



GSS Council Meeting Agenda

Thursday November 21, 2013

Thea's Lounge

Present:

Alexis Black, Ambrose Chan, Arni Mar Thrastarson, Brett Kolesnik, Cara Dong, Christopher Dickman, Christopher Roach, Christopher Jenkins, Christopher Quick, Craig Kerr, Daniel Wood, Danielle Thraser, Eric Becklin, Gabriela Badica, George Furey, Guillaume Beaulieu-Houle, Hafizur Rahman, Hamid Olson, Inti Dewey, Jack Hickmott, Jeff Abeysekera, Jens Vent-Schmidt, Jon Newell, Julie Zhang, Julianne Jagdeo, Kreso Sola, Laura Bohachyk, Lena Patsa, Lili Meng, Mahsa Mojahednia, Matt Sacheli, Michael Firmin, Michael Ries, Mitchell Meler, Nayantara Duttachoudhury, Omid Nourbakhsh, Patrick Lo, Paul Save, Pooya Hosseini, Richard Sandlin, Robert Teagle, Shona Robinson, Sima Valizadeh, Sneha Balani, Sofiya Lazarova, Tobias Friedel, Vincent Chan, Yuanyuan Liu, Yvonne Dzal.

Regrets:

Baseer Abdul, Bethany Schmidt, Cynthia Min, Dan Cohen, Ehsan Espid, Ingrid Olson, , Kristan Marchak, Martina Volfova, Min Xia, Natalie Marshall, Valeria Castellanos-Hurtado, Vivian Lam, Yifei Zhuang

A. Call to Order and Adoption of the Agenda

The meeting was called to order at 5:34pm.

1. BIRT that Abdul Alnaar be appointed as speaker for the November meeting.

MOVER: Christopher Roach, **SECONDER:** Jeff Abeysekera
PASSES

2. BIRT Motion 6, "AMS/GSS Health and Dental Plan" be moved to after the AMS/GSS Health and Dental Plan presentation.

MOVER: Christopher Roach, **SECONDER:** Tobias Friedel
PASSES

3. BIRT the agenda be adopted as presented.

MOVER: Lili Meng, **SECONDER:** Tobias Friedel
PASSES
(34-0-1)

B. Introductions

C. Presentations to Council (10 minutes, 5 minutes for questions)

- **ciRcle Awards**, Christopher Roach

The ciRcle Awards is a collaboration between ciRcle and GSS and is open to graduate students at UBC who submit exemplary non-thesis manuscripts or projects as part of graduate course work to ciRcle, UBC's digital repository

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ciRcle is the University of British Columbia's digital repository for research and teaching materials created by the UBC community and its partners. Materials in ciRcle are openly accessible to anyone on the web, and will be preserved for future generations.

There are four awards of \$500.

The recipients of this year's awards are:

- Sam Bailey and Shona Robinson, for "Aesthetic Assessment of Drinking Water at UBC: A Comparison of Waterfillz and Tap Water", and
- Christian Brady, for "Podcasting Lucan and the Classical World".

- **University Sustainability Initiative**, Paul Save

The UBC 20 Year Sustainability Strategy aims to increase housing and community at UBC whilst achieving a more sustainable campus.

Targets have been set to reduce Greenhouse gas emissions by 2035.

There are multiple groups working on the document which will be reviewed by the executives at UBC, students and stakeholders.

There is potential for a World café style meeting which will be an opportunity for anyone interested in the project to provide input / feedback.

It was asked whether there is a focus on sustainability in terms academics and teaching, to which the response was affirmative but at this stage, this is largely at the undergraduate level. The USI would like to see more graduate involvement and are working towards a more graduate-oriented perspective.

- **Council Retreat Summary** – Christopher Roach

The GSS Council Retreat, held in October at the AMS/UBC Whistler Lodge was a collaborative effort involving executives, Councillors and staff with the purpose of developing a strategic plan for the GSS.

The Retreat focused on five topics:

Graduate Student Centre

- A need for academic space, social space and commercial usage
- Priority should be given to graduate student use
- A suggestion that the bookings department run at revenue neutral
- A need for more statistics/data
- Better advertising, increase awareness, renovations, a more 'graduate atmosphere'.

