



ATTENDANCE

Present: Nicolas Romualdi, Pouya Rezaeinia, Tarique Benbow, Kimani Karangu, Sara Hosseinirad, Aaron Loewen, Abdullah Hassan, Alejandra Botia, Alireza Kamyabi, Andrew Zang, Arezoo Alemzadeh Mehrizi, Arwa Nemir, Axel Hauduc, Cody Brown, Erik Frieling, Ginny Pichler, Gloria Mellesmoen, Jackson Schumacher, Jenny Lee, Jin Wen, Jonathan Summers, Jordan Hamden, Kiana Yau, Kate Sedivy-Haley (proxy for Samantha Peng), Larissa Peck, Lihwen Hsu, Maria Jose Martinez, Mina Rigby-Thompson, Mollie Holmberg, Mostafa Hagar, Nicholas Najy, Nevena Rebic, Oluwakemi Oke, Sarah Park, Skicy Liu, Teesha Luehr, Temitayo Olarewaju, Thomas Smith, Timothy Luk.

Regrets: Nancy Yang

Absent: Alvionne Gardner-Harrison, Alexa Tanner, Airu Ji, Arash Shadkam, Joseph Garen, Judith Valerie Engel, Megha Khalia, Nafise Faridi, Negar Ghahramani, Philip Yanuar Wijaya, Raphael Debert, Temitope Onifade, Xuejun Ryan ji, Yangfan Zhang.

Quorum: 21 Councillors

CALL TO ORDER AND ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting will be called to order at 5:30 pm.

AGENDA ADOPTION

BIRT the agenda be adopted as presented.

Mover: Maria Jose Martinez

Second: Kate Sedivy-Haley
(Proxy for Samantha Peng)

Result: Motion Carried

FOR (20): Erik Frieling, Kiana Yau, Teesha Luehr, Skicy Liu, Gloria Mellesmoen, Thomas Smith, Alireza Kamyabi, Arwa Nemir, Abdullah Hassan, Temitayo Olarewaju, Maria Jose Martinez, Jonathan Summers, Ginny Pichler, Sarah Park, Nicolas Romualdi, Lihwen Hsu, Tarique Benbow, Andrew Zang, Jenny Lee, Mollie Holmberg.

TERRITORIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

President: Today, even though we're not all gathered on campus, we recognize that the University of British Columbia, Vancouver Campus, is located on the traditional, ancestral and unseeded territories of the Musqueam Nation and we continue to thank the Musqueam Nation for their help with our reconciliation process and to acknowledge our history of our misappropriation of the Haida Symbol.

INTRODUCTIONS

Introductions.



1 EXPEDIENT MATTERS

At the discretion of the President, the following are deemed urgent matters for Council and are presented at the beginning of Council (not exceeding 10mins):

1.1 HEALTH AND DENTAL PLAN FEE ADJUSTMENT FOR 2020/2021

Group Responsible: AMS/GSS Health and Dental Plan Caucus / President

Supporting Documents: [April 1st minutes](#)

WHEREAS the AMS/GSS Health and Dental unanimously recommends that the annual fee for the AMS/GSS Health and Dental plan be increased by 3% effective September 2020, and

WHEREAS fee increases up to 5% can be implemented with approval of the AMS and the GSS Council.

BIRT the GSS Council approves the increase of the AMS/GSS Health and Dental Plan fee by 3%, effective September 2020.

Mover: President

Seconders: Thomas Smith

Result: Motion Carried

Discussion:

Nicolas: As you may all be aware; the Health and Dental fee is collected through the AMS but the changes to the fee itself are recommended by the joint AMS/GSS committee. After review, which you can see in the minutes, we've determined that the 3% increase in the fee would be sufficient to provide cover for the upcoming year so we can continue to provide the same service level to the students. Since this increase is less than 5%, passing the increase through GSS and AMS Council is sufficient to send it to the BOG and to put this into effect.

Tarique: I'm not sure if Nicolas can provide more context for this but this proposed 3% increase, are there any increases in the types of services that will be provided to the AMS Health and Dental Plan?

Nicolas: There are currently no plans to change the provisions of Health and Dental plan, the proposed increase is simply to adjust for inflationary pressures from one year to the next. This is based on the recommendation of the policy underwriter, Pacific Blue Cross, and it was reviewed by a consultant DRG Group.

Arezoo: Just out of curiosity, is that increase adjustment always around the same percentage? Do we have a 3% increase each year?

Nicolas: The increase has usually been 5%. Upon intensive review this year and review of the current reserve in the Health and Dental fund it was deemed that the increase of the nominal policy adjustment made no sense and it would just introduce more unnecessary costs for the students. There's currently a substantial amount of money in the reserve so if we were to go over in terms of claims for the following policy year, we would be in a very good position to cover this without any challenge so it was decided that an increase past the nominal adjustment of the fee, made no sense.



Votes:

FOR (25): Erik Frieling, Jackson Schumacher, Philip Karangu, Larissa Peck, Jordan Hamden, Kiana Yau, Kate Sedivy-Haley (proxy for Samantha Peng), Arezoo Alemzadeh Mehrizi, Sarah Park, Abdullah Hassan, Temitayo Olarewaju, Sara Hosseinirad, Nicolas Romualdi, Jenny Lee, Ginny Pichler, Andrew Zang, Mina Rigby Thompson, Jonathan Summers, Arwa Nemir, Maria Jose Martinez, Thomas Smith, Tarique Benbow, Nevena Rebic, Gloria Mellesmoen, Teesha Luehr.

ABSTAIN (4): Skicy Liu, Pouya Rezaeinia, Lihwen Hsu, Mollie Holmberg.

1.2 HEALTH AND DENTAL PLAN THIRD PARTY ADMINISTRATOR CONTRACT

Group Responsible: AMS/GSS Health and Dental Plan Caucus / President

Supporting Documents: [March 23rd minutes](#)

WHEREAS the AMS/GSS health and dental committee was undergoing a request for proposal (RFP) review process for the third-party administrator (TPA) of the AMS/GSS Health and Dental Plan, and

WHEREAS as a result of the current outbreak of COVID-19, the committee's recommendation is to avoid introducing potentially unnecessary changes to the way the H&D plan is administered at this time, and

WHEREAS an agreement has been reached with the current TPA, Studentcare, to continue being the service provider for 2 years at the current fee, and

WHEREAS this agreement provides a reasonable timeframe to ensure service continuity at this time, while providing an opportunity in the reasonably near future to revisit the RFP process.

BIRT the GSS Council, by recommendation of the AMS/GSS Health and Dental Committee, approves the extension of the current contract with Studentcare for 2 years, starting September 1st, 2020.

Mover: President

Seconded: Arwa Nemir

Result: Motion Carried

Discussion:

Nicolas: As you are aware, and Council was informed before, we started an RFP process to review the third-party administrator of the Health and Dental Plan. So, just a refresher for those of you who might not remember, there are several components to the plan: the AMS, GSS, the actual policy underwriter which is Blue Cross who takes the biggest chunk out of the fee and then there's 2 extra companies, one is the TRG Group who is a subsidiary of an independent advisor to the GSS and AMS, in a purely advisory capacity to the 2 societies to make decisions on Health and Dental, and then the last component, is what we call the Third-Party administrator which does not actually provide the policy, they provide the interface between Pacific Blue Cross



and the subscribers, that be the students, and they manage opt-in and outs, and they also provide a number of extra benefits on top, for example, Empower me. Now, while we were in this process, the COVID crisis happened. And what the Committee agreed is that it was not prudent to continue with this process because if we were to make the decision to switch to a competing provider, this would not be a good time to make such switch because it is not a good time to mess with the health care provisions and we would run the risk of having students unable to access their Health plans. It was a risk that it's not prudent to take so we negotiated with Student Care that instead of a 5 year commitment that we normally have with third party administrators, we would sign a contract for 2 years and for the exact service conditions that we currently have. Once these 2 years pass, the hope is that by that point, the COVID crisis would be solved, we would be able to engage in the RFP process. In this manner we can preserve the current plan as is, so students can continue to access it seamlessly but also, we give ourselves the chance to review if we want to continue with Student Care or not, two years down the line.

Jordan: My question is for Nicolas, was the option about 1-year extension discussed. If not, how was 2 years decided on?

Nicolas: It was, but the problem is not just the 1-year contract, the problem is the RFP process takes about a year. So, it wouldn't make sense to do a 1-year contract. If we wanted to do an RFP to adopt a new plan for September 2022, we would need to start the RFP process, I would say, no later than halfway or beginning of next year. So, the timeline wouldn't work with a 1-year contract.

Arezoo: I understand the COVID-19 crisis has shown up but given that the committee already decided to which party they wanted to continue with and the President presented to Council about the benefits of continuing with that company, and given that COVID-19 crisis has happened, yes, but we still continue to have our meetings virtually. So, I'm not clear how that has prevented us from making the contract with the new party given that all the processes of signing contracts and everything is still happening virtually. I'm not clear as to how this situation has prevented the switch.

Nicolas: Point of order: I gave an update "in-camera" so let's be careful how we voice it "out-of-camera"

Arezoo: Sorry, I forgot it was "in-camera". Anyways, I think you understood my question. Do I need to continue explaining it or is this enough?

Nicolas: I do. Without adventuring any potential decision that may have been made or any direction in which we decided we wanted to go, it was the recommendation of both providers not to make the switch right now. Even of the competition. The reasoning is, that the problem is not about signing a contract, it's that the potential new provider would have to arrange an infrastructure with UBC and with the policy underwriter, to do the data transfer with all the enrolments into the plan of the new students plus the people who have the choice to opt-in plus the people who choose to opt-out and this was supposed to be a 6-month process if it could've been done in person. And testing would be required, and problems could've arisen with server issues and data formats, etc. It was the consensus that it was too risky to incur into a potential change where we would be by September, faced with no TPA and no way to communicate with the policy underwriter who the actual subscribers to the plan were. I may also point out the fact that Student Care's initial offer was for a higher price and we were able to negotiate it down to the price that we currently have. It seems like the most prudent action



to preserve the status- quo and to not be risking students not being able to access the extended health and dental plan during a crisis that could extend, at this point, for any unknown number of months.

Pouya: As far as I remember, in the last meeting we heard that the Committee couldn't negotiate with Student Care. Can I ask what changed?

Nicolas: We just had more time to negotiate and we were able to do so.

Votes:

FOR(26): Kate Sedivy-Haley (proxy for Samantha Peng), Kiana Yau, Jenny Lee, Sarah Park, Abdullah Hassan, Philip Karangu, Temitayo Olarewaju, Arezoo Alemzadeh Mehrizi, Andrew Zang, Nevena Rebic, Larissa Peck, Arwa Nemir, Jackson Schumacher, Maria Jose Martinez, Mina Rigby Thompson, Tarique Benbow, Jonathan Summers, Gloria Mellesmoen, Alireza Kamyabi, Lihwen Hsu, Mollie Holmberg, Pouya Rezaeina, Jordan Hamden, Teesha Luehr, Thomas Smith, Nicolas Romualdi.

ABSTAIN (1): Skicy Liu

1.3 FEOO SMART GOAL REVIEW

Group Responsible: Governance and Accountability Committee

Description: Mid-term / Final review of FEOO's SMART Goal progress

Proposed Objective: Inform Council regarding the progress towards the FEOO's goals prior to the election of the next FEOO.

Time: 5 minutes

Supporting Documents: [FEOOSmartGoalReview2020.pptx](#)

Group Responsible: GSS Council

Supporting Documents: GSS Bylaws

WHEREAS the Financial and Executive Oversight Officer (FEOO), Phillip Kimani Karangu, has tendered his resignation effective April 30th as a result to his successful election to the position of President of the Society, and

WHEREAS the GSS bylaws indicate that it is the responsibility and prerogative of the GSS Council to elect an FEOO.

BIRT the GSS Council appoints _____ as Financial and Executive Oversight Officer, effective May 1st, 2020 and until August 31st, 2020.

Mover: President

Seconded: Alireza Kamyabi

Result:



Discussion:

Speaker: I must open nomination. Does anybody want to nominate someone or themselves? I see that Temi wants to nominate himself. The motion then is:

BIRT the GSS Council appoints **Temitayo Olarewaju** as Financial and Executive Oversight Officer, effective May 1st, 2020 and until August 31st, 2020.

