other financial resources.

Enav: GSS should not be giving loans unless proposed and organized as a new policy. Any student with an immediate need can apply for the Emergency Fund. The Academic and External committee will consider US SLAIS student applications as any other applications.

Neal: US Department of Education should not have approved loans in the first place. In future, they will fix the issue.

Nayantara: The Emergency Fund requires students to be close to graduation, isn’t it the issue for the rest? Is it possible to transfer credits back in U.S.?

Mattias: for those students with graduation this spring, it is most unlikely to find alternative funding, money-wise it would be easier to help those who are to graduate in a couple of months. Some have already transferred back to U.S., some of the students have been applying for the alternative resources.

Eric: what are the actions of the Department?

Mattias: department is remodelling the course now. Future classes will not be affected.

Neal: deferral of the tuition is the only concrete step that the Department took at the moment for the students at the point of graduation.

Mattias: all US students may try to write an official letter to the U.S. Department of Education to reflect the position on the policy and how it affects the students studying abroad.

Hamid: are all 26 affected students at the point of graduation?

Mattias: all students are at the different stages of their program. At least 3 or 4 are near graduation.

George: as one of the options GSS can do - is to reimburse the fees to AMS and GSS back to the affected students.

Xun: what expectations do the SLAIS students have?

Mattias: some of the students are in a desperate situation and would appreciate any input or help the body has to offer.

Xun: If there are only 3 students who are in an immediate need, they should apply for Emergency Fund.

Colúm: recommends to attend Academic and External committee meetings, make an appointment with the Advocacy office, and submit application for the Emergency Fund. All affected students can also contact Daniel Wood, VP Academic and External and Neal Yonson, Grad policy researcher.

Christopher: have to rely on the structure that we have now. Would it be possible to set up a consultation with the UBC on the interest free loans on just tuition or assist in organizing a meeting with Scotiabank with which GSS has long-lasting relationship; however, may be hard to receive adequate response as the resources are limited for international students.

Enav: funds available at the Emergency Fund are limited. GSS should not be securing student loans in conversation with Scotiabank as cannot have guarantees that students will be able to fully pay off their loans.

Tobias: would like to receive more numbers. If there are only 3 or 4 students, Emergency fund shall work; if more shall consider other resources. All students affected should get together and meet with the Advocacy coordinators. Or, if not comfortable meeting as a group, shall schedule meetings individually.

L. Submissions

- 2014 GSS Student Satisfaction Survey;
- GSS Council Retreat Summary.

M. Next Meeting

Thursday February 19, 2014

GSS Council Minutes
Thursday January 15th, 2015
GSS Ballroom, 5:30 pm



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N. Adjournment

BIRT there being no further business the meeting be adjourned at 7:27pm.

MOVER: Mary-Anne Shonoda

SECONDER: Enav Zusman

MOTION PASSES

28/6/1