GSS Funds

- There were discussions about using the Departmental Organizations Fund to support events held both at the Graduate Student Centre and non-GSC events
- Allow VP Finance to approve applications
- The Special Events Fund, for non-departmental events, should be more flexible. There is potential to increase the amount given
- Graduate Student Emergency Fund; assists a small number of students. There was debate about whether this is a GSS responsibility and whether the money could be used for more graduate events.



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- Potential new funds include an academic fund (for conferences, research, guest speakers), internal legal fund, combining the DOF/SEF to create one events fund
- There is a need for clear and published criteria

Lobbying

UBC Lobbying Priorities:

- Student-supervisor relationships and conflict
- Time to completion
- Professional development, mentoring
- Stipends

Provincial Lobbying:

- Funding
- U-Pass
- Professional development
- Student health, mental health, Pharma Care
- Childcare

Federal Priorities:

- The immigration / permanent residency application process
- Funding
- Professional development

GSS Services

- Develop a cohesive graduate community
- Develop soft skills
- Social, academic, sporting and intercultural events
- Aim to increase awareness, regular participation, and maintain records

Strategic Planning

Strengths; financial stability, the dedication and contribution of the individuals involved, the facilities, lobbying
Weaknesses; communication, the need for a more quantitative-based organization, internal memory, internal infrastructure, graduate student / membership engagement

A complete and comprehensive summary will be sent early next week and feedback / input is encouraged.

It was asked whether there was a discussion about better incorporating off-campus students, to which the response was that the issue had been raised but needs to be explored further.

Action item: The contact emails of all who attended the Retreat need to be circulated.



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- **Health and Dental Plan** – Christopher Roach and Lena Patsa
- 4. BIRT Council move to camera for the AMS/ GSS Health and Dental Plan presentation.

MOVER: Christopher Roach, **SECONDER:** Jeff Abeysekera
PASSES

5. AMS/GSS Health and Dental Plan

BIRT Council approves the current AMS/GSS Health and Dental Plan with Pacific Blue Cross.

BIFRT Council tasks the GSS representatives to the AMS/GSS Health and Dental Plan Committee to work towards increasing the benefits desired by graduate students.

Recess at 8:00pm

Meeting called to order at 8:23pm

- 6. BIRT Council strikes items D; 'Executive Remarks', E; 'Committee, Taskforce and Operations Reports', and F; 'Representatives Reports' on the condition that the President complies these reports and sends them to all Councillors electronically.

MOVER: Christopher Roach, **SECONDER:** Eric Becklin
PASSES

D. Executive Remarks

E. Committee, Taskforce, and Operations Reports

F. Representative Reports

G. Approval of Minutes

- 7. BIRT the minutes of the GSS Council meeting dated "October 17th, 2013" be approved as presented.

Amendments:

- Nayantara Duttachoudhury to be seated on Council as a Departmental Representative.

MOVER: Chris Dickman, **SECONDER:** Jack Hickmott
PASSES

- 8. BIRT the following committee minutes be approved as presented:

House Finance – September 4

House Finance – September 11



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House Finance – September 24

House Finance – October 22

Services – October 16

Code and Policy – August 9

Code and Policy – September 23

Code and Policy – October 21

House Finance – October 8

Services – October 30

Code and Policy – September 6

Code and Policy – October 7

Code and Policy - November 4

MOVER: Arni Thrastarson, **SECONDER:** Christopher Quick

PASSES

H. Seatings, Unseatings, and Appointments

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

Jens Vent-Schmidt has been unseated from the Academic and External Affairs Committee.

Danielle Thrasher has been unseated from the Code and Policy Committee.

Jahidur Rahman has been unseated from the Executive Oversight Committee.

Lili Meng has been unseated from the Human Resources Committee.

Lili Meng has been unseated from the Services Committee.

Baseer Abdul has been unseated as an AMS representative.

Seatings and Appointments

10. BIRT the following seatings are approved:

Arni Thrastarson be seated to the Academic and External Affairs Committee.

