

Graduate Representative Council

MEETING MINUTES

NOVEMBER 28TH, 2017

The meeting was called to order at 5:03 pm with KIM in the Chair, making the acknowledgement that the GSS convenes on the traditional Coast Salish territories of the Lekwungen speaking peoples, and encouraging all members to engage in de-colonizing practices.

Present:

Anthropology: Luke Kernan and Maya Cowan
Biochemistry & Microbiology: Emily Koide
Biology: Malcolm Cowan
Civil Engineering: Pejman Azarsa
Community Development: Mike Butler
Electrical & Computer Engineering: Priyani Vanaparathi
English: David Eso
Exercise Science, Physical & Health Educ: Stephen Luehr
Germanic and Slavic Studies: Tessa Coutu
Greek and Roman Studies: Lee Anderson
History: Carla Osborne
Linguistics: Adar Anisman
Mathematics and Statistics: Joseph Horan
Mechanical Engineering: Markus Sommerfeld
Neuroscience: Chad Williams
Philosophy: Gennady McCracken
Physics and Astronomy: Maan Hani
Political Science: Ryan Broe and Stephanie Gruhlke
Psychology: Myles Maillet

Public Administration: Leila Bautista
Social Dimensions of Health: Lindsay Shaw
Visual Arts: Marina DiMaio
Writing: Janet Munsil
CUPE 4163: Mitchell Haslehurst

Chair: Susan Kim
Director of Finance: Olga Gould
Director of Student Affairs: Gillian Dornan
Director of Services: Jessica Wyatt

Executive Director: Stacy Chappel
Office Coordinator, Governance: Karen L. Potts
Operations and Services Manager: Mike Ronning

Guest: Dean of Graduate Studies: Dr. David Capson

Guest: Electrical Engineering: Mahsa Mahtab

Regrets:

Director of Communications: Danny Martin
Biochemistry & Microbiology: Teesha Baker
Biology: Lucianne Marshall
Computer Science: Seth Greylyn
Environmental Studies: Tanya Tran
Social Work: Madeleine Harber

Absent:

Economics: Tien-Yun (Arielle) Shih
English: Heidi Rennart
French: Emma Kwasnica and Regina Grishko
Sociology: Renay Maurice

STANDING ITEMS

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Motion: RESOLVED to approve the agenda.

M/S ESO/GOULD

CARRIED

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Motion: RESOLVED to approve the minutes of the 2017-10-10 GRC Minutes.docx as presented, with minor amendments.

M/S HANI/LEURH

CARRIED

BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

To be reprised after item 2a, "What's New in the Faculty of Graduate Studies?"

ASSIGNMENT OF TIMEKEEPER

To be reprised after item 2a, "What's New in the Faculty of Graduate Studies?"

REMARKS FROM THE CHAIR

To be reprised after item 2a, "What's New in the Faculty of Graduate Studies?"

MEETING BUSINESS

A. "WHAT'S NEW IN THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES?"

Special guest Dean David Capson of Faculty of Graduate Studies

KIM welcomed Dean Capson to give an update on developments in the Faculty of Graduate Studies. Highlights from Dean Capson's presentation included information on:

1. Updated FGS Graduate Supervision Policy

Previous version was from 2007. This February 2017 version is much expanded, particularly in the protections for graduate students. Some of the changes include:

Supervisory Committee

Policy now states that the supervisory committee (supervisor and additional members) must be formed within the first 3 terms of a thesis or dissertation.

Committee members must give at least 10 days written notice, supervisors 30 days, before withdrawing from a student's committee. The academic unit remains responsible for continuity of supervision and for locating a new supervisor. In the case where a student is withdrawing from the supervisory relationship, it is up to the student to locate a new supervisor.

Academic Unit Information

All units must publish their own Graduate Student Handbook by July 1 2018.

Feedback Standards

While engaged in a thesis or dissertation students should meet with their supervisor at least once every 40 business days and at least once a year with the entire committee.

