

**GRADUATE STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL**

**Minutes**

**Wednesday, March 22, 2023**

**2:00PM-4:00PM/ ZOOM**

**Attendees:**

Adebayo, Miracle	X	Manrique Hernandez, Johanna Elizabeth	X	Shabir, Nadhiyya	R
Ahmad, Hammad	X	Monir, Rifah	R	Shatzko, Amanda	R
Awotwi-Pratt, Stephanie	X	Nunes, Helena	R	Shwed, Alanna	R
Ganesh, Kirthana	X	Paudel, Bhuwan	R	Steele, Andrew	X
Huggins, Madison	R	Piva, Larissa	R	Wallace, Mandy	X
Jarry-Bolduc, Gabriel	R	Rempel, Kerry	X	Wiebe, Karin	R
Kooijman, Allison	R	Rousseau, Camille	X	Woolgar, Lucia	R
Kumar, Manish	R	Sarkar, Debangsha	X	Yang, Shirley	R
Lewis, Jennifer	R	Singh, Shambhavi	X	Zand Dizari, Nassim	R
<i>Shipley, Paul</i>	X	<i>Roberts, Deanna</i>	R	<i>Meehan, Alicia</i>	X

**Meeting started at 2:04pm**

**1. Chair's Remarks**

[Minimum Funding for PhD Students](#) – The minimum funding level increases to \$22,000/year in September 2023. All PhD students, not just incoming students, are eligible for minimum funding for the first four years of the PhD program. There is no minimum funding requirement for RAships. RAs are not considered employment. The minimum funding package can be any combination of RAs, TAs, and awards, as there is not a set minimum amount for each.

BCGEU & TA Salaries – The new BCGEU Agreement has been ratified, but is not yet published. The GTA salary increases in the new BCGEU Agreement are staying ahead of inflation. CoGS has advised programs not to use the increase in TA funding to decrease RA amounts.

[Graduate Student Expense Calculator](#) – The calculator is now published on the CoGS' website. If you notice anything odd, please contact Paul. The calculator illuminates how expensive it is to live in the Okanagan. For example, a domestic student who does not own a car needs approximately \$27,000-\$28,000/year to live, which is well short of the minimum funding policy for PhD students. The amount goes up dramatically for international students, students in professional programs, students who do not want to share housing, etc.



[3MT](#) – 3MT will be held on Wednesday, April 5<sup>th</sup> at 5pm in the Mary Irwin Theatre downtown. In past years, we sold out at the Innovation Centre, so we moved to a bigger venue this year; however, we have sold out this venue too. There is a waitlist for tickets that you can be added to, as it is expected that tickets will become available on the day of the event. There was great participation in the faculty heats this year.

[UBCO Academic Fund](#) – There is CoGS funding available to support student-led events. Event organizers can apply for up to \$500 to bring in speakers, run research events, symposiums, poster competitions, etc. for student-driven events. For guest speakers, the funding can be used towards flights, accommodations, or other event organization costs. The application form is found on the [CoGS' website](#). CoGS only had one applicant to the fund this past year. A research cluster or group of students can apply together for the funding; however, funding is provided based on the event, not how many individuals apply for the event. Students can apply for funding for reoccurring annual events.

[Research and Data Repositories](#) - Jason Pither from the Faculty of Science and Marjorie Mitchell from the Library have worked together to find data repository options for UBCO students, since UBC's thesis repository (cIRcle) is not a repository for associated data. Jason and Marjorie have worked with the Centre for Scholarly Communication to create a webpage with open data repositories and information for students.

Award Name Changes – The Graduate Dean's Entrance Scholarships and University Graduate Fellowships are now combined and called Okanagan Graduate Research Scholarships. A GSAC member noted that having "dean's" in the award name is more prestigious than the new scholarship name. We removed "dean" from the name, as the new award structure allows programs to assign the funds instead of the Dean. Paul will discuss the naming with CoGS' leadership.

## 2. UBCO parking lot difficulties (Johanna E Manrique Hernandez)

Many students have been complaining about parking availability. It is difficult to find parking, especially in the mornings, and it is not clear from signage that there are certain lots that cannot be parked in before 1pm. These issues are compounded by the fact that students will pay for parking on the app in advance, but are then unable to find parking, as there are no guaranteed spaces. Additionally, there will be spaces available in other lots; however, students can't transfer the payment to other lots or use some of the other lots. Other issues raised included issues with selecting the correct code for the parking lot in the app, having to pay for parking in the morning and then having to pay for "all day" in the afternoon. GSAC members requested changes in the app to make it clear what is being paid for, and to give morning, afternoon, and all day options for payment. GSAC members also advocated for being allowed to park in other lots where spaces are available.

The [Parking website](#) has information about short term and permit holder parking.

If you have received tickets that you feel are unfair (ex. you paid for parking; you thought you paid, but selected the incorrect code), you can contest the tickets.