Mover: President

Second: Alireza Kamyabi

Result: Motion Carried

Speaker: Does anyone have any questions or comments before we vote?

Arezoo: Yes, I was wondering if Tayo can explain his motivation or perhaps if he has any plans for when he enters this position. I would appreciate if he could explain to all the Councillors. Thank you.

Temitayo: I have been on Council for 2 years now and in that period I have basically been able to observe what the FEOO has been doing and been able to think of ways that I can serve and make the position better. So first, the FEOO position oversees finances and is also in charge of Executive Oversight. For Finances I intend to ensure that the processes are more streamlined. Right now, what happens at GSS is that there are lots of paper trails and bills can only be paid by cheque. So, I have a plan in place to hopefully automate that process. I have also been involved for a few years now and I'm a member of HF. This committee understands how finances of the GSS functions. And regarding the Executive Oversight, over the years I've noticed a few things and one of them to improve is on supporting and encouraging executives and secondly, in terms of the whole executive and oversight transition process, I think we can put mechanisms in place to ensure that we don't encourage executives to low-ball which is something that I notice sometimes happens. Basically, regarding this, I have thoughts on how to improve and encourage performance and on how to ensure that the goal setting process and review is improved upon.

Kate: Hi, I would like to whole-heartedly endorse Tayo for the position of FEOO. We've worked together for some time primarily in CPC and recently in EOC. He's highly qualified, highly conscious and I think he's going to do an absolutely fantastic job in the role of FEOO.

Votes:

FOR (26): Mina Rigby Thompson, Ginny Pichler, Sarah Park, Pouya Rezaeina, Maria Jose Martinez, Nevena Rebic, Temitayo Olarewaju, Arwa Nemir, Alireza Kamyabi, Andrew Zang, Jonathan Summers, Tarique Benbow, Oluwakemi Oke, Mollie Holmberg, Kiana Yau, Arezoo Alemzadeh Mehrizi, Thomas Smith, Jenny Lee, Abdullah Hassan, Kate Sedivy-Haley (proxy for Samantha Peng), Gloria Mellesmoen, Larissa Peck, Teesha Luehr, Jordan Hamden, Philip Karangu, Skicy Liu.

ABSTAIN (1): Nicolas Romualdi

1.4 2020 ELECTIONS RESULTS

Group Responsible: Elections Committee



Description: 2020 GSS Election

Proposed objective: Ratify Elections Results

Supporting Documents: [2020 Election Results.pptx](#), [2020-Preliminary Announcement of Election Results.pdf](#)

WHEREAS Elections Committee has overseen the 2020 GSS election conducted from March

BIRT Council ratifies the result of the 2020 election.

Mover: Maria Jose Martinez **Seconders:** Alireza Kamyabi **Result:** Motion Carried

Discussion:

Pouya: I'm wondering if there's anyone from the Election Committee in the meeting. And I would like to ask, who was the person in charge of deciding on the debate or all kinds of logistics for Elections. We saw a lot of messiness, I would say, in the Debates and a lot of things related to the Elections. I'm wondering if he/she can speak to that?

Nicholas (Elections Committee): I was the chair of the Elections Committee during the process of this election. We have most of the details that you were talking about in the Elections Report which should be item 4.3 in the agenda, so I hopefully cover most of what you mentioned at that point and then if we have any questions afterwards, we'll be open to questions as well.

Victoria: I was just wondering if we could have details on the voter turnout statistics? Just for record?

Nicholas: Yes, so we have data on the voter turnout by Department. We would be able to show you all of that cool information during our presentation.

Speaker: I think what I'm hearing is 2 same questions. Would you like to walk people through it now? Are you ready to present now?

Nicholas: Yes, I can deliver it now if you guys want.

-PRESENTATION 4.3: [2020ElectionsReport.pptx](#)-

Speaker: Excellently delivered. Any questions?

Jonathan: Thank you for the presentation. It was very good and thorough. Thank you to the Committee and the Elections Officer for all your hard work. I have two questions. Firstly, I was looking for the Elections Results after the Election, and I was wondering, were these communicated by email, because I didn't notice them, so I wanted to make sure I didn't miss them.

Nicholas: Thanks Jonathan. That is a good question. Is Priya, the Electoral Officer, here? She would be able to best answer these questions as I think she was in charge of sending out the preliminary results.



Priya: Once the preliminary results were out, we announced the results first to all the candidates. After which I contacted the Chief Electoral Officer of the AMS, he's in charge of making the results available to all the University. So, the same platform where you go for voting is where all the results are announced. After which we also sent out an email to Ben, and he made the results accessible on Facebook and the website, if I'm not wrong.

Jonathan: Ok, thank you. I do have a second question, if I may.

Speaker: Can I put you on the speaker's list?

Jonathan: Yes, no problem.

Pouya: First I want to thank Nicholas and the whole Elections Committee for the presentation. I know it was even more difficult this year for the Committee because of all the things that happened. I just wanted to say that the debate was exactly at the same time as the Craft Untapped which is an event we had with the theme of "Meeting the Candidates" and it was a little disappointing that very last minute, we realized that the Elections Committee moved the Debates to another location. And basically, what happened is that for about 1 hour, we didn't have any of the candidates in the event, and they came by after this hour. This was a little disappointing to us so in the future you can be more in contact and coordinate better with the VP Students and the Events Manager. Thank you.

Arezoo: I wanted to thank the Election Committee members and Electoral Officer for all the hard work that they have put in as well as our Communication Team and our Event Planning Team. I have more of a suggestion, I've noticed that there's a very general and vague complaining language that is not appropriate. I was hearing that for example: "there was a lot of mess happening" and blaming particular people about it. If really there is any point, I believe that instead of vague and general language, people should use very specific points. Like for example, such and such happened and why that happened. Because we must remember that this Election takes a lot of effort and a lot of that is done by volunteer people. So yes, maybe there's a lot of things in the way but maybe we can convey, more politely, our suggestions instead of using complaining language and very vague language. So, we don't want to discourage volunteers in the GSS because most of the work of the GSS is happening by volunteering. And I should also mention that both the Electoral Officer and Chair were very early in their role when they had to run the whole process, so I want everyone to consider that in their minds as well. Thank you.

Victoria: First, thank you so much Nicholas for that great presentation. I found it very thorough and well done. I understand that Elections is quite a hefty responsibility, so I really appreciate the work you did. I also want to recognize the fact that this is a Chair that was elected right before Elections and was not involved with the committee prior, so that's a huge feat. In terms of questions, I have very few now because they were almost immediately addressed by your presentation. But I wanted to maybe suggest that those recommendations you had for slow response time or deciding what was appropriate behavior and how to respond to that behaviour if it happened, if you could maybe put it into a Policy of some kind, maybe specific examples of that kind of behaviour or actions that you can take. I know it was very unfortunate that we had so many problems with this current election but I hope that the benefit that can come out of it is that you can have specific examples and actions that one could take. For example: if a candidate is taking too long to take an action, now that this is



something that we have experienced, you can maybe put it specifically into writing, what the consequences of that delay would be for that candidate. And likewise, for your Committee, you're trying to do a lot of work and I personally am in favour of having some sort of sub-committee or committee members that are specifically committed to complaints because that is quite an arduous job. I think that kind of standards for your own behaviours in writing can be a great asset for the next year's Elections, however those might occur, and I just wanted to thank you again!

Sarah: Thank you and I would just like to echo what was said. He took over a couple of weeks before the Elections and I really appreciate the speedy transition and facilitation of elections with the Committee and the Electoral Officer, Priya. Quick question: For one of the policy recommendations, it was if there were any complaints within 5 days of the incident and I'm wondering where the 5 days came from and seeing as how voting period was 12 days and 5 days just make a hefty amount of that voting period, are you planning on changing the voting period or what is the rationale behind the 5 days complain period? And again, thank you.

Nicholas: Thanks everyone for the support. We really appreciate it. Sarah, in response to your question, 5 days was sort of what we went back and forth on what a good range would be and obviously that's still a placeholder number. We were just thinking that we would want a time limit where it's not too quick like 24 or 48 hours that might be a little too quick and not giving someone enough time to formalize a complaint but then there's also the flip-side of not allowing for someone to far after something has, in their eyes, gone wrong, raise a complaint when it's too late and it's already happened and potentially even the results have already come out and where the Elections Committee couldn't do anything about it anyways. So, that was sort of the thinking we were having behind that suggestion. Kate, I know you were also behind this idea so if you have anything else you want to add, feel free, but I think that was mostly the way we got to 5 days.

Jonathan: Follow up question, I'm not familiar with the Elections Policy so forgive me for that but what are the possible sanctions that are available for infractions that take place, I mean having 1 week of misleading communications could have potentially, irreparable effects on an Election. I mean, it could be really damaging so I'm wondering, how much executive authority does the Electoral Officer have or I imaging it sounds like the Committee is ultimately responsible for making any decision about sanctions? If it's been considered to give the Electoral Officer more executive authority in terms of being nimbler in responding to these kinds of incidents and especially if it plays later in the campaign or during the Election period for example. Also, if there are sanctions available other than disqualification for example if an infraction would take place earlier on in the campaign period it might be less detrimental to the overall campaign than say during voting as happened this time. So, I'm wondering if these are things that have been discussed or considered. Thank you.

Nicholas: I believe that those are very good questions. When we first had our meeting on March 3rd to respond to the issue with Remzi, we did have a discussion on what our possible punitive responses are. One of them is to withhold reimbursements for campaign materials but we thought that it wasn't really appropriate in response of what Remzi was doing in his campaign so really the only viable option we had was the risk of disqualification of his campaign and so we did give him, in response of what you mentioned, 1 week and it was a long time but it wasn't one week of the original statements being on his campaign page. We gave him 48 hours and just before the 48 hours came up, he did change some of the statements but the only issue was that the statements that he changed them to, still had some subtle suggestions of the ideas he was saying earlier and just references to things that were not entirely honest and were a bit negative and alleging things that



hadn't been proven in any way. So, the things that he changed the statements to were still in a way, inappropriate. And we then had a discussion, do we give him another 48 hours with the risk of disqualification to then retract these statements and do we just get stuck in this game of cat and mouse where he just keeps changing it to something else and we have to keep giving him a 48 hour window? Or, do we just give him a blank cheque and say, if you still have statements that we deem as dishonest and disparaging, in 48 hours it doesn't matter to what you change them to, you would be disqualified. So, it was just a bit of the statements changing repeatedly that caused it to drag out for a week. But luckily it wasn't those original statements.

Kate: I'm hearing a lot of comments on the recommendations that were made with respect to the results of this election. As a member of the Elections Committee, I think it is most important to keep in mind that none of the concerns that were voiced about this process reflect in any way an unfair advantage that was enjoyed by the people that ultimately won the elections. Therefore, while I would be happy to furthermore discuss recommendations pertaining the electoral process, I think that there is every reason for us, for respect to the motion at hand, to ratify these results and then we can continue with the broader discussions on the electoral processes later.

Votes:

FOR (20): Mina Rigby Thompson, Temitayo Olarewaju, Pouya Rezaeina, Nevena Rebic, Kate Sedivy-Haley (proxy for Samantha Peng), Oluwakemi Oke, Maria Jose Martinez, Jenny Lee, Ginny Pichler, Arwa Nemir, Thomas Smith, Mollie Holmberg, Jonathan Summers, Erik Frieling, Abdullah Hassan, Gloria Mellesmoen, Andrew Zang, Teesha Luehr, Jordan Hamden, Larissa Peck

ABSTAIN (6): Arezoo Alemzadeh Mehrizi, Tarique Benbow, Philip Karangu, Sarah Park, Nicolas Romualdi, Alireza Kamyabi.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1.5 GSS COUNCIL MINUTES

BIRT the following GSS Council minutes be approved:

- February 20th, 2020

Friendly amendment Page 24-30 removed "blah blah" from the minutes.

Mover: Kimani Karangu

Second: Alireza Kamyabi

Result: Motion Carried

Discussion:

Alireza: Something I wanted to suggest changing in the minutes, page 24 of 31 at the top, suggests that I finished my statement by saying: "blah, blah", which I'm pretty sure I didn't. So, I would like to move to amend that. I consider that a friendly amendment but up to interpretation.



