



Graduate Student Advisory Council

MEETING MINUTES

OCTOBER 4, 2023 | UNC 334

Introduction

Paul began the meeting by introducing the role of the Graduate Student Advisory Council (GSAC) to the representatives. When a representative asked in what capacity can they make change, Paul provided examples of successful initiatives in the past, such as the Graduate Leadership Award, food services for graduate students, affordability, and many others.

A land acknowledgement was made and the role of the committee in contributing to the quality of life for graduate students was recognized.

Summer Update

Paul provided the group a summary of changes that occurred over the summer. The Indigenous Knowledge IGS program was created and the launch of Workday Student, a new system for student records, which is still ongoing.

Open Floor

Karin Wiebe brought attention to students from the Okanagan School of Education (OSE) who were struggling to find childcare during their compulsory Saturday courses and inquired if anyone knew of any available options. Anjali Desai shared they had received similar inquiries and knew of some UBCO students with childcare licensing who are offering their services to students on Saturdays. They will provide their contact information to Paul to be shared with those who need it.

A committee member mentioned the ongoing Simon Fraser University (SFU) Teaching Assistants (TAs) strike and their demand for \$2,000 towards mental health resources, suggesting that a similar request should be proposed by GSAC. Paul responded by noting that TAs receive healthcare through their student status and no benefits from their employment status due to the work hours. Paul suggested that the Students Union (SU) negotiate with the insurance company for better mental health benefits.

Nataasha Khattar asked if Student Care, the healthcare provided by the SU, covered the psychiatric care provided by UBCO's Psychology program. Other representatives suggested likely not as they are not licensed. Representatives who are also members of the SU will consult with the insurance company.

Hammad asked if the discussion surrounding food services, specifically the affordability and availability, for graduate students could continue this year. Paul agreed that it should continue, and



proposed that the next meeting include discussion on what the graduate students are needing, which will then be shared to Food Services at a future meeting. All representatives agreed to include this item in next month's agenda.

Hammad mentioned the proposed referendum to the students' athletics fees by the SU. Hammad shared the concern of students feeling they have little influence, especially when many are discontent with the mandatory fees not including a gym membership and having little explanation as to what the current fees actually cover. Paul expressed willingness to help advocate for students with this matter.

Meeting ends, 3:00pm

DRAFT