GSS GRADUATE REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 2010, 5 PM – 7 PM
MINUTES

In attendance:
Anthropology
Claudine Gravel Miguel
Biochemistry & Microbiology
Omid Haji-Ghassemi
Biology
Leslie Rietveld
Chemistry
Katherine Davies
Community Development
Barbara West
Computer Science
Alejandro Erickson
Earth & Ocean Science
John Furlong (rep)
Economics
Sean Mullan (rep)
Grace Lee
Educational Psychology & Leadership Studies
Kelly Logue
Electrical & Computer Engineering
Ping Li
English
Leah Ellingwood
Environmental Studies
Victoria Wyllie de Echeverria
French
Erin Fairweather
Hispanic & Italian Studies
Estelle Kurier
History
Adam Hough
Law
Nicholas Burton-Vulovic
Linguistics
Supriya Routh
Music
Thomas Magnuson
Nursing
Twila Bakker
Pacific & Asian Studies
Megan Kirk
Philosophy
Nursing
Laura Bonde
Physics & Astronomy
Lynda Cameron
Political Science
Pierre Wilken
Sociology
Frank Berghaus
Visual Arts
Georgina Nicoll
Chair
Camille Stengel
Director of Communications
Matt Trahan
Director of Finance
Kalin McCluskey
Director of Services
(Studies in Policy & Practice)
Director of Student Affairs
Adrienne Canning
Executive Director
(Philosophy)
(Physics)
Director of Services
Matthew Park (Political Science/CSPT)
Director of Student Affairs
Nick Graham
Executive Director
(Sociology)
(Community Development)
GSS Rep to UVIC Childcare consultation
Qi "Cookie" Ke
Stacy Chappel ex-officio, non-voting
(Philosophy)
(Business)
Regrets:
Tara Skobel, Child and Youth Care

McCluskey called the meeting to order at 5:08 pm

STANDING ITEMS

1. Welcome Address
   McCluskey welcomed graduate representatives new and old to the Graduate Representative Council.

2. Introductions
   There was a round of introductions.
3. Approval of the Agenda
Hough requested the Faculty of Humanities representative election be moved earlier in the agenda as he is the outgoing representative and has to leave the meeting early.

M/S Canning/Park
The Agenda is approved with the following revision:
Election of Faculty of Humanities representative is moved to Internal Business Item 4 and all other items are renumbered accordingly.
CARRIED

4. Approval Minutes from the February 23, 2010 Graduate Representative Council meeting
M/S Graham/ Haji-Ghassemi
Minutes are approved with minor typographical corrections.
CARRIED

5. Department Reports
Pacific and Asian Studies: Cameron reported the graduate course requirements are being re-evaluated.

Political Science: Nicoll reported there is a review underway of the one year MA program, and the department is hiring new faculty.

Law: Routh reported there is nothing new to report for graduate studies, but there is a new LLB in Indigenous Law in the works (a first in the world).

Anthropology: Gravel-Miguel reported the Cornett building construction has resulted in more office space for grad students! There is a new PhD programs, but some have the same courses as the MA, so work is being done to make them different.

Educational Psychology and Leadership Studies: Logue said there was nothing new to report. The Mac building no longer has doughnuts (due to renovations)

Visual Arts: Trahan said there is nothing new to report.

Linguistics: Magnuson people are using the lounge and there is a new kettle and chair.

Electrical Engineering: Li said there is nothing new to report.

Physics & Astronomy: Berghaus said construction is ongoing. There is a new advisor and new course scheduling.

History: Burton-Vulovic reported things are going well. The study space is back in the Clerihue, the journal has been expanded and is accepting longer submissions. The Centre for Religion in Society has a talk Wednesday on torture.
Economics: Lee reported that there are 17 MA students entering this year, down from 25. There is a change in the PhD requirements, PhD students now have to write a candidacy before a coop. The students are still trying to get a printer allowance.

Earth & Ocean Science: Furlong said there was nothing to report.