Nicolas: I would like to sincerely apologize. That completely slipped me when I reviewed the minutes. I hope you understand that the last month has been less than ideal for the executives with all the things we need to deal with and that totally slipped me. I am really sorry, this is definitely a friendly amendment. I never heard you say “blah, blah” or any statement that was unworthy of the floor at Council. I sincerely apologize.

Votes:

FOR (21): Nevena Rebic, Andrew Zang, Thomas Smith, Ginny Pichler, Pouya Rezaeinia, Mollie Holmberg, Lihwen Hsu, Oluwakemi Oke, Jenny Lee, Teesha Luehr, Tarique Benbow, Philip Karangu, Abdullah Hassan, Kate Sedivy-Haley (proxy for Samantha Peng), Jordan Hamden, Maria Jose Martinez, Larissa Peck, Arwa Nemir, Alireza Kamyabi, Gloria Mellesmoen, Arezoo Alemzadeh Mehrizi.

1.6 COMMITTEE MINUTES

BIRT the following GSS Committee minutes be approved:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Academic & External Committee: | | Human Resources Committee: | Feb 24 th , 2020 & Mar 16 th , 2020 |
| Code and Policy Committee: | Feb 28 th , 2020, Mar 18 th , 2020 & Mar 30 th , 2020 | Services Committee: | Jan 30 th , 2020, Mar 5 th , 2020 & Mar 24 th , 2020 |
| Elections Committee: | Mar 3 rd , 2020 | AMS Caucus: | |
| Executive Committee: | Apr 2 nd , 2020 | Graduate Council: | |
| Executive Oversight Committee | Feb 7 th , 2020 & Feb 24 th , 2020 | Health and Dental Plan Caucus: | Mar 23 rd , 2020 & Apr 1, 2020 |
| Governance & Accountability Committee: | Feb 13 th , 2020, Feb 27 th , 2020, Mar 12 th , 2020 & Mar 26 th , 2020 | Strategic Planning ad-hoc Committee: | |

Mover: Alireza Kamyabi

Seconder: Jordan Hamden

Result: Motion Carried

Votes:

FOR (19): Tarique Benbow, Thomas Smith, Jenny Lee, Maria Jose Martinez, Oluwakemi Oke, Arezoo Alemzadeh Mehrizi, Andrew Zang, Larissa Peck, Philip Karangu, Teesha Luehr, Jordan Hamden, Abdullah Hassan, Alireza Kamyabi, Mollie Holmberg, Erik Frieling, Nevena Rebic, Lihwen Hsu, Gloria Mellesmoen, Arwa Nemir.

ASBTAIN (2): Jonathan Summers, Kate Sedivy-Haley (proxy for Samantha Peng).



2 SEATINGS

2.1 NEW COUNCILLORS

BIRT the following Seating of new Councillors be approved:

| Name | Department |
|---------------|------------------------------|
| Axel Hauduc | Genome Science & Technology |
| Mostafa Hagar | Chemistry |
| Aaron Loewen | Cell & Developmental Biology |
| Cody Brown | English |

Mover: Sarah Park

Seconded: Alireza Kamyabi

Result: Motion Carried

Discussion:

Victoria: Maybe this is a Point of Information. But for Councillors that may not have handed the Declaration Form until after the agenda submission deadline, they are not included in this new Council seating, is that correct?

Nicolas: That is correct. Full documentation is required prior to the agenda being sent out, to be included in the Council agenda. Also, because of training scheduling. Training is mandatory prior to seating, which took place earlier today. So short answer to your question, yes. Full documentation needs to be sent out and if not, you get seated in the upcoming meeting.

Votes:

FOR (23): Pouya Rezaeinia, Mina Rigby Thompson, Oluwakemi Oke, Philip Karangu, Nicholas Najy, Kate Sedivy-Haley (proxy for Samantha Peng), Jin Wen, Larissa Peck, Jenny Lee, Thomas Smith, Jonathan Summers, Maria Jose Martinez, Abdullah Hassan, Tarique Benbow, Ginny Pichler, Arezoo Alemzadeh Mehrizi, Jordan Hamden, Lihwen Hsu, Andrew Zang, Mollie Holmberg, Arwa Nemir, Gloria Mellesmoen, Alireza Kamyabi.

2.1.1 Committee Seatings

All GSS Councillors are required by the bylaws to sit on at least one committee.

[Committee descriptions and meeting times can be found here.](#)

BIRT the following Committee seatings be approved:



April 2020 Council Minutes

April 16, 2020 | Online Meeting | 5:30 pm

| Committee/Caucus | Nominee | Position | Vacancies |
|-----------------------------|---------------|-----------------|-----------|
| Academic & External | | Councillor | 0 |
| | | Ordinary Member | 0 |
| Code & Policy | Aaron Loewen | Councillor | 1 |
| | | Ordinary Member | 3 |
| Elections | Mostafa Hagar | Councillor | 2 |
| | | Ordinary Member | 2 |
| Executive Oversight | | Councillor | 2 |
| | | Ordinary Member | 3 |
| Governance & Accountability | Axel Hauduc | Councillor | 1 |
| | | Ordinary Member | 3 |
| House Finance | | Councillor | 2 |
| | | Ordinary Member | 0 |
| Human Resources | | Councillor | 3 |
| | | Ordinary Member | 2 |
| Services | Cody Brown | Councillor | 1 |
| | | Ordinary Member | 1 |
| Strategic Planning Ad Hoc | | Councillor | 0 |
| | Axel Hauduc | Ordinary Member | 2 |

BIFRT Tarique Benbow be seated on the Executive Oversight Committee starting May 1st 2020.

BIFRT Pouya Rezaeinia be seated on the Services Committee as Ordinary Member starting May 1st 2020.

Mover: Alireza Kamyabi **Seconded:** Jordan Hamden **Result:** Motion Carried

Discussion:

Jordan: I just wanted to briefly motivate for Code and Policy. As you guys heard there's lots of opportunities for the next year for CPC and Elections Committee to collaborate and really improve our processes and I thought that we could really use new members. As the CPC Chair, I was also seating in the Elections Committee during this cycle. I had to unseat myself from that so, Elections will definitely need more members, and this is a great opportunity to collaborate between committee's and learn more about the GSS overall. I realize I may be speaking to the wrong group of people here to motivate, but we could really use some more people on both these committees to help with our goals over the next year.



April 2020 Council Minutes

April 16, 2020 | Online Meeting | 5:30 pm

Kimani: I would want to request to anybody that has no committee now, to join EOC, because EOC seems to be one of the most active committees. We have a few members leaving the committee not because they don't like it, but because they're graduating. Next is that for instance both me and Alireza are moving from the Committee. Luckily, Tayo will join the committee so I think to be able to support him in office, it would be very important that members that want to see oversight done in the right way, to join EOC.

Alireza: I would like to nominate Tarique for EOC.

Tarique: I have a question. I'm still technically VPUAA even after today's meeting so I'm not sure if I can be seated.

Mostafa: I would like to join the Elections Committee.

Kate: G&A is about to start out midterm goal reviews so that is always an exciting time to get started into the committee. You'll be able to see what everyone else is doing and a very interesting conversation about progress and where to go from here. We've also got a couple of projects running including improving transitions for incoming chairs, so that's something that is potentially going to make a big impact because institutional memory in chair training has been a big issue for the GSS in the past and we're making some good steps towards improving that.

Nicolas: I understood that the VPUAA was intended to be seated in EOC? I may be wrong, and he's welcome to vote down my motion but in the event that it was intentional and to streamline the process, I move to amend this motion to add a line at the end, saying: Tarique Benbow to be seated as a Councillor in the EOC starting May 1st.

Tarique: First of all, I'd like to say, thank you Nicolas for clarifying this and making it a possibility. I accept the nomination.

Speaker: So, I take that as a seconding this amendment?

Tarique: Yes, I second.

BIFRT Tarique Benbow be seated on the Executive Oversight Committee starting May 1st 2020.

| | | | | | |
|---------------|-----------|----------------|----------------|----------------|-------------------|
| Mover: | President | Second: | Tarique Benbow | Result: | Amendment Carried |
|---------------|-----------|----------------|----------------|----------------|-------------------|

Speaker: I need a vote to add this clause in, otherwise it can't be included in the main motion.

Sarah: Point of information. I have a quick question. Is the incoming executive's transition to their role on May 1st, would we get automatically unseated from committees that we're on or do we still have to unseat ourselves officially?

Speaker: The intent of the bylaws and policy of executives are not supposed to sit on there, you would be automatically unseated if the intent is unclear then you won't be. But to answer your question properly, I need to pull the bylaws.



Nicolas: I just want to use my interpretation powers one last time. Given that Sarah is currently a Councillor and Executives are also Councillors, my read would be that she's not automatically unseated from any committee where she is currently seated as she would just carry on as Councillor. If your intention is to unseat yourself from a Committee, unless we're out of vacancies now, you can do it after the meeting to simplify things. However, if there's need to create room in a committee, you can unseat yourself now. Otherwise just email me and the AA after the meeting and we can unseat you from whichever committees you'd like to be unseated from.

Sarah: Sounds great, thank you.

Votes:

FOR (15): Pouya Rezaeinia, Maria Jose Martinez, Andrew Zang, Jenny Lee, Sarah Park, Axel Hauduc, Teesha Luehr, Mina Rigby Thompson, Thomas Smith, Mostafa Hagar, Nicolas Romualdi, Jonathan Summers, Abdullah Hassan, Arezoo Alemzadeh Mehrizi, Arwa Nemir.

Discussion:

Arezoo: Hello everyone, I'm the HR Committee Chair so I would like to introduce you to the committee and what we do and what we're going to do. Overall, the HR Committee is part of the oversight for our employees, so we do the process of hiring and firing and, we have 3 goals for this coming year. One of our small goals is almost near to be finished. We're working on assessment of salary of our current full-time staff and also we're going to work on creating a vision for HR Committee and set a vision of what the committee means to the Society and what can be expected from them. Those are not very clear now and; we're working to rearrange the supervisory structure of GSS. So, a lot of exciting and stimulating work and conversations are underway and always have been. Aside from working on the goals, we always have HR matters that are coming to the Committee and it's really a very outstanding managerial experience. One of our ongoing tasks is hiring and we do a lot of this throughout the year. Being seated on the hiring team is a very exciting opportunity because you learn later how you present yourself during future job interviews. So, I encourage people that are interested in any managing work and the new Councillors, I encourage you and invite you to join the Committee.

Alireza: I'd like to quickly motivate for Strategic Planning. This Committee does the long-term planning of the GSS. Is a significant organizational task to do and we need as many people to do it as possible. Currently, we're at a place where new members can join in well and get accommodated to the process of the Strategic Plan, quite well, so I'd like to encourage anyone that's interested at all in joining in.

Sarah: Going of the bat, here's why you should join Services Committee: how would you know about the GSS if you didn't know about GSS? Services is here, so you know about GSS and all the cool stuff we get up to. And I'd also like to nominate Cody to Services.

Speaker: Cody do you accept?

Cody: Yes, I accept.



Alireza: I'd like to nominate Pouya as a member of Services effective, May 1st.

Sarah: Point of Information. Would Pouya be an Ordinary Member starting May 1st?

Axel: I'd be interested in joining Strategic Planning if that's possible.

Speaker: Mr. President, can we take the second amendment as friendly?

Nicolas: Yes.

Speaker: Great, so we don't need to vote on that one.

Thomas: Yes, I would like to echo what's in the message with the position that I believe Axel nominated himself for Strategic Planning, I guess I'm a bit confused as to why it got placed on G&A as a Councillor? And I'm also wondering, as Councillors I thought we were not able to be an Ordinary Member if they were meant to go in Strat Plan?

Speaker: That is correct. So, Thomas to clarify, and Axel, please correct me if I did it wrong, when he nominated himself for Strat Plan, the Councillor seat was unavailable therefore somebody else spoke up and recommended him seated in G&A, and he said yes. Is that correct?

Axel: I didn't remember somebody recommending for G&A but I'd be interested in that as well. That's fine with me.

Nicolas: Actually, thank you for bringing that up. However that will only apply to standing committees and the membership of Ad Hoc Committees is determined by the Committee terms of reference which at this point, actually for the SPAHC not that we should do anything right now, but you should have expired at the AGM and we never restructured the Committee although we did hold you at AGM, so the committee is in a dubious state. Speaking about the membership question, at this point, the Councillors can seat as ordinary members in SPAHC because that rule does not apply to Ad Hocs and I believe the terms of reference of the Committee do not forbid Councillors from taking the Ordinary Member seat. Maybe the chair could double-check that.