Parking is not permitted before 1pm in some lots to ensure that all permit holders are able to find spots in the lot. If there are spaces left after 1pm, those are a result of permit holders not coming to campus for the day.



There is overflow parking past H lot, across the street from the gravel truck station.

GSAC members suggested better ways for tracking whether or not permit holders would be in for today, so that availability of spaces would be better known.

A GSAC member indicated that this conversation should be integrated with other groups that strategize around parking.

It was noted that long-term campus plans do not include additional parking, as the campus is trying to encourage public transit use.

### 3. Students' Union Report

The Students' Union elections were held recently and 56 graduate students voted, which is 5X the number of graduate students who have voted in past elections. The new graduate student representative is Anjali Desai who will be taking on the role in May. Kirthana is currently working on a transition document for the role.

The graduate student cultural night was a huge success and the biggest event to date, with 120 students and family members in attendance.

Executives from UBCO's Graduate Student Committee (GSC) and UBCV's Graduate Student Society (GSS) have been meeting to discuss issues and ways to improve the relationships between unions. The GSS has direct access to the President of UBC, the Board of Governors and other executives. GSS and GSC members plan to alternate visits between campuses.

GSC members will be meeting with students from Thompson Rivers University to discuss how UBCO formed the graduate student subcommittee within the SUO.

A reminder that the GSC holds [office hours](#), so that graduate students can talk to GSC about anything. The in person office hours are held in the Graduate Collegium, ASC 460.

A queer graduate student meet up will take place at 5pm on March 29<sup>th</sup> for any current graduate students who identify as queer. Students will meet up for coffee and then go for a walk.

The "Rest is Resistance" graduate student event will take place on March 30<sup>th</sup> from 3-4:30 PM in the UBC Gym. The registration link is posted on the [GSC's Instagram page](#).

There are plans for a Bob Ross paint night to be held, but a date has not been chosen yet. Information will be posted on Instagram when available.

### 4. Report from Senate



No updates provided.

## 5. Other Business

A member brought up the UBCO student who was attacked at a bus stop in a racist attack. Students want to hold an event to raise awareness and discuss how to protect each other. The community would like to see the university engage on this topic. CoGS can help support events and raise awareness. The SUO VP External has transit issues, including safety, on their list of priorities for advocacy, and this topic will be escalated for advocacy given the attack.

A GSAC member raised the issue of managing uncomfortable situations and misbehaving students in the classroom, and she would like to discuss the issue further at the next GSAC meeting. Members noted that there are workshops available for TAs, but there are currently no workshops for students regarding how to respectfully approach TAs and instructors. It may be possible to incorporate this information into orientation events. Paul will see if he can find someone involved in undergraduate orientation to attend the next GSAC meeting.

A GSAC member asked for better resources to support student learning on practicing anti-racism in the classroom. Currently, some IBPOC TAs and instructors are being asked about their lived experiences in the classroom, and it isn't fair to these individuals to have to teach students about these topics. Stephanie has created related resources for the Student Learning Hub that could be incorporated into UBC 501, and she is happy to share them with CoGS.

A GSAC member suggested holding a talk, in a safe space, for TAs to share the experiences they have encountered in the classroom. Students need to see the humans behind the grades. Unfortunately, disrespectful student behaviour related to race or gender is not an uncommon experience for TAs.

Senate reviews their policies and procedures every three years and the [review](#) is currently taking place. Please submit your comments to [okanagan.senate@ubc.ca](mailto:okanagan.senate@ubc.ca) by 4pm on Friday, March 31st. Please ensure that "Triennial Review Comments" is at the start of the message subject line for ease of sorting.

The Faculty of Education offers an online course called [Historical, Systemic and Intersectional Anti-racism: From Awareness to Action](#). It was suggested that this course could be included in orientation for all students.

A GSAC member indicated that the \$5 food option has been removed from the Sunshine Cafeteria even though Food Services indicated that they were going to expand the program. Paul will investigate.

If the graduate student cultural night becomes an annual event, it would be great if more Canadian students participated, so that they could learn about other countries. Please encourage your friends to attend in future years.

Many awards for leadership and community involvement are dedicated to undergraduate students. It would be great to have some awards available for graduate students involved in leadership and community building to



recognize contributions and to encourage more graduate students to participate on committees. The awards could be in title, or another option is to provide certificates to volunteers.

With campus food services, it is sometimes unclear which cafeterias offer halal options and which do not. Additionally, halal options can be very limited in the cafeterias that do offer these options. Furthermore, Food Services' staff are not always sure whether or not the food is halal. Members recommended adding dietary restriction and location information to the [Feed Me! website](#), advocating for expanded meal options, and training staff on dietary requirements.

GSAC members requested that future meetings have hybrid options.

**Meeting adjourned at 3:11pm**