



GRADUATE STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL
Minutes
Wednesday, November 23
2:00PM-4:00PM/ ZOOM

Attendees:

Al Ousi, Sahar	R	Monir, Rifah	X	Singh, Shambhavi	X
Ahmad, Hammad	X	Kumar, Manish	R	Steele, Andrew	R
Amoh-Siaw, Felix	R	Lewis, Jennifer	X	Tao, Sophia Hong Yang	R
Awotwi-Pratt, Stephanie	R	Nunes, Helena	X	Ueda, Yukie	R
Crampton, Kara	R	Paudel, Bhuwan	R	Wale, Janna	R
Dizari, Nassim Zand	R	Piva, Larissa	R	Wallace, Mandy	R
Ganesh, Kirthana	R	Rempel, Kerry	X	Walsh, Monique	R
Hewitt, Michelle	R	Rousseau, Camille	R	Wiebe, Karin	X
Huggins, Madison	R	Singh, Shambhavi	X	Woolgar, Lucia	R
Jarry-Bolduc, Gabriel	X	Shabir, Nadhiyya	R	Yang, Shirley (Sijie)	R
Kumanan, Aswathy	R	Shatzko, Amanda	R	Zand, Nassim	R
Kooijman, Allison	R	Shwed, Alanna	X		
Manrique Hernandez, Johanna Elizabeth	X	Sarkar, Debangsha	R		
Shiple, Paul	X	Roberts, Deanna	X	Bandringa, Janie	X

Meeting started at 2:00PM

1. Chair’s Remarks

Meeting Format

The Chair began the discussion by reiterating that GSAC had decided to hold meetings on an alternating Zoom/Zoom with in-person option schedule, and that as it stands, our next meeting will have an in-person option. The Chair stated that this policy can be revisited if needed.

The Chair also announced that the GSAC meeting will not be held in December, as the meeting falls on the 23rd. The next meeting will be held in January, and will include representatives from Food Services as well as from the ICI building lead team.



English Language Proficiency Requirement

GSAC was updated on changes in the English Language Proficiency requirement for graduate students. The Chair stated that the major change to the policy is that our campus now offers an EAP program that is available to graduate students, and that if students achieve 68% in the terminal course of the EAP, this will now be acceptable to meet the language requirement. This has not passed through Senate, but it is now through the Graduate Council.

Graduate Student Affordability Task Force

The Chair asserted that the Graduate Student Affordability Task force has begun. They felt that it would likely conclude with information that is already familiar to GSAC (that food and housing are the top priorities), but that it was still beneficial to have this issue formally discussed.

Deans' Division of Programs

Dr. Reeves and Dr. Shipley have split up the graduate programs they're responsible for. Dr. Reeves will be responsible for Science with the exception of Computer Science, and Engineering, and Dr. Shipley will take on all other programs.

Funding Policy

The Chair discussed an issue with funding policy, whereby students and supervisors were having a difficult time obtaining information in a timely fashion. They stated that they are well aware that this is a problem, and that they are taking steps to fix it.

New Award

The Sylix Okanagan Graduate Teaching Fellowship has been created for those who have facility in Sylix language. This award has been created through FASS.

New IGS Theme

There has been a new Indigenous IGS theme proposed which may be open for September 2024 admissions.

3MT Competition

The 3MT competition is almost ready. The Chair encouraged GSAC members to spread the word to other graduate students, as the competition is excellent for skills development and includes an award component.

2. Students' Union Report

There was no Students' Union report as the SUO representative was not present.



3. **Vote for an International Student Representative (with attachment)**

Members took part in a vote for the International Student Representative. The vote ended with Miracle Adebayo being voted into the position. The Dean's Assistant will send a thank-you email to all nominees, and will inform Miracle Adebayo that she has been selected for the position.

4. **International students' concerns about finding temporary accommodations (Nassim)**

This item was not discussed as the member was not present.

5. **Report from Senate**

There was no update from Senate.

6. **Other Business**

Visa Support

A member brought up the topic of visa support, as they felt that some programs do not send RA or TA information to students quickly enough, and students need this information to provide proof that they have sufficient income to live here. The Chair suggested that International students reach out to Nora Lambrecht for support regarding this issue.

Early Alert

A member asked for clarification about what Early Alert was, and asked whether TAs should be made aware of this service. The Chair stated that typically Early Alert would not apply to TAs, and that they would typically reach out to their teaching supervisor in the event of any issue. The Chair clarified that Early Alert is an online webform in which an alert can be filed for Health and Wellness to contact a student with wellness supports.

Graduate Student Support for Supervisory Issues

A member discussed a situation in which a graduate student was passed along for technical expertise, and during the interaction, the member felt the need to connect with the student's supervisor as the student is not receiving adequate support. The member asked how they should go about helping the graduate student access the correct supports. The Chair felt that the answer was complex, and that there were a couple of different routes that could be pursued in this case. The official policy route would be to engage with the program or theme coordinator. In cases where this does not prove fruitful, or where there is a conflict of interest, the situation would be escalated to CoGS and be directed to Dr. Shipley or Dr. Reeves.

Another member suggested that perhaps Ombuds could be an option, as this issue seems to be a lack of engagement with the supervisor and supervisory committee. The Chair felt that engaging multiple campus



partners would be the best strategy, including SVPRO, Health and Wellness, the Ombudsperson Office, the Students' Union Office, and BCGEU, as appropriate. They felt that engaging with campus partners would be important.

Update on the Shop Steward:

A member asked whether anyone knew the name of the Shop Steward in the Union, as they weren't sure who to send information to. The Chair stated that general information is written out in the BCGEU Letters of Agreement on student employment.

Faculty of Education Student Led Leadership Group

One member discussed the creation of a "Student Led Leadership group" in the Faculty of Education, which organizes events and represents students in a variety of ways. There is a Canvas shell that participants from the Vancouver and Okanagan campuses are linked to, with some opportunities for members to go to the Vancouver campus a few times a year. They felt that it was beneficial to have a group like this which links the two campuses, and that it was much more tangible to have a Canvas shell in order to create content. The member gave the example of a student symposium, which was being organized separately by the Okanagan and Vancouver campuses. The new Canvas Shell allowed the opportunity for collaboration in this case, and could be useful in many similar scenarios. Deanna pointed out that there is also an academic support fund to help fund opportunities like conferences and events, and wanted to ensure that students knew that this was something that was available for use.

Fipke Lunch Room

A member discussed a decision to change the lunch room for Chemistry students in Fipke to a graduate student space. They felt that there was a lack of transparency regarding the decision, and that some students were upset that they were not consulted. The Chair didn't know whether this decision was made by the Space Committee, but felt that they may have been in control of this process. They felt that there were often difficult decisions to be made regarding the allocation of space on campus, but agreed that it was important to have transparency in the process and to ensure that student voices were heard. Deanna suggested that the member reach out to Natalie Walliser (natalie.walliser@ubc.ca) regarding this.

Meeting adjourned at 2:42