Alireza: Yes, that is correct. So, Axel can sit as an Ordinary Member in SPAHC.

Speaker: Axel do you want to sit in SPAHC or both?

Axel: I can do both.

Votes:

FOR (28): Mina Rigby Thompson, Nevena Rebic, Larissa Peck, Alejandra Botia, Pouya Rezaeinia, Aaron Loewen, Kate Sedivy-Haley (proxy for Samantha Peng), Thomas Smith, Sarah Park, Mostafa Hagar, Oluwakemi Oke, Lihwen Hsu, Jordan Hamden, Arezoo Alemzadeh Mehrizi, Maria Jose Martinez, Jonathan Summers, Gloria Mellesmoen, Nicholas Najy, Andrew Zang, Abdullah Hassan, Alireza Kamyabi, Axel Hauduc, Jin Wen, Philip Karangu, Cody Brown, Ginny Pichler, Mollie Holmberg, Arwa Nemir



ABSTAIN (1): Tarique Benbow

2.2 COMMITTEE CHAIR SEATINGS

BIRT the following Committee Chair Seatings be approved:

Timothy Luk as Chair of Strategic Planning ad hoc Committee.

Jin Wen as Chair of the Governance and Accountability Committee.

BIFRT the following Committee Chair Seatings be approved and effective as of May 1st 2020:

Sara Hosseinirad as Chair of Academic and External Affairs Committee.

Mover: Kimani Karangu **Second:** Alireza Kamyabi **Result:** Motion Carried

Discussion:

Alireza: I'd like to speak for the Chair of SPAHC. Timothy has been a very productive member of the Committee since joining and I whole-heartedly endorse him as the new chair. I believe the Committee will be in very good hands going forward. I believe Timothy is here at this point as well, if he'd like to make any comments.

Timothy: Thank you very much Alireza for those kind words. I'm looking forward, should I be voted in as Chair, guiding this Committee, as the President said, in this dubious time. Thank You.

Larissa: I have a question. I'm the current chair of AcEx and I will no longer be a student at the end of this month so Sara Hosseinirad will be taking my spot as chair. Does that have to go in today's Council minutes?

Speaker: If you wish to be, you can amend the motion to put her in at the end of the month. So I have:

BIFRT the following Committee Chair Seatings be approved and effective as of May 1st 2020:

Sara Hosseinirad as Chair of Academic and External Affairs Committee.

Mover: Larissa Peck **Second:** President **Result:** Amendment Carried

Votes:

FOR (27): Sarah Park, Temitayo Olarewaju, Tarique Benbow, Nicolas Romualdi, Aaron Loewen, Mostafa Hagar, Andrew Zang, Erik Frieling, Arwa Nemir, Jenny Lee, Axel Hauduc, Jin Wen, Mina Rigby Thompson, Cody Brown, Kate Sedivy-Haley (proxy for Samantha Peng), Philip Karangu, Gloria Mellesmoen, Lihwen Hsu, Arezoo Alemzadeh Mehrizi, Maria Jose Martinez, Mollie Holmberg, Ginny Pichler, Teesha Luehr, Abdullah Hassan, Alejandra Botia, Larissa Peck, Alireza Kamyabi.

Discussion:



Kate: Just wanting to speak in favour of Jin as the incoming chair of G&A. We've been talking about this for a while in the Committee. He's currently the deputy and has started the training process. I will be continuing for two weeks or so as a member of the Committee, after that transition, to make sure things go smoothly. Looking forward to Jin coming on and taking the helm of G&A.

Votes:

FOR (23): Mina Rigby Thompson, Erik Frieling, Abdullah Hassan, Arwa Nemir, Kate Sedivy-Haley (proxy for Samantha Peng), Axel Hauduc, Nicolas Romualdi, Alejandra Botia, Ginny Pichler, Jenny Lee, Nicholas Najy, Mostafa Hagar,, Mollie Holmberg, Larissa Peck, Maria Jose Martinez, Tarique Benbow, Philip Karangu, Teesha Luehr, Cody Brown, Sarah Park, Lihwen Hsu, Arezoo Alemzadeh Mehrizi, Gloria Mellesmoen.

3 MATTERS FOR DECISION

3.1 AFFILIATE ORGANIZATION RECOGNITION

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

BIRT the following organizations be recognized as Affiliate Organizations for one year, ending at the meeting of Council in April 2021:

| Name of Affiliate Organization | Representative |
|---|-----------------|
| Zoology Graduate Students' Association | Ken Thompson |
| The UBC British Columbia Water and Waste Association Student Chapter | Varshini Baskar |
| International Collaboration on Repair Discoveries Trainee Committee (ICORD) | Katelyn Hudak |

Mover: Kimani Karangu

Seconder: Sarah Park

Result: Motion Carried

Discussion:

Arezoo: I was wondering if, I think Pouya could explain about, International Collaboration on Repair Discoveries Trainee Committee (ICORD), what is that? Which Faculty and Department do they belong to? How big is their organization? Thank you.

Pouya: I don't have their application in front of me, but that information should be in the supporting documents. ICORD is actually one of the very active Off-campus student organizations and they haven't been affiliated with us for a long time and I heard their name a lot from Jacqui from G+PS, they are very active so we reached out to them and we asked them to apply to become members with us. I don't exactly remember the numbers, but they are around the VGH area and they're a non-departmental organization.



Votes:

FOR (20): Mina Rigby Thompson, Alejandra Botia, Mostafa Hagar, Erik Frieling, Aaron Loewen, Jenny Lee, Andrew Zang, Teesha Luehr, Arezoo Alemzadeh Mehrizi, Arwa Nemir, Maria Jose Martinez, Axel Hauduc, Mollie Holmberg, Nicholas Najy, Philip Karangu, Jordan Hamden, Lihwen Hsu, Larissa Peck, Gloria Mellesmoen, Abdullah Hassan.

ABSTAIN (1): Jin Wen

Discussion:

Sarah: Point of Order. It says that their AO will end at the meeting of April 2020 so just a friendly amendment it should say April 2021.

Speaker: We're already voting on it, so I think what we must do is close the vote right now and amend the motion. President, is this amendment correct:

BIRT the above organizations be recognized as Affiliate Organizations for one year, ending at the meeting of Council in April 2021

Mover: President

Second: Abdullah Hassan

Result: Amendment
Carried

President: Yes, I move that amendment to be added.

Speaker: The previous vote carried through but it's not effective because it's basically ending right now. So, let's do it again.

Votes:

FOR (28): Mina Rigby Thompson, Kate Sedivy-Haley (proxy for Samantha Peng), Sarah Park, Thomas Smith, Skicy Liu, Nicolas Romualdi, Lihwen Hsu, Larissa Peck, Mostafa Hagar, Arwa Nemir, Alejandra Botia, Mollie Holmberg, Jenny Lee, Tarique Benbow, Arezoo Alemzadeh Mehrizi, Ginny Pichler, Axel Hauduc, Philip Karangu, Alireza Kamyabi, Jin Wen, Maria Jose Martinez, Cody Brown, Nevena Rebic, Andrew Zang, Abdullah Hassan, Jordan Hamden, Gloria Mellesmoen, Teesha Luehr.

3.2 CPIF EXPENDITURE- EQUIPMENT FOR TKH

Group Responsible: House Finance

WHEREAS a table cart is required for Event Production Assistant setup and takedown tasks;

WHEREAS the current podium is broken; and

WHEREAS the current wireless microphones and Lapel mic are out-dated and in disrepair

BIRT the GSS Council approve the expenditure of up to \$3 600 from CPIF for the purchase of a table cart, podium, two wireless microphones, and one lapel mic.

Mover: HF Committee

Second: Alireza Kamyabi

Result: Motion Carried



Discussion:

Victoria: Point of Information: Is it allowed for a Committee to be a mover of a motion rather than an individual?

Speaker: Yes, it is.

Christina: I realized that the motion should say that the expenditure of up to \$3600 from CPIF. I just realized that it's not clear where we're taking the money from.

Speaker: Good point. Since you're the chair of HF Committee and you're the mover, you amended this motion, so it doesn't change the intent because of the title so I'm not going to go to the amendment process.

Alireza: Can I get a status from Kimani on how much money we have in CPIF right now?

Kimani: We have around \$240 000 approximately.

Speaker: This is a special resolution because we're taking money from CPIF and it's in the Bylaws as a Special Resolution.

Votes:

FOR (21): Thomas Smith, Cody Brown, Tarique Benbow, Kate Sedivy-Haley (proxy for Samantha Peng), Teesha Luehr, Alejandra Botia, Andrew Zang, Philip Karangu, Jenny Lee, Oluwakemi Oke, Arezoo Alemzadeh Mehrizi, Larissa Peck, Axel Hauduc, Aaron Loewen, Alireza Kamyabi, Lihwen Hsu, Mostafa Hagar, Mollie Holmberg, Nicolas Romualdi, Maria Jose Martinez, Arwa Nemir.

ABSTAIN (3): Mina Rigby Thompson, Jin Wen, Gloria Mellesmoen.

3.3 UBC VANCOUVER AND OKANAGAN GRADUATE STUDENT REPRESENTATION DURING COVID-19

Group Responsible: Executive Committee

WHEREAS there is no Graduate Student Society that represents Graduate Students of the UBC Okanagan Campus, and

WHEREAS in the current context of the COVID-19 outbreak, the needs of Graduate Students are substantially similar and need to be articulated to, in large part, the same UBC and Government authorities, and

WHEREAS Graduate Students of the Okanagan campus are the most natural advocacy allies for the Vancouver Campus Graduate Students, and



WHEREAS the UBC Student Union of Okanagan UBCSUO has provided express consent to the GSS to advocate on behalf of UBC-O Graduate Students, and

WHEREAS unifying the Graduate Student voice across of all UBC strengthens the positions taken by the GSS and facilitates advocacy for both groups of students (UBC-V and O).

BIRT the GSS Council authorizes the GSS Executives to advocate on behalf of Okanagan Graduate Students for the duration of the COVID-19 outbreak.

Mover: President

Second: VP UAA

Result: Motion Carried

Discussion:

Nicolas: You are all aware of the challenges we're experiencing as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak and you may or not know the UBC-O Graduate Students, don't have a GSS like we do. And they are less equipped in a way to advocate for themselves and for the needs that they have and they have approached us and have expressed their desire for us to represent them in advocacy fronts as well as other grassroots Grad Student effort who they also want to get behind them. Okanagan Grad Students are not paying members of the GSS but my assessment and the VPUAA's is that it does not really take from us to advocate for them as well because we're advocating in the same places and for the same thing. And furthermore, the fact that we're able to present arguments that unify the voice of all Graduate Students at UBC, not just the Vancouver students, helps strengthen the position that we take. I will, in the spirit of full disclosure, say that we made a submission to the BOGs and you can find the link in my updates, where we have already expressed the views of the Okanagan students. Again, this does not negatively impact us in any way, on the contrary it helps strengthen the position like I mentioned. And to reassure everybody, we have expressed consent of the UBC Student Union of Okanagan, which is the AMS equivalent for them, to advocate for Grad Students. We've also actually been sent by the Dean of the College of Grad Studies from the Okanagan and the general sense is that this is a good initiative that helps us advocate for both campuses. Just to be clear, this is not Okanagan students joining the GSS, it is not Okanagan students using services or funds or any option that the GSS provides to Graduate Students of the Vancouver campus. This is simply and express authorization that the current executives are seeking, so that we're all in the same page and be aware that we're also advocating in this case not just for Vancouver but also for Okanagan students. To wrap up I would say that the way I see it, is that it's not as different as we align ourselves with other campuses, and we do this when we go to ABCS and we advocate to the provincial government, we join forces with other universities. In this case, as we advocate to the UBC Board and President, during these trying times, I don't see any drawback and I see a lot of benefits in doing this. And even if there weren't any benefits, I believe we have the skills and opportunity to help our fellow students in the other campus and even from the perspective of pure solidarity we should move into this direction. So, we're seeking formal endorsement from the Council to do this. Thank you.

Tarique: I think Nicolas hit all the nails on the head right there. This is a real opportunity for us to come together with the other location. Having more than 1 voice together while we're advocating, especially to UBC BOG's, really helps and puts us in a firm standing. I think there's no drawback to this so I think we should go ahead and support this. This is for a great cause and I think it's a good idea.