Supervisors and members of a supervisory committee should normally return comments on a thesis or dissertation within 20 business days.

Tracking Progress

The policy requires formal annual review for students in thesis or dissertation programs. Beginning July 1 2018, FGS will implement a campus wide electronic system for assembling and recording central aspects of the formal review, including expectations, goals and milestones for the upcoming review period.

Funding

The unit Graduate Student Handbook will make public all unit policies on graduate student funding, the base funding in particular. However the FGS will be encouraging units to also include department specific grants, teaching assistantships etc.

2. Towards an enrolment-based funding allocation model for FGS Fellowships, Scholarships and Awards

Dean Capson reported that a major review has been underway on how funding decisions have been made. Currently, the FGS has an internal budget allocation for graduate student support as follows:

- Base (UVic Fellowships, UVic Awards)
- Graduate Entrance Awards (GEA)
- Presidents Research Scholarships (top ups linked to the Tri-council awards)

For 2016-17, the total dollars flowing to UVic graduate students through UVic accounting has been \$30.2 million. The amount from FGS makes up 22%. Research Assistantships 34%, Teaching Assistantships 17%, donor awards 4%, Federal Council Awards 13%, Other 10%. Not included are monies to international students from foreign governments, or students who are employees in other services on campus. So the FGS only has \$2670 per FTE graduate student (3000 FTEs at UVic) to distribute. Dean Capson finds this to be a challenging situation.

The average student received \$15,128 per year. This is the average for 2000 graduate students who receive funding. Over 1000 graduate students receive no funding at all.

Proposed New FGS Funding Principles

Allocations to academic units will be based on per-student amounts for 3 year rolling average enrolments of in-time students.

Academic units can deploy their allocations as they deem strategically appropriate (within FGS guidelines).

Going Forward

There have been no changes in funding since 2016, and will be no changes for the next 2 funding cycles.

All academic units that currently receive funding will continue to receive funding. No academic unit will see a change of more than 10% in year over year funding, so there will be no dramatic changes even with a 1 time anomaly change in enrolment.

The President's Scholarships (tri-council top-up scholarships) will be increased to \$5000 per student (from current value of \$4000).

Unknowns for 2017-18

Provost's Office is starting Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM) targets. It is unknown how this will work or impact enrolment and funding.

BC Provincial Graduate Scholarship Program has been mandated by new provincial government. There have been no details or consultations announced.

Support from FGS

Dean Capson emphasized that the FGS is available to confidentially help any individual graduate student. He emphasized that he is working with all faculty deans to address unit level funding concerns. The goal of the new proposed changes from FGS is to provide predictability and stability in funding for everyone.

Questions from GRC Council

Tuition Waiver model potential: FGS has no jurisdiction over tuition. They are aware there are some Universities who offer waivers, but Dean Capson is not optimistic that UVic will adopt the model.

B. RECESS

C. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

KIM brought the meeting back to order at 6:00 pm.

HORAN asked CHAPPEL for a verbal report on Senate Committee participants. CHAPPEL reported the following:

Regarding the Senate Library Committee: The GSS did not receive a request to fill this Senate Committee. The list of Senate Committees we are asked to fill changes each year. No request indicates a grad student senator has chosen to serve on this committee. In this case, graduate student Senator, Diana Popova, is the graduate student on the committee. The full list of Senate Standing Committees with the membership and terms of reference can be found at: <https://www.uvic.ca/universitysecretary/senate/committees/index.php>.

As well, GSS Executive members often serve as graduate student reps on Senate committees. This year, they are serving as follows:

- Academic Standards: Gillian Dornan
- Awards: Jess Wyatt
- Continuing Studies: Olga Gould
- Learning and Teaching: Danny Martin.

D. ASSIGNMENT OF TIMEKEEPER

WYATT volunteered.