Computer Science: Erickson said the grad advisor changed twice, and there is a new professional Masters in software engineering.

Philosophy: Wilken reported the department is in the process of changing grad advisors. The department is debating starting a journal. The students finally have a new lounge! And the department is looking for a new chair.

Hispanic & Italian Studies: Kurier said the students don’t have all the space back (post-renovation) yet in Clerihue, including seminar space. There is a colloquium October 21-22 open to all students. Kurier is in a PhD by special arrangement, which is an experiment in the department.

Biology: Rietveld reported the Biology department is also in renovations, with the labs moved. November 11-13 is the biology grad student symposium. The students had welcome back events and are bringing a scholar famous for imaging the brain.

Community Development: West reported this is the inaugural cohort for the program, which is largely online/distance. There is lots of ongoing feedback regarding issues with online learning.

Music: Bakker reported there is Friday music every week at 12:30 in the Phillip Young Recital Hall.

Environmental Studies Wyllie de Echeverria reported the department is still looking for a rep. the program has a new director, Peter Stephenson. There have been program changes but no official word on them yet.

Sociology: Stengal reported there was a meeting last Friday regarding the PhD program. The department had a welcome back event and a cohort camping party.

Chemistry: Davies reported there is ongoing construction. The department is having a new chair search, the last offer wasn’t accepted. Temporary chair is Dr. Coddin to December and Dr. Van Veggel from January.

Nursing: Bonde reported visiting scholar Jean Watson will be receiving an Honourary degree too. Research conversations with chocolate are ongoing.

English: Ellingwood had nothing to report.

Biochemistry & Microbiology: Haji-Ghassemi reported that space sharing is an issue. There are new grad courses starting this September.
French: Fairweather reported the department has no ceilings! The students are planning a symposium May 2011. A new course is being offered in Senagal.

6. Executive Reports
McCluskey explained the purpose of the approval of Executive Board member reports is to confirm the executive have earned their monthly stipend.

Chappel apologized that Canning’s report was not included in the Agenda.

McCluskey tabled the discussion until Canning’s report could be circulated.

7. Student Senator & Committee representative updates
McCluskey explained that 2010 is the first year there have been three graduate student senate seats at UVIC, thanks to a campaign by the GSS.

She reported there are two reps currently, herself, and Leanne Wiltsie, who was also a student senator last year. There is a bi-election coming up to fill the third seat, and two candidates are running, Gordon Ruby and Wanda Martin.

McCluskey noted that there are five “Senate Standing Committees” with graduate student representatives on Senate:
- Qi Ke is the GSS rep on Academic Standards
- Matthew Park is the GSS rep on Learning and Teaching
- Nick Graham is the GSS rep on Appeals.

There are currently vacancies on Continuing Studies and Planning.

The Senate Standing Committee on Planning deals with Academic planning, such as approval of new programs and program requirement changes.

McCluskey asked that grad reps let students in their departments know about these vacancies.

8. Return to Executive Reports
McCluskey returned to the executive reports.

Canning’s report was circulated.

A member asked if executive members should be attending events.

McCluskey responded that Executive are expected to try to attend events, but in cases where there is limited space (such as the chocolate tour), only the Director of Services will attend to ensure there is space for members.

M/S Logue/Bakker
April – September 2010 reports of the Executive Board are approved.
9. Childcare Working Group

Riddett reported he is the GSS re to a consultation on childcare. He said there is a big childcare crunch at UVIC, and UVIC is trying to address the issue. He will be circulating an email with some information, but briefly, there are 285 kids on the waitlist, and the wait to get in is currently 2+ years. The goal is to cut the wait in half. One step will be to eliminate the kindergarten program and use the space for toddler care. The biggest problem is finding space for 3-4 year olds.

Since UVIC purchased the Queenswood property there has been a campaign to have the space used for childcare, which could add 80 places. If anyone wishes to give input, they can reach Riddett at mr@uvic.ca.

