



GRADUATE STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL

AGENDA

Wednesday, November 25, 2020

2:00 pm – 4:00 pm / ZOOM

All members introduce themselves.

1. Welcome to new members

2. Student Services and Graduate Student Resources –

Guest: AVP Students, Dr. Dale Mullings

Dale Mullings introduced himself as the AVP Students as of September 1. He is also a PhD candidate at the University of Toronto, researching student success. The AVP Students supports campus services that support students outside of class, including International Programs and Services, Health and Wellness, and the Sexual Violence and Prevention Office. Today's visit is about starting a conversation about the needs of graduate students. Dale reported that he intends to meet one-on-one or in smaller groups with as many students as possible.

Dale reported that the AVP Students office is working on responding to needs for a daycare for graduate students and expanding the current daycare, as well as an Immigration Advisor and Permanent Residency advising for international graduate students. They are also working on TA training and credentialing outside of the classroom and ways of capturing that.

GSAC members were invited to provide feedback on campus services.

- Students are struggling with isolation and connection, and substance use among students is increasing. Is there a way to make space for community on campus during COVID, beyond ZOOM?
- Specifically, connection opportunities for international students who are particularly isolated during this time
 - o AVP Students is working on bringing in a 6-month position to build opportunity for international students outside of regular programming
- Need for more accessible designated workspace for graduate students
- Need for a cross-campus disability student organization to work on more options for accommodations for graduate students, as the currently available accommodations don't always work
 - o Dale reported that two more advisors have been added, and Faculty liaisons are starting in the future



- Support for BIPOC students and addressing issues of anti-racism
 - o UBC is working on processing their existing data to better support intersectional students and take action, but qualitative analysis is also needed to understand student experiences. UBC will be launching focus groups soon.

Dale invited graduate students to reach out and encouraged invitations to student events. The AVP Students team is also available for information.

3. Chair's Remarks

Paul reported that CoGS is trying to set up a solution for incoming international post-docs with families, who have limited and expensive options for the mandatory 14-day isolation period.

A second credential on professionalization is being worked on for next year.

4. UBCSUO Update – Cassidy Wallis

Cassidy reported that the UBCSUO AGM did not have quorum so could not bring in bylaw recommendations for a standing graduate student committee. The Board is being recommended to strike an ad-hoc committee for the short term, until the new board can vote to keep or change next year. If the Board is in agreement, the SUO will start working with the ad-hoc committee in January.

GSAC members suggested alternative voting options such as a digital vote or proxy system to address problems with meeting quorum.

5. Survey for LGBTQ* students - Johanna E Manrique H

Johanna proposed a survey about how the LGBTQ* student community is coping with the pandemic – Who are they? How are they doing, and what do they need?

GSAC members discussed needs for confidentiality and concerns around data usage as well as more open-ended questions and space for students to provide longer comments and context.

It was also suggested to try an alternative way of gathering information, such as connecting over a drop-in ZOOM session or focus group (similar to the existing Disability Committee sessions) to check in on students and see how they are doing.

6. December meeting schedule

GSAC members discussed hosting an informal meeting to chat before the winter break; Marissa will send out a Doodle poll to schedule a time.



7. Other Business

GSAC members discussed how many international students are struggling with participation marks from their ZOOM classes. Some students are concerned about speaking out during class and don't know how; or come from different backgrounds. There is no guidance on how to achieve marks and many international students feel at a disadvantage, and are uncomfortable speaking to the professor.

Members discussed providing more guidance to faculty members, and providing students with more resources including basic email communication skills and an orientation session for online learning. Paul confirmed that faculty are struggling with this as well. These could be addressed in UBC 501, or through the Centre for Scholarly Communication (CSC).

Communication and participation were identified as issues for other students as well, including those with autism or disabilities. Faculty should clearly define expectations and communicate how participation will be assessed, what the criteria is, and provide appropriate ways for students to achieve those. These expectations should be incorporated into course outlines and should link to course outcomes – what are students supposed to be demonstrating?

Paul added that faculty now have tools available to help plan courses and estimate the amount of required. These were not available when courses were first moved online. He also discussed ESL students and students who struggle with English, having more difficulty with participation.

GSAC members also discussed TAs and challenges such as time zone differences, assessments, learning software, and engagement strategies. Paul confirmed that UBC is still legally unable to employ anyone not in the country, which is the reason for the Graduate Research Stipend.

Members requested to include the chat log from the meeting.

ZOOM CHAT:

From Kerry Rempel to Everyone: 02:32 PM

thanks for trying to get that through. I tried to get to it, but had a family issue come up. Let me know if you need some support

From Cassandra Gouschuk to Everyone: 02:52 PM

Great Idea Kerry!

From Kerry Rempel to Everyone: 02:56 PM

Karin, do you know if the students have talked with their professors about their concerns?

I can share some ways (offline) about how we address this for undergraduates in other scenarios.



From Katherine Rose to Everyone: 02:56 PM

Just to confirm, are for synchronous classes (live zoom)?

From Kerry Rempel to Everyone: 03:01 PM

That would have been soooo awesome to have had when I started.

I think it would be valuable for everyone... even if it's in January.

Kirthana - Such great feedback - you are spot on!

From Kerry Rempel to Everyone: 03:06 PM

You want to have ways that are good for introverts and extraverts, asynchronous and synchronous... there are a million ways.

From Kirthana Ganesh to Everyone: 03:07 PM

Discomfort with English might also mean that students might find it difficult to absorb, reflect, and respond in real time

From Kerry Rempel to Everyone: 03:13 PM

Great point Kirthana

fantastic learning strategy!

From Johanna E. M. H. to Everyone: 03:14 PM

As international student as well I must say that every kind of orientation and help is more than welcomed, we mostly feel confused sometimes

From Eva Kasprzycka to Everyone: 03:15 PM

Heavier. Across the board from the students I've spoken to.

From Johanna E. M. H. to Everyone: 03:15 PM

concerning different topics, such as how this is going to be once we Will be there, economic struggles specially if we are going with family, job opportunities and so forth

From Paul Shipley to Everyone: 03:16 PM

Thank you Johanna. Feel free to pitch any orientation ideas as well, we would be very interested

From Kerry Rempel to Everyone: 03:17 PM

Super tough for TA's because you didn't have the summer to prep.

you can save the chat

From Johanna E. M. H. to Everyone: 03:17 PM

Thank you Paul, if that is the case, certainly I Will be talking to you about our concerns! ;)

From Eva Kasprzycka to Everyone: 03:17 PM

ellipses...?

From Kirthana Ganesh to Everyone: 03:25 PM

Thanks so much for that Lauren! That's a super useful resource to have on hand!

From Eva Kasprzycka to Everyone: 03:26 PM

Thank you everyone!

8. Meeting adjourned