Christopher Roach, Gabriela Badica, Inti Dewey, Lili Meng and Sima Valizadeh be seated to the Elections Committee.

Note: Paul Save now has Colum Connolly's iClicker for voting, as his is no longer working.

Shona Robinson be seated to the House Committee.

Gabriela Badica and Nayantara Duttachoudhury be seated to the Human Resources Committee.

Lena Patsa be seated as an AMS representative.

Laura Bohachyk be seated as a Graduate Council representative from the Faculty of Education.

Hamid Omid be seated to the Services Committee.

I. Council Motions

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11. Biochemistry and Molecular Biology Department Committee Petition

BIRT Council ratifies the Biochemistry and Molecular Biology Graduate Student Association as the departmental graduate student organization for the Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology.

MOVER: Craig Kerr, **SECONDER:** Guillaume Beaulieu-Houle
PASSES

12. Acadia Park Community Needs Assessment Results

BIRT the Academic and External Affairs Committee recommends that the GSS Council supports the recommendations of the "Acadia Park Community Needs Assessment Results".

MOVER: Chris Quick, **SECONDER:** Sima Valizadeh
PASSES

13. GSS 2013/2014 Budget 2.0

BIRT Council approves the updated 2013/2014 budget as presented.

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

Discussion:

Where the budget refers to 'Special Events', this includes the Graduate Administration Appreciation Luncheon, the Graduate Student Organizations (GSO) Caucus meetings, the GSS Open House, and ongoing events such as the Coffee Social.

'Miscellaneous' expenses refer to projects such as the redesign and redevelopment of the GSS websites, the Health Plan, and the Strategic Plan.

It was asked whether the surplus money can be returned to graduate students who paid those fees? It was answered that, theoretically this could be done but that it is not the focus of this motion.

It was stated that in future meetings House-Finance will present forecasts instead of a budget, and that the difference will be explained in an upcoming meeting.

Councillors and graduate students are welcome to attend House-Finance committee meetings should they wish to present any ideas for use of the surplus.

14. Elections Committee Chair and Chief Electoral Officer

(note: this motion must be passed by a special resolution)

BIRT **Gabriela Badica** be appointed chair of the Elections Committee and Chief Electoral Officer.

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MOVER: Christopher Roach, **SECONDER:**
PASSES

BIFRT the Chief Electoral Officer receives no honorarium upon Council accepting the 2014 Election Report.

MOVER: Gabriela Badica, **SECONDER:** Inti Dewey
PASSES

Discussion:

It was asked what the workload would entail. It was answered that the role will involve approximately 70 hours over the next three months (until February).

Gabriela asked that the motion be amended to read 'no honorarium', as she is unable to accept payment for this role and risk affecting her scholarship conditions.

It was suggested that the honorarium be given back to the Elections Committee for use at their discretion, to which the response was, that would be what would happen in lieu of the Chief Electoral Officer receiving payment.

15. Graduate Students of Nursing Association (GSNA) Referendum Results

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.

MOVER: Christopher Roach, **SECONDER:** George Furey

There was a motion to table this until the next Council meeting as there was a reluctance to increase graduate student fees without further discussion.

MOVER: Sima Valizadeh

It was explained that the Graduate Nursing Student Association (GSNA) held a referendum which was passed by graduate nursing students who were in favour of the \$25 fee to support the GSNA.

It was explained that students will not pay the fee directly to the GSNA but that the University will collect it from students and forward it onto the GSNA.

There was a motion to Call To Question.

A vote was taken to see those who were in favour of tabling the motion (13) and those who were opposed to tabling the motion (14).



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There was a motion to Call To Question.

MOVER: George Furey, **SECONDER:** Christopher Roach

PASSES

J. Other Business and Notice of Motions

K. Discussion Period

GSS Council Winter Dinner: Friday December 12, in the GSS Ballroom

RSVP Kristie Nevill, aa@gss.ubc.ca no later than Monday December 2. This is a catered event therefore registrations are crucial.

L. Submissions

M. Next Meeting

Thursday December 12, 2013

N. Adjournment

BIRT there being no further business the meeting be adjourned at 9:33 pm.