Teesha: First of all, I would like to say that I'm super supportive of this and really excited for this. I did my undergrad at UBC-O and very much know that the resources for Grad Students on that campus are not as big,



just because it's not a big research campus for Graduate Students, so I'm excited about this opportunity. I have two questions, probably directed at the President. The first of which is, you mentioned that the UBCS-O as well as the College of Graduate Studies, both of those groups have said that they want us to speak on behalf of them and to advocate. I was just wondering if there's a plan to reach out to the Graduate Students themselves or maybe a body of students that might be able to better speak on what they might need us to advocate for, if there's any specific points that are unique to the Okanagan. And the second question is, I'm not sure if the GSS or UBC as a whole is going to define when the outbreak is over or when we're no longer in crisis, so, I was just wondering if that needed more details in the BIR clause. When the outbreak is over, I don't know how that could be interpreted and I'm sure that there could be some loose interpretation in that clause so I was just wondering if there was a plan to maybe put some slightly more specifics of when students are allowed back on campus or when the President of UBC says we're no longer in an outbreak.

Nicolas: I'll answer both your questions Teesha, thank you for them. We have been in touch with a number of Grad Students and we're currently informally through Facebook, in touch with about 350 students. It's unreasonable that we would be able to run something as strong as a referendum to get formal consent, although I do take your point, I will say that we are in touch with a number of students from UBC-O and we are interfacing with them. As a matter of fact, there's a team within our team that is called Okanagan-Vancouver Coordination, and there have been no voices against that but what I would also say is that the fact that they have consented in a written letter, I would trust that they don't make this decision lightly. I do take your concern because consent was a very big part of this process and I'm unsure if we're able, at this point, to secure something more than expressed consent of SOO. As far as the Dean, this was just an expression of appreciation for us including the SOO on how we express to the Board this cycle. Just to be clear, we did need to do this before we had consent from Council because the Board met earlier today so there was no way we could be able to wait for this motion to be passed and it would've been a great loss to not bring that motion forward. To answer your second point, I think the motion is fine as is because we do meet monthly as Council and if at any point there's a concern at an executive level, Council can quickly put them back in line but to try to point to a specific action, let's say we say that it's when the Graduate Students are allowed back on campus but perhaps at that point the concerns relates to COVID are not fully resolved. Tuition awards are not resolved, extension of funding is not resolved, housing concerns are not resolved. I would caution against trying to pick a hard deadline because this could set a problem to us doing what we need to do at the time that we need to do it. The situation is very fluid, and I don't know if you've had a chance to go through our updates but it's evolving very rapidly. These unusual times do require perhaps that the executives have a bit more leeway because we need to respond daily to this. I realize that this could make some people apprehensive but it's the landscape that we're navigating. I hope that answers your questions.

Teesha: That answers my questions. I think I was just worried that the executives would be stretching too thin for too long but it's an ongoing thing and that if Council sees fit, we can try to intervene at some point or just to make sure we're not overspreading ourselves.

Alireza: I have one question and one comment regarding Teesha's point. First, my question to the President was whether the interpretation of this policy extends to our advocacy efforts with the Provincial and Federal Government. And my comment was, that regarding having an end point to this, I believe that the interpretation



to the Constitution is such that it would not allow executives to advocate on behalf of the UBC-O Graduate Students if it's against the interests of the GSS or its members, or it hinders the advocacy process.

Nicolas: I believe at this point there's no conflict of interests, and we do not foresee a clear conflict of interests but if that were to happen, I believe that the Executive Committee should meet with Council. At no point would we advocate against the interests of Vancouver Grad Students. So far that's the leeway that the Constitution gives us. I had an interesting perspective and we do have precedent on this matter, when we interpreted the Constitution as allowing us to advocate for prospective Iranian students and to remove barriers to education. I believe a similar reasoning applies and furthermore the Constitution does not specify that we only advocate for Vancouver students. It says UBC Graduate Students. If that said the Graduate Student Society of UBC Vancouver, but it doesn't specially anywhere preclude us from advocating for UBC-O.

Alireza: Mr. President, regarding whether advocacy extends to Provincial and Federal advocacy efforts?

Nicolas: I would say yes, it's not limited to inside the University.

Arezo: My question is a bit more general and if it's a lot of information for you to provide us with, that's ok, you don't need to do so, but I was wondering if by any chance you know, Nicolas, why they don't have a Society and if there's any possibility that they can be paying members of GSS in the future.

Nicolas: I wouldn't know why they don't have a Society. I would suspect that it's just because it's a smaller campus with only 3500 Graduate Students. It's a rapidly growing campus, and whether they can or can't be members the GSS, I believe it's a completely separate matter that requires much more analysis, conversation and consultation, that's outside of the scope of the motion that we now have on the floor. I appreciate the thought, but I would say that that's a separate matter from what we have at hand right now. It's a nice thought to think about at a later time.

Kate: I would like to speak in favour of this motion. The President consulted with me as the chair of G&A at the time that the submission to the BOG's was required. For the reason stated that this is something that is highly likely to be beneficial to both and the fact that the Constitution allows us some flexibility in order to advocate in this way, I think this is a great thing to be doing and I also agree that the question of membership is one that we could potentially re-visit at a later date but it's not necessary considering this particular motion so overall I'm in favour and I think is something we should do and something we can do.

Teesha: I was just going to add in that the campus is vastly growing, I think it's 11 or 12 years old. So, the Graduate Student population when I graduated, a handful of years ago, was like next to nothing. It was like 1% of all student population so in the last 3 or 4 year they have grown quite substantial and this might stem them to want to make a Society. So similarly on the UBC-O campus, all students are part of the Student Union Organization similarly to how we're all a part of the AMS, so they're still represented as students, just not necessarily as a specific cohort of Grad Students so that's why there's currently no GSS there.

Votes:



FOR (27): Philip Karangu, Mostafa Hagar, Kate Sedivy-Haley (proxy for Samantha Peng), Sarah Park, Nicolas Romualdi, Pouya Rezaeina, Abdullah Hassan, Jenny Lee, Jin Wen, Jordan Hamden, Aaron Loewen, Erik Frieling, Nevena Rebic, Alejandra Botia, Teesha Luehr, Ginny Pichler, Arwa Nemir, Larissa Peck, Axel Hauduc, Maria Jose Martinez, Mina Rigby Thompson, Arezoo Alemzadeh Mehrizi, Andrew Zang, Tarique Benbow, Lihwen Hsu, Mollie Holmberg, Gloria Mellesmoen.

3.4 GRADUATE STUDENT FINANCIAL AID FUND

Group Responsible: Tarique Benbow

Description: Graduate Student Financial Aid Fund Usage Report

Proposed Objective: To share the GSFA usage report for 2019-2020 period and Recommendations to improve the initiative.

Time: 10 minutes

Supporting Documents: [GSFA Usage Report](#)

WHEREAS the current outbreak of COVID-19 may put undue pressure on the graduate student financial aid (GSFA) fund, and

WHEREAS the GSS budget for 2019/2020 fiscal is balanced, and

WHEREAS there may be urgent need to re allocate funds to the GSFA.

BIRT the GSS Council authorizes the reallocation of departmental surpluses to the financial aid fund by recommendation of the department head and the approval of the Financial and Executive Oversight Officer and the House Finance Committee until the end of this fiscal year which is the May 31st 2020.

Mover: President

Seconded: VP UAA

Result: Motion Carried

Discussion:

Alireza: Thanks, Tarique for the presentation. I had a few comments to make first and I'll end with a question. First of all, I would personally like to see a higher number of applications going into the GSFA. I think it highlights a problem that you already alluded to that the communication of the fund should be better done. One of my first questions is, what plans do you have to run a good communication plan to let Grad Students know about the GSFA. Secondly, during this time I would suspect the number of applications for the fund would multiply, seeing that it's currently quite low, do we have any plans to streamline the process, have the panel meet more often perhaps but I would really like to recommend to increase the eligibility criteria around this time seeing that there are many students of variant circumstances that could use this fund. So, my second question is if you have any plans on increasing that eligibility? Thank you.

Tarique: Thank you Ali for your questions and kind comments on the presentation. So, to answer the first question that you highlighted which is increase the number of students applying for the fund, that is a very delicate balance that we have to try to strike. As I said before, the funding is not unlimited so one of the things



that we've been very careful with is to try and not go over in promotion because then we would get a bunch of applications that we just can't fund. So, I think the first challenge that we should really be tackling is how can we increase the level of funding that is applied for the GSFA and also how can we maintain that sustainably. So, I think that's the first challenge we would want to tackle before really pumping up the communications platform for the fund. Now, let's say we do get the funding to support the initiative, obviously we would have to develop a communications plan and that can be done together with the GSS office and presented to Council later. Perhaps that's a recommendation for the incoming VPUAA once we've settled on sustainably support the funding for this initiative. And for your last question, with COVID-19 the panel met earlier today and what we did is that we already saw and increase in the number of applications. This month we reviewed 4 applications which is the highest we've had in any one month. So, what we've done is that all the panelists have agreed to meet once we get an application. Before we were meeting 1 or 2 times per month, now we have promised to meet every time we get an application so that is going to be communicated to us and we will meet as frequent as we get applications during this crisis. In terms of the guidelines, that has not been discussed but perhaps it's something for us to consider given the current circumstances. I will say that based on the current guidelines and terms of reference for the Policy, the COVID-19 is an unforeseen challenge so that with any application coming in that is COVID related, all being that everything else in the application is sound and full proof, the current guidelines already do set a precedent to allow for COVID-19 related issues or challenges to be funded.

Victoria: Thank you very much for the presentation Tarique. I'm really glad to hear any updates regarding GSFA as I think it's a very important fund. I wanted to speak in favour of this motion because as a previous representative of a professional program where the financial impact caused by COVID-19 has been pretty severe, specially a lot of us are working part to full time and those jobs have been laid off. I want to speak from that perspective, that I would really hope that not only will the surpluses be added to the fund, but that certain flexibility could be considered with the students.

Kate: I would also like to speak in favour of this motion. I will point out as I think the VPUAA alluded to, the criteria for eligibility are already broad with the main one being unforeseen circumstances and COVID-19 certainly qualifies. Other than that, to be a Graduate Student demonstrating a financial hardship, they do need to be further recommended by an office or academic unit which should not be hard if Departments are sending us people. And the requirement that they can't have applied for the last 4 months or received it in the past 12 months. And the reasoning behind that is to spread out the funding to as many students as we can help with the limited funds. I'm also happy to note in respect to the future administration of the fund that the incoming VPUAA has expressed an interest in the GSFA as a fund and it's continuity, so I'm confident that it's something that would continue to be looked over closely and improved upon.

Kimani: Thank you Tarique for that wonderful presentation. Speaking to this particular case as the outgoing FEOO I would like to clarify that as of end of February we had a surplus of \$23 234.39 and although I know this will be impacted by the end of this month due to the fact that we're doing some refunds to the events that never happened but were planned for, and we're also failing to get some rent due to the situation at the moment, we're going down. However, all that said and done, I think I am for the motion and I would want to second this motion because our priority should always be to our students because it is through them that we're able to survive. Therefore, giving back whatever, we can make sure that they continue surviving and that they continue being members of GSS. Of course, going forward I think I would want to recommend to the next



VPUAA to think of expanding the scope of this item. Sara did a great job bringing this motion and I want to think of this being a bigger funding opportunity for us. So therefore, I second it if it's in my purview to do so.

Gloria: I had 2 things. First of all, in my Departments Grad check-in today they mentioned this is a potential option for students in need. However, if there's only \$1000 left, I don't know if I want to be recommending them to be seeking out funds when they aren't going to get it. So, I was wondering what I should be telling people, whether they should be applying or not. And also, the recommendation for a levy and fee that we have to pay, I'm not sure if I follow that part given that we're all financially stressed right now and we don't all need to apply for this but a lot of people aren't in the best financial situation and having the idea of having to pay into this right now, seems a little bit of bad timing to me. Unless it's optional.

Tarique: I would say yes, still tell them to apply. Although there's \$1000 left, that is the maximum that we would fund any one applicant. We may fund less so maybe \$200 or \$500 so I would say still apply. If this motion passes today, it will significantly increase the financial fund moving forward so perhaps you can gage that based on the vote, but I would say yes, tell them to apply. I believe the incoming VPUAA will be setting a new budget so that may also be fed into this funding as well.