E. REMARKS FROM THE CHAIR

KIM reported that:

- A few GRC reps were able to attend the Victoria Forum. It was extremely informative to see how UVic was positioning itself, and to hear its ideas on particular topics that have a global relevance.
- The UVSS has expressed a real interest in partnering with the GSS on a student advocate programme.
- The restaurant looks beautiful! We can officially a countdown to its soft reopening in mid-January.
- GSS has hired a new Services and Operations Manager, Mike Ronning to replace Brandy Sistili. He was with the Grad House Restaurant as its Kitchen Manager for five years and brings with him a wealth of kitchen experience, useful computer skills, and a great sense of humour.

KIM introduced and welcomed Mike Ronning.

RONNING talked about the new café “Side Project” that will be added to the Grad House Restaurant for specialty coffees, baked goods, and snacks.

F. DEPARTMENT REPORTS

Anthropology: Luke Kernan and Maya Cowan – all new faculty and teaching positions have been filled.

Biology: Malcolm Cowan – symposium was held over the reading break.

Civil Engineering: Pejman Azarsa – sustainability plan has been developed in the department, hoping it will be a model for other departments.

English: David Eso – concerns have been raised in the department about the ability of the program to support indigenous content in the curriculum. Eso expects this to be an ongoing issue in the coming term.

History: Carla Osborne – reminder to other Humanities grad reps to use the common room.

Linguistics: Adar Anisman – hiring indigenous faculty, as well the department is looking for interdisciplinary papers related to linguistics.

Mathematics and Statistics: Joseph Horan – Unanticipated absences amongst faculty have created some upheaval in the department.

Neuroscience: Chad Williams – major changes are underway due to a recent program review.

Physics and Astronomy: Maan Hani – students are asking for more transparency in internal award process, want CVs to be required, and are also doing internal career development/cv workshops.

Political Science: Ryan Broe and Stephanie Gruhlke – hiring is wrapping up.

Psychology: Myles Maillet – new hiring underway.

Public Admin: Leila Bautista – department has a new director.

Visual Arts: Marina DiMaio – organizing exchange exhibitions with other BC visual arts students.

Writing: Janet Munsil – new hire announcement is imminent.

CUPE 4163: Mitchell Haslehurst – just joining GRC, first meeting.

G. COMMITTEE REPORTS

Communications: MUNSIL read a written report from MARTIN. Work continues on social media strategy and aligning tasks with office staff job descriptions. Soft launch of new website is scheduled for December.

Appeals: WYATT reported that the Committee has had its monthly meeting, and is bringing forward a motion to further develop the appeals process.

Events: WYATT reported that speaker for Men's Health event has cancelled. Wed coffee will be Dec 6 and 13. Dec. 20th will be gingerbread house making and a holiday film. January will have a skating event and a welcome back breakfast when the café opens.

Finance: GOULD reported on an exercise reviewing the various funds and year to date numbers. Restaurant renovation continues to be on budget. GOULD asked for suggestions to increase GSS revenue.

Bylaw and Policy: BROE reported that work continues on the Code of Conduct, reviewing examples. The Committee also discussed processes in the Health and Dental plan, including transparency with broker decisions, accountability to GSS members, and how decisions are made about benefits and services.

Student Affairs: WILLIAMS reported that talks with UVSS are proceeding about a student advocate position.

Stipend Review: HORAN reported the Committee met in October and November. Observations were made that department orientations could be more shared amongst Executive, and that there could be an improved process to receive and approve Executive Reports which are sent to the Stipend Review Committee.

HORAN asked for a straw poll to see how many people read the Executive Reports. With eyes closed for anonymity, 6 GRC and 3 Executive members reported reading the Executive Reports currently, while 17 GRC and 3 Executive members reported they would read the Reports if pertinent to issues on the GRC agenda.

Faculty of Graduate Studies Council: HORAN reported that Dean Capson made a similar presentation to Council. Bullying and harassment policies were discussed.

GRC Committee Membership

Motion: BIRT Michael BUTLER be added to the Appeals Committee beginning January 2018.