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1. Circulation of Orientation materials

Orientation packages were circulated, including the budget, meeting dates, some basic information on use of Roberts Rules, how to submit motions, upcoming issues, GSS structure, a chart showing the roles of various Executive Board members and a history of the GSS.

[Ke left at 6:15 pm]

2. Overview/history of key issues / upcoming issues
   a) Travel Grants

McCluskey reported the GSS hosted a “speakeasy” in the summer regarding changing criteria for the travel grants. The goal is to try to meet the needs with limited funds. The GSS also circulated proposals around for feedback. New criteria are out, and include a new $150 grant for travel to Vancouver, Vancouver Island and Seattle. There is a letter of understanding between CUPE 4163, GSS and FGS to stop the freeze of the program and establish the new criteria. Last year FGS froze the program when there was a funding crunch and this added to the stress for students. This year students contributed additional funds through both CUPE 4163 and the GSS, and the FGS then added some funds as well.

   b) Tuition Limit Policy

McCluskey BC’s Tuition Limit policy caps tuition increases at inflation.

Information on the policy is here:
http://www.aved.gov.bc.ca/tuition/tuition_policy.htm

The GSS successfully defeated a $55 per term increase to Athletic fees that UVIC was seeking in order to build a new Athletics facility as it violated this policy. The GSS is also concerned about using student fees to finance capital projects.

   c) Senate elections

McCluskey noted that as mentioned before graduate students now have three senate seats.

   d) Department Representation
McCluskey noted that the GSS had also successfully campaigned for recognition of the importance of graduate student representation in university decision making. The Faculty of Graduate Studies had passed a statement of best practices for departments that included having an elected students in department meetings with voice, vote and the ability to put items on the agenda. The University Act guarantees elected graduate student representation in meetings of the Faculties.

e) Leave for one year MA proposal
Chappel reported the Faculty of Graduate Studies considered a motion at their last meeting to eliminate the ability of one year MA students to take a leave in their first three terms. Chappel referred to the briefing on the issue that had been circulated with the agenda.

Routh said he had originally considered the proposal ok, but given the concerns in other one year programs for the ability to take a term to work, he thought this should be possible.

Haji-Gassemi asked how many students finish in one year, in the one year programs? 8%?

M/S Erickson/Davies
RESOLVED The GSS Executive is directed to oppose the motion from the September 23, 2010 Faculty of Graduate Studies meeting to eliminate personal leave for one year MA programs. FURTHER RESOLVED the GSS executive seek clarification and transparency about UVIC’s policy regarding tuition for students in one year programs.

Motion to Amend Bonde
RESOLVED the motion is amended to add
FURTHER RESOLVED the GSS see to find solutions to correct the discrepancies between policy and practice.
Amendment CARRIED

Canning noted students have to get approval from their supervisor in order to take a personal leave, and this policy could hurt the students who are worst off financially.

CARRIED AS AMENDED

3. Meeting with the president and senior administration
McCluskey said the GSS meets with the president and senior administration of UVIC twice per term and has an upcoming meeting. She asked reps to send any agenda items they wish to have raised with the senior administration.

4. Survey: Does your department have a department student council?
   TASK: Chappel to email a survey about whether departments have departmental or faculty student councils.

EXTERNAL REQUESTS

5. Committee Appointments
   a. Faculty of Social Sciences Committee on Equity and Diversity
6. Announcements
Canning noted the GSS bulletin is normally sent out Fridays and is compiled on Thursday if members wish to submit items such as department events (email to gsscomm@uvic.ca)

Canning also noted the deadline for source articles is September 30. Submissions can be sent to unsourse@uvic.ca and can include poetry, visuals, articles (under 1500 words), spotlights featuring graduate student research, and volunteers are welcome.

Bonde asked if pumpkin carving will be on again, Graham said Yes, and the Halloween howl too.
McCluskey asked for a motion to adjourn.

M/S Rietveld/Park
Meeting is adjourned at 7:01 pm.
CARRIED

[Signatures]
Approved, Chair

[Signature]
Approved, Executive Director