Pouya: I'm also in favour of this motion but I have a question for VPUAA. Can we not limit this to the 2019-2020 fiscal year? Can we have this beyond the current fiscal year? Like for the next one?

Tarique: That would probably be done with the budget if I'm not mistaken. Maybe the FEOO can correct me on this. But if the 2020-2021 budget has already been planned for, I'm not sure, so maybe FEOO can speak to this. If I may also use the opportunity to recognize that I didn't answer one of Gloria's questions which was whether the \$2 fee would be a thing that we do right now. This is for the future so I wouldn't recommend putting a \$2 fee on our members right now. But perhaps after COVID-19 and when things get back to a semi-normal situation, then it would be a good time to perhaps approach our members and see what they think. Again, this is a referendum so they can vote for or against. Hopefully they will vote for when the financial situation improves.

Nicolas: To answer Pouya's question, I appreciate what you're saying and I believe that would be premature because the reason why we're putting this motion forward now it's because there's an emergency situation so we need flexibility to move money into the GSFA from our respective surpluses. And the way it works is that every department would have to first recommend and then approve, so it's not like anybody is going and appropriating other people's funds. But if we were to do this as an ongoing thing, this would be interfering with the HF purview to set the budget for the fiscal year because it would set a budget and then we would go around and move money in a different way than it was set, so I would advise against an ongoing authorization for executives or anybody to move money around in the budget unless coming to Council, except for emergency circumstances such as this one. So, I believe that we should stick to the current procedure where it's Council that approves the budget and we have to work within those bounds and I hope that this motion passes, whenever a situation like this appears and there's an emergency, flexibilize that procedure to address the particular emergency but we should be cautious about extending blank cheques of flexibility into the future. With that said, I just realized that this motion has a problem and doesn't have a time-limit. Could you add me to speaker's list?



Tayo: Once again Tarique thank you for the insightful presentation and as the current situation stands, this initiative as far as there are surpluses that can be. However, regarding your comments and recommendations, the GSS remains a constituent part of the AMS and GSS students currently are GSS Members like every one of us included, currently must pay fees called AMS Financial fees...

Nicolas: Point of order. We already had this problem when we were discussing this, let's speak on the motion. AMS is out of the scope. The motion is not about...

Tayo: It is regarding the motion because the GSS still remains a part of the AMS...

Speaker: Tayo, is your point on the motion of re-allocating the money to this fund?

Tayo: My point is on the presentation, on one of the recommendations of having a referendum for a fee which was what Gloria spoke about.

Speaker: If we're talking about a referendum it's not in direct relationship to the BIR clause which we moved and seconded. So, I have to rule this out of order. Do you have any other points to make to this motion?

Tayo: No further point then.

Alireza: Point of order. This is a bit problematic because the presentation is on a different matter than the motion. They're separate in a way, so when we ask questions about the presentation that was made it may be considered out of order regarding the motion, but it is regarding the presentation that was made. So, I guess that would leave it up to the speaker to rule on that, but I just want to point out that the presentation did touch on these matters that we're talking about, it is regarding GSFA generally.

Speaker: I can only rule on the motion that belongs to the floor to everyone, which is written on there. I can't control whatever the presentation before the motion. Even though it could be related. My job is to keep everyone on focus on the motion at hand. If you want to talk about additional things, someone needs to make an amendment to add it in there.

Alireza: If I may clarify, the presentation comes with the motion, doesn't it make it in order?

Speaker: no, it's all stated in the motion. Regardless of what the presentation, the motion is what speaks. Does it make sense?

Alireza: It does but I still think it's a bit problematic, but we can move on.

Speaker: It's a problematic of the motion which I can't control, Cause the motion belongs to Council.

Alireza: Perhaps the presentation should've been made at a different time but for the sake of moving on, we can move on.

Nicolas: I would like to move to amend the motion, to add at the end: Until the end of the current fiscal year (End of May 31st). I will motivate if I'm seconded.

Speaker:



BIRT the GSS Council authorizes the reallocation of departmental surpluses to the financial aid fund by recommendation of the department head and the approval of the Financial and Executive Oversight Officer and the House Finance Committee until the end of this fiscal year which is the May 31st 2020.

Mover: President

Seconded: Jordan Hamden

Result: Motion Carried

Nicolas: The rationale for that is first, to address what I said before this should not be blank cheque for the future whenever, it should have a limit. And we do need to submit new budgets starting June 1st and to Council in May for the next Fiscal year, so at that point if we have information then we will budget for the fund accordingly. At that point we can plan ahead, and it should no longer be an emergency measure, so I think it's prudent and sufficient for now. If anything, else is required we can address it in the May Council meeting.

Christina: I just want to clarify what this means because we don't have all the actuals for the year until like the middle of June or end of June, so we might not know how much surplus there is until then. So, I just want to make sure that we're able to move the money from the previous fiscal year. It's just that we probably won't know the surplus until mid or end June. Can we clarify if we actually need to move the money before the end of May or is this talking about the money that we will have for the previous fiscal year but we can move the money in June if necessary.

Nicolas: No, the way I'm reading this is that we could only move money up to May 31st, so we would use the most current actuals we have.

Tarique: I think the surpluses are from the current fiscal year. Just to put it into perspective. We're not recommending surpluses to be moved in the new fiscal year. Not sure if that helps clarify things for you Christina.

Speaker: Nicolas I'm seeing that on topic of this amendment, cause it's about clarification of the period, so what I'm hearing is "from the current fiscal year" Does that correctly reflect Christina and Tarique's point?

Nicolas: I find it redundant because you can't move money from the future fiscal year but it's friendly if we want to include it. We can't move money that we not yet have.

Speaker: What do I do with the original amendment?

Nicolas: Let's just vote on it.

Speaker: Ok, I cannot add it in unless Christina, you specifically ask for it.

Christina: No, I think Nicolas sufficiently clarified my question.

Tayo: My comment is that I think the current alteration requested by the President is also redundant because of the whereas is based on the GSS Budget of 2019-2020 so it already presupposed that it will take place at the end of that fiscal year and not the year after. While it doesn't hurt to have more clarity, it is also redundant.



Speaker: Nicolas has talked that the Whereas clause has no binding and that's exactly the point, I would recommend all of the motions that have money and a dollar amount on it to have where it's from and the time period. Any good motion should have those components. Anything outside of the motion is now legally binding.

Votes:

FOR (25): Pouya Rezaeinia, Maria Jose Martinez, Temitayo Olarewaju, Nicholas Najy, Aaron Loewen, Lihwen Hsu, Jenny Lee, Abdullah Hassan, Teesha Luehr, Axel Hauduc, Jin Wen, Nevena Rebic, Alejandra Botia, Tarique Benbow, Gloria Mellesmoen, Andrew Zang, Mostafa Hagar, Nicolas Romualdi, Mollie Holmberg, Erik Frieling, Arezoo Alemzadeh Mehrizi, Kate Sedivy-Haley (proxy for Samantha Peng), Jordan Hamden, Alireza Kamyabi, Arwa Nemir

Discussion:

Jordan: While we're voting, Point of Information. I'm just curious as to what the quorum is for the meeting and if we're still meeting that with these 25 members?

Speaker: 21 is the quorum.

Votes:

FOR (23): Oluwakemi Oke, Maria Jose Martinez, Erik Frieling, Aaron Loewen, Kate Sedivy-Haley (proxy for Samantha Peng), Jenny Lee, Nicholas Najy, Jin Wen, Jordan Hamden, Alejandra Botia, Axel Hauduc, Abdullah Hassan, Andrew Zang, Arwa Nemir, Pouya Rezaeinia, Arezoo Alemzadeh Mehrizi, Teesha Luehr, Alireza Kamyabi, Mostafa Hagar, Gloria Mellesmoen, Tarique Benbow, Mollie Holmberg, Lihwen Hsu.

4 MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION

4.1 DELAYS IN STRATEGIC PLANNING DUE TO COVID-19

Group Responsible: Alireza Kamyabi – Chair of SPAHC

Description: Strategic planning is built on input and consultation with various stakeholders. The current COVID-19 situation has interrupted the consultation process and made long-term planning and consultation difficult. Chair of SPAHC will provide info on how COVID-19 will affect the strategic planning timeline and most likely cause delays.

Proposed Objective: To inform Council about the delays in Strategic Planning process due to COVID-19.

Time: 15 minutes



Supporting Documents: n/a

Discussion:

Alireza: As you know, COVID-19 has affected almost everything and the GSS Strategic Planning process is not immune to that. We officially launched the consultation process with the launching of the theme consultation survey which some of you might have seen when we requested committee chairs to send it out to their committees. However, with the current situation we were planning to carry on further consultation from that but unfortunately the survey has seen low participation so far and we expect that with the current situation we'll see a delay in the roll out of the Strategic plan in general. In terms of timeline the goal of the committee was to officially present a graph of the 2021-2026 Strategic Plan in the 2021 AGM, however I suspect that it would be delayed a few months to say the least. A few reasons for the expected delay are that the resources in the GSS office are currently very limited to support the communication of the consultation process of the Strat Plan. A lot of those communication channels are currently reserved for COVID-19 related issues. Another reason is that some can see that carrying out this consultation period at this time might come across as insensitive as some students are struggling financially or have loved ones that are currently affected by the situation and that was brought up to SPAHC as a potential reason to suspend and lastly, students might not be able to provide the feedback that we might usually expect from them. All this is to say that in SPAHC we're currently brainstorming how and whether to continue the consultation process of strategic planning. We hope that Timothy can present a motion in next Council as to whether we might suspend it if we decide to, otherwise I just want to inform you that to say the least, we should expect a delay in the ruling out of the Strat Plan. I'd be happy to answer any questions that you may have.

Victoria: Hi thanks for the update. I have a question, this is a matter for discussion, are you asking for discussion from Council about a particular matter related to this? Or is this more of an update? In which case, it sounds like it might be a matter to note instead.

Alireza: As to the delineation between matters of discussion and matters to note, I'm not sure, but this was to inform Council of potential delays, given that that's in our mandate. But you might be right, that it's better for matters to note.

4.2 RESEARCH GRADUATE STUDENT FUNDING SURVEY REPORT AND NEXT STEPS

Group Responsible: Tarique Benbow

Description: Research Grad. Student Funding Survey Report and Next Steps

Proposed Objective: To inform and share with councillors the major findings of the Research Graduate Student Funding Survey and the Next Steps

Time: 15 minutes

Supporting Documents: [2019Funding Survey Report](#)

Discussion:



Nicolas: Thank you Mr. VPUAA for the presentation and for all the work you and your team put up through the year to support and advocate in this front particularly to the Board because that's where the money is going to have to come from if we want to make a difference here. You may or not know the fact that through our advocacy efforts, the first immediate results were that the GSS was granted a seat in the Academic Renewal Working Group. This led to us having direct access to the discussions on the Board level and giving us the opportunity to advocate for this fund. Fortunately for all of us, although discussions were, in closed and therefore I wasn't able to update you throughout the year on how those went, since the Dean of Graduate Studies earlier today in a public meeting stated one of the biggest outcomes of that, I won't wait anymore to announce it formally that funding has been allocated for and across the board for 25% tuition reduction for PhD students starting September 2020. That reduction would be in the form of a tuition award and extended to all PhD students both international and domestic, centrally funded by the University. This was pre-COVID and the budget approval has been deferred to June. The budget still contains the item which is cited in the submission we made to the board where we do quote the budget proposal for 2020-2021 and it includes the support, I encourage to read the whole budget briefing because it includes all the mentions of the advocacy that we did through the year and the renewed focus in Grad Students Support. Right now we're advocating for an extension of those supports due to COVID but everything is up in the air so we're working hard to make sure we don't lose any of the ground that we won and that we can actually gain more ground in the form of more support to overcome summer and potentially the fall term, however this unfolds. Again, I would reiterate my appreciation for all the effort Tarique's team has put into this and the effort that came out of the GSS staff as well. The amount of communication, policy analysis, effort in events that was put into this. This was an effort that pretty much every piece of the GSS put in and I'm certainly hoping that the current context doesn't negate this effort. But it is a pleasure to be able to communicate this after the term is over, I guess I should thank the Dean for making this public statement earlier today. I would like to conclude and open to questions.

