

2023-24 Events Committee Annual Report

Semi-Annual General Meeting March 2024

Membership

Chair: Mitch Nascimento

Interim Chair: Maggie Lawton

2023-24 members:

- Katie Jamson
- Ivan Garcimartin-Carmona
- Delaney Johnson
- Stacey Edmonson
- Sanaz Ajabshir
- Nadiya Shore
- Neil Barney, ex-officio, non-voting
- Petranella Daviel, ex-officio, non-voting

I have to thank my committee members past and present for their incredible job of helping kicking off our new strategy to events at the GSS – special thanks go to Sarah Lane and Sarah Roberts who were my day-one events whizzes and who helped universally with our events transition. A massive thank you also goes out to Petranella, who has taken the Event Coordinator role to another level – your creativity and plethora of unique ideas has made our events calendar better and more fun than I could have ever imagined, thank you so so much for being the backbone in holding the fort in my leave of absence. With that, I must also thank Maggie, who stepped up as my Interim Chair and did far more than I could have asked for in the position. A final thanks to my committee members on your patience and kindness as I went through a most complicated end to PhD studies – it was a hard time, but made easier by the competent team of people around me. You're all wonderful!

Duties of the Committee

Plan, organize and promote social events that interest the membership throughout the year;

Promote GSS activities and events to the membership;

Present proposed events to the GRC at the start of each term;

Present an annual written report to the Executive Board to inform the next Annual Plan; and

Carry out all other duties as directed by the GRC.

Overview of Work Completed

The committee goals from October to March have largely been focused on the continuation of recurring events (knitting/mini-painting/art), and the planning and execution of small events that present an opportunity for grad students to do something new of familiar/comfortable. This flows directly from our

annual plan goal of creating a stable events portfolio of Board Game Tuesdays/Crafty Wednesdays/Wednesday coffee with sporadic additions in between. Examples include Winter-themed events like ice-skating, Cider&Study days, and hot chocolate and card making night, as well as more broad-interest events like Trivia, movie nights, Earring-making/Zine making/Mug painting and more! These events have been invaluable in providing a metric of participation and interest, as well as a measure of the success of our marketing strategy enacted by the former Communications committee.

We have also established end of term parties as a main event to celebrate end-of-semester, and have recently streamlined them so that food is help-yourself and available for unlimited graduate students.

We have also updated our committee terms of reference, which have re-centred the committee mandate in the planning and execution of events for grad students by grad students, as opposed to engaging with work that does not directly engage our membership.

AGM: Report on April-September
SAGM: Report on October-March.

Overview of Incomplete and Outstanding Work

The events committee currently has several long-standing foci, which we expect to work to continue on for several committees to come.

The first of these is the recruitment of volunteers. Post-pandemic engagement of graduate students is precipitously low in comparison to pre-pandemic, both in event attendance and in participating in event organization and actioning. Re-building our volunteer base with both GRC and members at large is critical to the long-term success of events (both attendance and actioning), as well as in the development of better and more diverse event offerings which comes part-and-parcel with a larger, more diverse, and engaged event committee.

The second of these foci is the generation of the event portfolio in which the minority of event ideas stem from the event committee chair and event coordinator, and are instead introduced and co-led by a member of the event committee. The Events Committee Chair and Coordinator largely serve to provide resources, support, assistance, and volunteers to members of the committee who want to hold events. Currently, the majority of ideas have been generate by the chair of the committee and event coordinator, likely as a holdover from the post-pandemic period. However, we are beginning to see increased engagement with our committee in my tenure, and I predict this will continue to grow in the new Chair's tenure.

The third of these foci is the long-term engagement of the graduate population in interacting with the grad house and event portfolio. We have renovated the space, beer garden, side-project patio and interior, and with recurring events beginning to take hold, the long term goal of the events committee should be to establish the Halpern Centre as home #2 for graduate students. We ultimately do what we do to offer grad students reprieve and relaxation from the stressors of grad school. Through the maintenance of recurring events and the successful community hub that is Wednesday coffee, we

should engage in grassroots getting to know our fellow grad students and using recurring events as a place to let people know what's coming up (see Maddie's chalk board as you grab a coffee, etc).