M/S DORNAN/COWAN

CARRIED

Motion: BIRT Markus SOMMERFELD be added to the Finance Committee.

M/S HANI/OSBORNE

CARRIED

Motion: BIRT Adar ANISMAN be added to the Bylaw and Policy Committee.

M/S DORNAN/ESO

CARRIED

Motion: BIRT Mitchell HASLEHURST be added to the Events Committee.

M/S DORNAN/SOMMERFELD

CARRIED

Motion: BIRT Emily KOIDE be added to the Events Committee.

M/S WILLIAMS/ANISMAN

CARRIED

Public Administration has a new rep who will be on co-op for January term and not able to participate in committees.

H. DECISION: HEALTH AND DENTAL APPEAL OF APPEAL PROCESS

KIM provided context on the need for a policy on how to appeal a decision by the Appeal Committee. GRC in previous years discussed the issue but no decision was finalized. Without a policy in place the GRC as a whole oversees the Appeals Committee, and the GRC could be in a position where an appellant's personal information would be reviewed by the GRC as a whole.

Most of the issues that arise are with students who may have language barriers, or who are used to relying on GSS staff for advice, and who end up feeling lost when it is the GSS staff decision they must appeal.

Motion: BIRT the following be added to section 20.9.6 of the Policy Manual.

M/S ESO/WYATT

Section 20.9.6 of the Policy Manual addition:

"a. Appealing the decision of the Appeals Committee

A member may not appeal a decision of the Appeals Committee based solely on a disagreement with the result of the decision.

A member may appeal a decision of the Appeals Committee to the Executive Board under specific circumstances. Sufficient grounds for an appeal of the Appeals Committee decision include:

- a) the member believes that the hearing or decision was biased; and
- b) the process or procedure for the appeal was not followed.

A member wishing to appeal a decision on one of the above grounds shall submit a written request for appeal of the decision to the Executive Board of the Society, outlining the grounds for and facts related to the appeal of the decision.

If the Executive Board finds, by majority vote, that the grounds for the appeal of the decision are founded, the Executive Board shall take steps to ensure that the initial appeal is heard in a manner that addresses the

findings of the Executive Board's decision. The Executive Board shall not consider the merits of the appeal itself.

b. Consideration of new information after an appeal

In the event that new information is provided to the Appeals Committee after a decision, the Appeal committee will hear a second appeal from the student. If the appellant makes any subsequent appeals, the Appeals Committee may, by a majority vote, decide to hear the appeal again as a new appeal. The original decision does not need to be appealed in this instance."

KIM referenced the briefing note "Appeal of an Appeal" which was put together by KIM, WYATT, and CHAPPEL after consulting with the Ombudsperson. The Ombudsperson's recommendations, included that:

- The first Appeal decision should never be considered final. The Ombudsperson suggested that the majority of people who appeal do not realize what information is pertinent until they receive the letter of rejection.
- Students who want to more about the process should be sent to the Ombudsperson's Office, or someone else who is independent, who can help prepare documents for a second Appeal.
- That the Ombudsperson's contact information be provided on the appeal forms.
- The appellant consistently receive feedback on the results and rationale of the Appeal Committee.
- The student appellant be given the criteria as to when an appeal of the Appeal Committee's decision would be accepted e.g. if the decision was biased.
- If new information or evidence comes to light, it should be considered a new Appeal, not an appeal of the first decision.

The question was asked as to how a student would know if there was bias in the decision or unfairness in the process. KIM responded that the Ombudsperson recommended that Appeals Committee members' names are public so that an appellant knows if Committee members are known to them. Committee membership is already information accessible to all members. There are enough members on the Appeal Committee so that a person may recuse themselves if the appellant is known to them.

The question was asked about a further process if a request for an Appeal was rejected. As the GSS is an independent society it is not under the jurisdiction of UVic, but it does defer to the UVic Ombudsperson. As well, all GSS members have access to information about how to seek society policy changes through society meetings, bylaws etc.

ANISMANN provided some context of past appeals.