Arezo: Thank you very much Nicolas and Tarique and all the staff behind this hard work. Many congratulations to all the Grad Students. I just have one question, that 20% reduction, if it happens, does it include just certain years or if Grad Students are in 5th or beyond that year, does that apply to them as well? Is there any restriction regarding where you are in your studies?

Nicolas: No, it was approved across the board for every PhD student.

Kate: I would like to thank and congratulate the team involved in this advocacy effort. This is really a fantastic result.

Victoria: Sorry for taking more of people's time but I really did want to send a huge congratulations to everyone in this issue even if for some reason they revoke this wonderful action, I've seen firsthand how much work has gone into this, I'm really excited to see this advocacy continue but the effort that has gone into this has been tremendous and I'm so happy that I was able to see come to some fruition before I graduated and left Council. So, thank you everyone.

4.3 2020 ELECTIONS REPORT

Group Responsible: Elections Committee

Description: The report on the 2020 Elections



Proposed Objective: Inform Council on the election process and recommendations for improvement

Time: 15 minutes

Supporting Documents: [2020ElectionsReport.pptx](#), [ECMeetingMinutesMar3rd2020.pdf](#)

Discussion:

Speaker: From my understanding, this has been presented, Elections Committee chair, Nicholas, are you ok with taking questions?

Nicholas: I would presume now would be a better time to take some more of the feedback that people had on the recommendations and such.

Alireza: Given your presentation and the recommendations that you made, what would be some of the first priorities in the Committee in the coming months?

Nicholas: Of the top of my head, I know we have several recommendations so it's hard for me to say which one we would prioritize first. But the one of the top of my mind that would probably be the best choice, would be looking into a more robust system of handling complaints. Be that a more pro-active approach from the committee in monitoring tentative behaviour or by having more regular email updates to all candidate with very clear link to help lines and contacts within the Elections Committee that they can reach out to if they have any grievances so that they don't make it public and a part of their campaign as we saw this year around. To sum up, just a more robust complaint handling system.

Kate: We have a very thorough list of things that we came up with in Elections and talking with Jordan about policy issues, if anyone is interested, there will be ongoing consultations but some specific actionable items are on the table.

4.4 VP STUDENTS FINAL UPDATE

Group Responsible: VP Students- Pouya Rezaeina

Description: VP Students Final Updates

Proposed Objective: To update the GSS council on the efforts of the VP-Students' office during the 2019-20 term

Time: 20 minutes

Supporting Documents: [VPStudentsGSSPresentation.pdf](#)

Discussion:



Victoria: First of all, thank you Pouya for your time in office. I appreciate the initiative to send an update to Council. I wanted to also second your shout out to Nicole. As part of my role as G&A Chair I was helping support the Committees in particular Services in investigating ongoing issues or ways that G&A could support them and I had the opportunity to talk to Pouya, Nicole and Services and it basically confirmed my understanding that Nicole has been a specially valuable staff member to us and I don't want to say anything in camera or anything but I really wanted to shout out her huge efforts in coordinating and facilitating all the student events because it really is at times, a one or 2 person show, so that's something I definitely wanted to highlight. The other thing I wanted to mention, I wanted to remind Council that reporting on SMART Goals is something that G&A does to provide a third party, nonpartisan view of the goals. As a reminder, I appreciate the effort to report on your own goals but, the process is such so that G&A can provide an impartial view of the progress that was made and will be doing so in May, as well as at the end of the GSS year, so I'm not sure why that was there, but thank you for your efforts.

Arezo: Pouya, that was very impressive. As a former VP Students, I have a special feeling for this role and I'm very passionate about this. So, I'm very happy for all these achievements that you, Nicole, the communications team and Services Committee, put a lot of effort in to and made this success happen. Heartfully, I extend my congratulations to you all. I just have a little question out of curiosity, could you please give an example of a partnership with AO's any example of events that you guys did with AO's?

Pouya: We collaborated with an AO at HLI and organized a Procrastination Workshop there and we also collaborated with Graspods to hold a Career Fair. These are the 2 that I can remember of the top of my mind.

Tayo: Once again Pouya thank you for your service over the past 2 years. It's highly appreciated, and we could all see the progress you made on your goals. I would also like to re-iterate what Victoria just said, that for executives, the body responsible to present on SMART Goals is EOC headed by the FEOO. In this case, they would be the one to provide the feedback on executives after evaluations as I said. As this would be the last time that you and all the current executives will be in Council before handing over, we understand, as a prospective FEOO, that it's been hectic to bring what's happening and is also about to transition to the President Position. However, according to the policy manual, this should be done even before he makes that transition. It would be helpful to at least have a report that can be annexed to the subsequent Council meetings. So, It might be helpful to have something similar for all executives even after the transition happens.

Final discussion:

Arezo: We have a tradition that we always thank all the outgoing executives and I don't know in what way we can do this, but I encourage everyone to perhaps turn on their mics and clap. It's my suggestion. And I would like to ask the outgoing executives, they have done a lot of work and if you want to be successful in any effort that you do, I invite the rest of the executives to let us know what are the initiatives they would like us to follow with the incoming executives.

Speaker: Are you asking for each of them who hasn't spoken, to speak?

Arezo: If they like, for example some people can say, I did a lot of hard work on this initiative, please make sure to follow up on incoming executives and see if they're continuing that effort. If they like, no pressure.



Speaker: Thank you for all executives who served last year and since this is your last Council meeting, I'm sure there's a lot of blood, sweat and tears invested into to this year. If anyone has some final remarks, I'll recognize you when you say speak.

President: I think I would like to thank the former VP Students, current Chair of HR for setting us up with the opportunity to speak. We did have our outgoing review recently and these were very prolonged discussions of over an hour, so I don't want to bore everyone with the details. If there's one thing that I want to leave with everyone is that if we reflect on the presentation that Tarique and I just delivered together, and it's not only been Tarique, it's been all the executives, that there's so much more we can achieve when we work together and just focus on how we play to the team strengths and collaborate to achieve common goals. There's so much more that can be achieved, I don't want to get into the minutia of things. I am continuing as VPUAA so if there was so a lot of issues that I want to continue, I'll just continue them. I think with that, thank you all and I'll yield to my vice president. Thank you.

Tarique: As most of you guys know, my ascent to VPUAA has been one of the non-traditional routes. I came into office approximately 3 months late and I tried my best to reach the same speed that the other executives where going at. It has been an uphill battle but once I got in the groove, I was in the groove and I just want to echo what Nicolas said in terms on teamwork. I think just working with this amazing group of executives this year, very competent people, we worked well together, we all have our different strengths and weaknesses, but it balances out. When you look at the whole team as one, it was really great working with the staff as well and you know, going to the GSS Office was one of the highlights of my days you know pre-COVID so I'm going to miss going to the office and being an executive and leading the front in advocating for Grad Students within the university. I also want to thank all Councillors that gave me support. Special thanks to the chairs, chairs of G&A and CPC, that helped a lot of the initiatives such as the GSFA, funding survey, research grad focus funding group and non-research graduate Students focus groups as well. Overall, enjoyable time, a tough battle but I enjoyed every bit of it, and I will be around this year as Senate so look out for more. Thank you.

Kimani: Thank you madam Speaker for this opportunity and for being such a wonderful leader. I will always repeat, I came in as a member of CPC but left as the FEOO and since then, it's not been easy, learning on the job and having to work with different teams. Particularly I would want to give my special thanks and congratulations for having lead the team with a lot of integrity, passion and enthusiasm and also I would like to shout-out to Tarique, he came in mid-way, met a lot of challenges and I think I want to be very thankful for how he navigated the challenges and he's coming out so successful at the end of the day. Pouya, on the other hand has been very impressive in terms of trying to organize events and programs for our students and it's been a very coordinated effort together. Sara has revived our External department, it was somehow dead, quote in quote, and she has tried to bring it to life. As the FEOO, the budget and other matters to do with oversight and being a chair to the committee and oversight sometimes it's overwhelming but I understand this is what needs to be done. Otherwise, I would like to thank the outgoing team and of course, I would like to encourage and congratulate the incoming team that is waiting at the door to come in and assume the positions. I think as Nicolas has articulated, we're going to have a very formidable team as you know, I talk about team work because together we achieve more and of course I'm looking forward towards that and not only with the executive team, I understand and acknowledge the efforts that are always put by the committees. The GSS is supported and driven by the committees so I want to thank the chairs, councillors and ordinary members and all people. Above all, I want to thank the people behind this, Vivian, Nicole and Ben, the person that has made it



very possible for us to have this meeting, so thank you so much to our full time staff. And of course, Maria our AA, she's not here right now but she will come back sometime soon. At this time and for my end and to all part time staff as well, thank you so much and I look forward to working with everyone taking over from where Nicolas left. He has left a very big shoe to fill, I will try to fit in there. If you find me doing it and it's like a boat, know he left a big shoe but that I'm equally up to the task. Thank you everyone else and I hope to raise good and challenging questions going forward.

5 MATTERS TO NOTE

Time reserved for questions regarding updates below.

5.1 UPCOMING EVENTS

- Online schedule of events to be finalized by April 20th.

5.2 EXECUTIVES

5.2.1 President:

- **COVID-19 Related Updates**

- a. **University Advocacy**

The GSS has presented a submission to the UBC Board of Governors on behalf of both, UBC Vancouver and Okanagan students. The submission lays out a rationale to ask for the accelerated implementation of planned long-term awards for doctoral students, to provide additional tuition awards for all research students, masters and doctoral, starting this summer and for the duration of the COVID-19 outbreak, and to match government assistance to domestic students, to international students. The submission can be found [here](#). It has been included in this Board's Meeting Agenda (https://bog.ubc.ca/?page_id=16951).

- b. **Coordination with UBC**

We have set up weekly check ins: VPS/SHUSH/AMS/GSS/SUO and GPS/GSS.

- c. **Graduation/Convocation**

The official act of degree conferral, i.e. the students being accepted into convocation by the Chancellor by recommendation of the Senate, will take place in an online ceremony in the same time frame originally scheduled for convocation. This means that degree conferral will not be delayed. An in-person ceremony will be held at some time in the future, without any legal value, for students to be able to experience the in-person process if they so wish.

For the GSS, this also means that we will likely not collect the usual income from convocation in spring.

Dissertation defenses are currently being held online without noteworthy problems. We will continue to monitor the situation.



d. **Housing**

The following has been approved so far:

Housing rent increases will be delayed until further notice.

Summer housing accommodations will be provided to students who normally wouldn't have it and would request it. Similarly, graduating students will be able to apply for summer housing. The current assessment is that we will be able to house students as needed.

e. **Extension of Guaranteed Funding**

Discussions have been started on how funding offers will have to be adjusted based on the COVID outbreak and resulting delays. The conversation is still at an early stage. More update will be provided as the matter develops.

f. **Bridge Funding for Graduating Graduate Students**

Discussions are ongoing on how to financially support graduate students who are lined up to graduate and cannot move on to their next phase in life. Currently, departments are dealing with this individually and it is unclear what will be the central support. I am working on this and will update as soon as I get a straightforward answer.

g. **Green College**

The food services provider has walked out on the college. SHUSH is currently providing 2 meals a day to the residents, similarly to what their provider did, free of charge. SHUSH is liaising directly with the College for experience, and I continue to monitor the situation. So far, residents seem satisfied with the arrangements.

We investigated where St. John's could have a similar problem, and this is not the case.

• **VPS Portfolio Strategic Planning**

The VPS Executive Director and Strategic Planning staff organized a meeting to receive feedback from the GSS executive team. The basis for the plan development were presented. In general, there was agreement that the strengths and rooms for improvement for the University, for the perspective of students, were correctly identified. In particular, the 4 areas for improvement are consistent with the top 4 advocacy priorities that emerge from the GSS-SSS, which is in part, a result of effective communication with the VPS office (currently, the VPS and Executive Director meet with the GSS President monthly to discuss issues and align priorities). A particular focus on affordability is being placed, which is very encouraging, seems this is consistently the number one concern of graduate students. It was raised that, while priorities are correctly identified, how they are articulated into plans and actions will make or break the effectiveness for Graduate Students. From that perspective, we asked the VPS team to include the GSS in the making of the plan, rather than only consultation. We will hear back on this (see next item for food insecurity).

