



**GRADUATE STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL**

**Minutes**

**Wednesday, June 28, 2023**

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

**Attendees:**

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

**Meeting started at 2:03pm**

**1. Student Newsletter and Workshops – Alicia Meehan**

Alicia requested attendees to provide feedback on the student newsletter and workshops offered to them. A summary feature of future defenses and an increase in information for student events was requested by a member. The idea of having more social media advertising for student events was suggested to reconcile the issue of too many emails to read. A suggestion to have academic and social events be included in the same email was provided, which Alicia responded by saying that CoGS focuses mostly on academics, so combining the two would be unlikely.

On behalf of the Student Experience Office, Alicia sought feedback on their professional development programming and recreational/social events. A member requested more frequent events, emphasizing accessibility. The suggestion to have professional development workshops occur all in one day was made to aid in scheduling conflicts among students. Another member, again, suggested that social media be used to advertise these events, promoting the pre-existing events hosted by GSC. Alicia noted she would connect said member to the Student Experience Office.

**2. Chair’s Remarks**

Referring to the previous meeting, Paul notes that discussions surrounding the conflict of interest between TAs marking their peers is ongoing and that he is drafting a policy on said issue. The Graduate Leadership Award is on its way to the Senate for approval and could in place by next year.



Attention was brought to a Castanet news article citing the implementation of an Indigenous Community Nursing Program at UBCO, which Paul says is not yet a program, but could be in place in a couple years.

Graduate Student Orientation is currently be planned and will occur on Thursday, August 31<sup>st</sup>.

The CoGS office is in the process of moving to OM2 which is why some emails may take some more time being responded to as staff are still moving in to the new space. The new building should be able to accommodate future in-person meetings. Staff adjustments have been occurring at COGS with Damien Bell's position changing to Business Analyst and Training Lead, and a new Receptionist and Assistant to the Deans, Aliya Aumond.

Paul shared his screen to show visualizations of degree completion data, noting that COVID has not had as significant of an impact on the time to completion as he initially thought, though it is too early to tell yet for PhD students.

### **3. Students' Union Report**

A member who has joined the Students' Union Graduation Committee stated that more people were needed as four members had stepped down. This member also advertised events coming up: a BBQ in August and weekly coffee socials on Wednesdays. A new graduate student cricket team has been formed and meets every Tuesday, with plans to propose a tournament among graduate students.

### **4. Report from Senate**

No report.

### **5. Other Business**

#### Summer TA-ships

A member brought to attention the lack of TA opportunities available to graduate students over the course of the summer in addition to a lack of general funding. Importance was stressed as (international) tuition costs were still being paid during the summer, in addition to the costs of living in Kelowna. TA-ships would help financially support students to pay these costs while also being able to keep up with their research. Paul acknowledged the lack of financial opportunities and supports for graduate students during the summer months, explaining how most TA positions are available during the winter terms. Paul acknowledged the challenges presented by graduate students receiving their funding in distinct chunks instead of even monthly amounts. It is the goal of CoGS to find ways to improve this situation, though the inherent nature of both awards and TAships present challenges to achieving this.

Another member asked if, in combination with a TA-ship, working an additional job on campus would cause students to go over the 12 hours per week cap. Paul clarified that the 12 hours cap is for TA hours only.

The maximum number of hours that could be worked on campus was confirmed to be 35.

Regarding those who already had TA-ships, a member asked if incorporating TA-ships into programs that required out-of-town research activities was a possibility. Paul noted that no policy prohibits you from discussing with your department the organization of coverage while away research work and that it was a common occurrence among faculty.



### Financing Studies

A member requested an update on past discussions on the creation of a minimum funding for master's students and emergency graduate housing. Paul made members aware that while no one was disagreeing with minimum funding, it would take a long time to enact. It is actively being discussed at the Graduate Student Affordability Task Force and Paul is optimistic for the long-term. Graduate student housing is more likely as people within the housing department are on the task force. Paul hopes that it could become a reality in the next year or so.

An additional update was requested regarding affordable food options. Paul said he is working on it, but the biggest issue facing food services at the moment is staffing. He mentioned a pilot project for affordable lunches, but it ended after five months as they ran out of money. Paul notes that this is a sign that it was a successful program, which could potentially lead to permanent funding.

### GSAC Next Year

A member asked how the application process will work for current members next year. Paul answered that it depends on the faculty as these are dean-appointed positions, but that he would be grateful to have any of the attendees present to continue next year.

## **6. Closing Remarks**

Paul expressed his gratitude for the hard work of the committee over the past year and clarified the process of disbursing honoraria over the summer.

**Meeting adjourned at 3:22pm.**