It was suggested that the Bylaw and Policy Committee could consider the other recommendations in the Briefing Note and bring policy recommendations back to GRC, such as the public notice of Appeal Committee members' names.

CHAPPEL updated the proposed policy to reflect the Briefing Note and Ombudsperson recommendations.

Motion: BIFRT, Section 20.9.6 will be amended to ensure appellants receive information on the process to appeal an appeal in the letter they receive describing the result of their appeal; and Appeal forms will be amended to refer appellants to the services of the Ombudsperson.

M/S HANI/GOULD

CARRIED

I. DISCUSSION: GRADUATE STUDENT TRANSIT USE

OSBORNE reported that there has been preliminary discussion on a graduate student transit needs survey. GRC provided some initial comments and OSBORNE requested additional feedback through the GRC listserv.

J. FOR INFORMATION: MENSTRUAL PRODUCT DRIVE

SHAW reported on the impetus for the menstrual product drive. The lead group, called the Period Posse, is accepting cash and product donations. The event has been going on for 2 days and awareness is growing and people and businesses are beginning to respond. There is now one pharmacy which is willing to allow the group to purchase products at cost. The GSS was one of the first to respond and a donation box is set up in the front office.

K. DISCUSSION: LIBRARY COMMITTEE FEEDBACK SOLICITATION

ESO reported that various copyright rules etc. are currently under review by Ministry of Heritage and Ministry of Innovation and the timing for a letter/contribution is good. Support can be easily expressed for transparency and inclusion in decision making processes. However, ESO reported that he was uncomfortable taking a side between open access versus the right of authors to profit from their work, without GRC input. A straw poll was held with the majority of GRC members in attendance supporting principles of open access.

ESO requested if a letter could be sent quickly for timely participation in the consultations. The suggestion was made to draft the letter, circulate it amongst GRC in a week's time, and have it for review to a special meeting of the GRC on December 12, 2017.

L. UPDATE: STUDENT ADVOCATE PROGRAMME (STUDENT AFFAIRS)

DORNAN provided an update on the work done by the Student Affairs Committee toward a potential partnership with the UVSS and potential referendum to fund a student advocate programme. Work is continuing.

M. UPCOMING GRC TRAININGS & SPECIAL MEETINGS

- Mental Health Literacy Training in partnership with Counselling Services: GSS, December 6th, 12-1 PM
- President's Strategic Plan Consultation – GRC only meeting: Halpern Centre, December 12th, 5-7 PM.
- Operational Relations Committee: Invitation to international student GRC councillors to attend a December 11th special meeting regarding ensuring international students are set up with basic health care coverage when they attend UVic.

N. THANK YOU

CHAPPEL announced that Teesha Baker will be resigning from the GRC and Committees as of December 31, 2017. Teesha was thanked for her service to the GRC.

Motion: BIR to formally accept the resignation of Teesha Baker

M/S HORNAN/WILLIAMS

CARRIED

CLOSING ITEMS

BIKE RACK (NOTICE OF MOTION)

- Library Committee Letter to the Board of Governors (LEE)
- Standing GRC-NSU Seat
- Ad Hoc Mental Health Committee
- TRC Workshop
- Listening Campaign: Survey Questions, GVAT Training

UPCOMING MEETINGS AND EVENTS

- Movember Moustache Competition and Lunch, Wednesday, November 29, 11-12:30
- Wednesday Coffee, December 6 & 13, 9-10:30 AM
- UVSS Puppy Playtime, December 1, SUB Upper Lounge, 1-4 PM

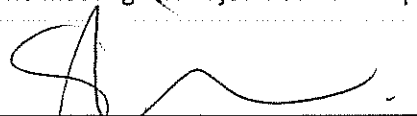
ADJOURNMENT

Motion: RESOLVED to adjourn the meeting.


M/S DORNAN/HORNAN

CARRIED

The meeting was adjourned at 7:43 pm.



Approved, Chair



Approved, Executive Director

KLP/SC/klp