• **Food Insecurity for Graduate Students**

As a result of the engagement with the VPS office, the food insecurity CORE team has granted a seat to the GSS directly onto the team to bring the graduate student perspective in how food insecurity is addressed. Initial meetings to coordinate this collaboration will take place over the coming two weeks.

• **GSS Transition into Online Work**

The general sense is that the GSS has successfully migrated its operation to online platforms. The GSS



office and Committee work is being carried out. I am extremely happy with how this went, and I want to particularly thank Ben who coordinated the efforts to have Microsoft Teams running as soon as we did. Without Teams, we would be in a much more difficult place right now.

- **GSS AGM**

The AGM was put on hold as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. At this point, it is uncertain when the AGM may take place. The possibility of an online AGM will be discussed once we have gone through the April Council meeting and we have a clearer sense of whether this type of meeting can be effectively held online.

- **Alumni Advisory Council / Development / Student Advisory Council**

The GSS took a more active role in collaborating with Alumni engagement this year. Although this may not have been a determining factor in the fundraising success, our collaboration has been duly appreciated. This year more than 215 MCAD were raised from almost 15 k donors. The goals continue to be made more ambitious and I strongly recommend that future President's continue to actively engage with UBC Development and Alumni UBC. A direct result of our involvement has also been the reserved seat that the GSS now has in the Student Advisory Council to Alumni UBC, a privilege that is not enjoyed only by the GSS (other seats are students at large, not necessarily connected to the AMS or SUO). Currently, Alireza Kamyabi seats on this body.

- **AMS/GSS Health & Dental Plan**

The joint committee has made the following recommendations, expecting ratification from both AMS and GSS Council:

Given the current context (COVID-19 Pandemic), the committee has reached an agreement with Studentcare to sign a 2-year agreement, as opposed to the usual 5, for a rate of 10.90 (same as the current rate). This will provide the opportunity for a full RFP process to be started in 2021, a head of a decision in 2020. The agreement is that currently, it would be unwise to try to switch providers, which means the current FRP process has been stopped.

The adjusted plan rate and student fees were reviewed and a 3% increase to the annual plan fee was decided. This is in line with the annual increase of costs in the plan. The assessment is that the reserve fund is sufficient to offset any potential unexpected expense.

5.2.2 FEOO

- February budget and actual sent to HF for review and approval March budget and actual will be out by mid April this has been the practice, however due to the current covid-19, while online has become the new office Marchs figure may take a longer time to complete. But it will be done.
- Payments have been moved online and the FEOO has been tasked with the paying of GSS bills etc. HF approved this payment procedure > once the GM sends the invoice, President and VPUAA approves it > FEOO approves and makes the payment > all details are recorded in a spread sheet only available to the 4 members. So far so good.
- FEOO together with the GM are currently putting together a transition schedule for the incoming executives, consultation meeting have taken place with other staffs Events and Communications and the very able President has had much to offer.



5.2.3 VP University & Academic Affairs

- Supporting Graduate Student Mental Health and Wellbeing:
 - **Rainbow Social Postponed**
 - We have been awarded a grant of \$1000 to support the execution of this event. However, the Rainbow Social has been postponed for obvious reasons. Use of grant funds has been extended on an as needed basis. Recommend that the incoming VP UAA ensure this event is executed once the pandemic settles.
 - **Advocacy Office Accommodations/Adjustments during the COVID19 Pandemic**
 - The advocacy team met late March, to discuss the implication the COVID-19 might have on operations. The team is working fully online and continue to engage and provide peer support to all graduate students in need. The VP UAA has also stepped in to assist in managing the workload that has occurred as a result of the current pandemic crisis. Advocates work with communication director to create resource for GSS social media platform to support graduate student's mental, physical and social wellbeing during the quarantine period.
- COVID_19 Relevant Updates:
 - **Course Based Graduate Students Classes Online**
 - Weekly meetings with the Associate Dean Academics have led to the successful translation from face-to-face class to online classes via various platforms on campus. Graduate students enrolled in courses have shifted to online classes and is expected to continue to do so until the second term of summer.
 - **Students with Disabilities/Accessibility Concerns to Online Classes**
 - ADA committee has shifted the course requirement from Senate to the Faculty, allowing for course coordinators, professors and deans to adjust course requirements as they see fit. This allows students to matriculate in instances where they are unable to perform online sessions. Additionally, successful advocating with ADA has led to the commitment of 100 laptops to accommodate students who may not have access to computers at home. This number is still small, but discussions are being had to increase it accordingly.
 - **Graduate Students and Academic Milestone Progression**
 - Discussions with GPS + ADA has yielded specific communications geared towards research graduate students, that has been cascaded downstream at the faculty level. Thesis defense, committee meeting and comprehensive exams have now shifted to virtual platforms upon approval from GPS. Discussions are being had to support funding for graduate students who might need to take an extra semester or two as a result of the current pandemic.
- **Policy Consultations and Tuition Consultation Submissions:** The VP UAA's Office has worked with the Academic and External committee and GSS Policy team to prepare and submit the



following response for submission of policy and tuition consultation. Copies of submissions can be found in the Advocacy Files on Teams.

- IMED Fee Increase
 - MEd in Indigenous Education Tuition Consultation
- **Improving Function and Efficiency of the Advocacy Office:**
 - Constructing the Advocacy Panel
 - Final version of the Advocacy TOR to be ratified at the next AcEx committee meeting. Committee is to be formed as a sub-committee of the AcEx and will be formed simultaneously at the next meeting. The first issue the panel will review is the issue of "Graduate Student Professional Development."
 - Key Performance Indicators (KPI) for Advocacy Staff
 - The first Draft of the KPI for the advocacy office staff has been produced and circulated for comments.

5.2.4 VP External Relations

- International Student MSP:
 - Due to the current situation of COVID-19, meeting Minister Dix seems to be unachievable. KSA representative of ABCS met with MLA Rachna Singh in regard to the MSP changes. She will be supporting us in this matter and help us to get in touch with the ministry office. The ABCS chairperson and the chair of the research and campaign had a meeting with the [BC Health Coalition](#) on March 26th and discussed International Student MSP - we are hopeful for an advocacy partnership with them in this area.
- COVID-19:
 - The VP External is collaborating with the provincial student organizations to assure that the rental frizz policy will protect students from losing their housing or facing any financial distress and federally with graduate student organizations and internally with faculties to advocate for external scholarships, awards, and grants extension. The GSS should provincially and federally advocate for international graduate students since they have not been considered in any governmental supports at this situation. The challenges that international graduate students may face are such as difficulties in updating their immigration status, returning to their home country, medical plans, or financial distress.
 - Meet with BC Campus organization regarding their upcoming student wellbeing sessions.
 - Will meet ThinkGrad members in April 18th and discuss the COVID-19 related advocacies.
 - Will take steps according the prepared advocacy plan.
- The incoming VP External Transition:
 - The transition report has been submitted to the next VP External and EOC.
 - The next VP External is attending the meetings with the outgoing VP external.

5.2.5 VP Students



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- (None submitted)

5.3 COMMITTEES

5.3.1 Academic & External Committee

- Update

5.3.2 Code & Policy Committee

- (None submitted)

5.3.3 Elections Committee

- (None submitted)

5.3.4 Executive Committee

- (None submitted)

5.3.5 Executive Oversight Committee

- The committee has completed final executives' goals review and a comprehensive report will be available in May council.
- Currently, EOC is reviewing all transition materials sent by the Executives in readiness to passing the baton over to the new execs.
- EOC has been consulted by the CPC committee on the ongoing draft regarding the executive absence from office. There is great progress recorded on this project.
- EOC is striving to fully transition to the TEAMS (as soon as possible), there has been a great success holding meeting online, even before the unprecedented covid-19.

5.3.6 Governance & Accountability Committee

- G&A has begun work on our own SMART goals. These consist of creating a transition package for committee chairs, improving month to month awareness of committee functions (such as through KPIs), and reviewing distribution of Councillors based on departments and academic units. Executives and Chairs may already have noticed a new Resources folder in Teams! If you are a new or outgoing chair, we'd love to hear your input about what material would be useful in creating a smoother transition.
- We are presenting this council on the FEOO's SMART goals, combining the mid-term review with a final review, given that he will be resigning.



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- We have collaborated with CPC and caucus chairs regarding a policy to clarify the roles and responsibilities of caucuses and their chairs, and provide the chairs with an honorarium. The policy is expected to be ready next Council meeting.
 - We have been consulting with Services committee on improving engagement within the committee, and we reviewed CPC's executive absence guidelines.
 - We are reviewing progress on the Strat Plan, to be presented at a future Council or General Meeting, dependent on the COVID-19 situation.
 - We are looking forward to our mid-term review of SMART goals, to be presented in May Council!

5.3.7 House Finance Committee

- (None submitted)

5.3.8 Human Resources

- (None submitted)

5.3.9 Services Committee

- (None submitted)

5.3.10 Strategic Planning ad-hoc Committee

- In March, SPAHC launched the Strategic Planning Themes/Areas of focus Consultation. The Survey, [linked here](#), was included in the GSS newsletter, is aimed at understanding what general areas (referred to as Themes) do students want GSS to prioritize in the 2021-26 Strategic Plan.
- The Survey data will inform the shortlist of themes that SPAHC will present to council to ratify as the final themes in the Strategic Plan 2021-26.
- However, the communication of the Survey has been backlogged by GSS Office initially due to a heavy communication work in March to promote AGM and elections and now due to COVID-19. Participation in the Survey remains low. SPAHC has started taking small steps that are within its powers to promote the survey (i.e. distributing survey within Committees).
- Strategic Planning process will be delayed as a result of COVID-19. Consultation planning and communication with the student body have been and will remain difficult.
- SPAHC is currently considering bringing up a discussion in Council to pause the consultation process of Strategic Planning and focus on developing a comprehensive communication strategy, with greater mandate and allocated support from Council to perform the heavy communication work that's required in the strategic planning process.

5.3.11 AMS Caucus

- (None submitted)

5.3.12 Graduate Council Caucus



- (None submitted)

5.4 SENATORS AND BOARD OF GOVERNORS

5.4.1 Senators:

- Example update

5.4.2 Board of Governors Representatives:

- The Board of Governors met for committees on April 6th and 7th, and will be meeting today (April 16th) for full Board. We discussed a number of matters, summarized [here. You can view the webcasts, agendas, and materials at bog.ubc.ca.](#)

6 NOTICES

6.1 NOTICE OF NEXT MEETING

Date: Thursday, May 21st at 5:30 pm

Location: Michael Kingsmill Forum, AMS Nest

6.2 NOTICE OF UNSEATINGS

- Joseph Ogbede was unseated as Departmental Representative for Genome Science & Technology.
- Mohammadali Shahsavari was unseated as Ordinary Member from the Governance & Accountability Committee.
- Lois Evans was unseated as Ordinary Member from the Strategic Planning Ad Hoc Committee.
- Victoria Gomez was unseated as Departmental Representative for School of Library, Archives and Information Studies.
- Victoria Gomez was unseated as Councillor from the Governance and Accountability Committee.
- Aaron Loewen was unseated as Ordinary Member from the Code and Policy Committee.
- Karanpreet Matharu was unseated as Departmental Representative for Civil Engineering.
- Karanpreet Matharu was unseated as Councillor from the Executive Oversight Committee.
- Karanpreet Matharu was unseated as Councillor from the Human Resources Committee.
- Farah Deebea was unseated as Departmental Representative for Electrical and Computer Engineering.
- Arielle Kersey was unseated as Departmental Representative for English.



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- Josef Garen was unseated as Councillor from the Human Resources Committee.
 - Alireza Kamyabi was unseated as Chair from the Strategic Planning Ad Hoc Committee.
 - Alireza Kamyabi was unseated as Councillor from the Executive Oversight Committee.
 - Kate Sedivy-Haley was unseated as Ordinary Member for Human Resources Committee.
 - Kate Sedivy-Haley was unseated as Ordinary Member from the Strategic Planning Ad Hoc Committee.
 - Kate Sedivy-Haley was unseated as Chair of Governance & Accountability Committee.
 - Jordan Hamden was unseated as Councillor from the Elections Committee.
 - Samuel Adeniji was unseated as Ordinary Member for Human Resources Committee.

7 ADJOURNMENT

BIRT there being no further business the meeting be adjourned at 9:27 pm.

Mover: President

Second: Sarah Park

Result: Meeting Adjourned