



GRADUATE STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL
Meeting Minutes
November 1, 2023 | Zoom

Attendees:

Adebayo, Miracle	X	Harper, Breanne		Sandler, Michael	
Ahmad, Hammad	X	Heth, Zach	X	Sharma, Akshta	
Al Barazi, Mariam		Khattar, Nataasha		Shatzko, Amanda	
Awotwi-Pratt, Stephanie	X	Kizza, Ronald		Shwed, Alanna	X
Conneely, Ryan		Kooijman, Allison	X	Singh, Shambhavi	X
Crawford, Carolyn	X	Manrique Hernandez, Johanna	X	Wiebe, Karin	X
Desai, Anajali		Monir, Rifah Rafia		Yang, Shirley	
Gnyawali, Kaushal		Morshedzadeh, Yenganeh	X		
Shiple, Peter	X	Roberts, Deanna	X	Bissell, Laura	X

Meeting started at 2:04pm

1. Chair's Remarks

Paul Shipley announced the creation of a new scholarship called the Peter Wall Legacy Fund scholarship. This scholarship will be open to graduate students on the Okanagan campus and is expected to be released this Winter. Paul will discuss plans for the adjudication of the scholarship with colleagues in Vancouver next week and the award will likely be forwarded to Senate for their December meeting.

2. Students' Union Report

No report was given. Hammad Ahmed confirmed that Anajali Desai has taken over as the graduate student representative for the Students' Union going forward. Hammad also



informed the group of several Students' Union events that have been planned for graduate students including:

- Rest as Resistance: an Invitation to Unwind
- Graduate Student Coffee Catch-Up
- Various Sporting activities, including cricket, badminton, and volleyball
- Graduate Student Gala (November 24 - more information to come)

Thrive is also planning several mental health focused events for November and is looking for student-led initiatives that can be funded to support students' wellbeing and mental health.

More information can be found on the [Thrive](#) website.

3. Report from Senate

Paul confirmed that there were no updates from Senate to report. Paul also confirmed that there are currently no new graduate programs working their way through the approval channels. The Master of Design program is making a small update that will be presented to Senate this month and the program should open to applications shortly thereafter.

4. Program and Curriculum Membership Call

Paul reported that the College of Graduate Studies Program & Curriculum committee is looking for graduate student volunteers to join the committee. This committee reviews and approves all curriculum proposals that go to Senate, including new courses and new graduate programs.

As the committee currently has no student representative, Paul asked if any GSAC members would be interested in joining the committee or if they would be willing to share the call out with their fellow students so that the student voice is heard. Allison Kooijman asked how big the committee was, as student voices are not always heard in larger faculty-dominant



committees. Paul confirmed that the committee is small with only 5 members. The time commitment is minimal for this committee (between 30 min and 1.5 hours per month to review proposals and the meeting is usually less than an hour each month.) Attendees can join the meeting remotely or in person and they occur the third Thursday of each month. Stephanie Awotwi-Pratt asked if students needed experience with different curricula to participate and Paul confirmed this was not a requirement for participation.

5. Need for Free Childcare Facility

This item was deferred to next month's meeting.

6. Other Business

a. Food affordability on Campus

Hammad started the conversation by noting that Picnic has recently launched a free "[Grab and Go](#)" breakfast program available for all students each morning from Monday to Friday. Many students have reported enjoying the initiative and it has been a success. The SUO is also offering [\\$5 Smart Meals](#) in the UNC on Wednesdays in November that provides affordable, healthy, and planet-friendly meals to all students. CoGS has been sharing these initiatives in communications to grad students and will continue to do so.

b. Parking affordability on Campus

Miracle Adebayo raised the issue of parking affordability on campus. Over the last several years, the availability of parking on campus has reduced and the cost has increased. Deanna Roberts noted that there was discussion on this topic at the University about a year ago and it was confirmed that the move to fewer parking lots and higher costs was an effort to encourage



students, staff, and faculty to use the bus or carpool instead. Allison commented that this move is actually punitive to students who live further from campus and must commute and already bear the extra costs of commuting. Miracle agreed and that as it gets colder out, waiting for the bus is not fun. Paul asked the committee what GSAC or CoGS could do to advocate for better options? The response was to push for more affordable parking on campus and better bus service to the campus. Stephanie reported seeing a poster for the [SUO Grocery Bus](#) and Hammad confirmed that this bus runs at least once a week to Superstore from the campus and is offered by Campus Wellness and the SUO Pantry. Stephanie commented that the way forward may be tied to offering additional transportation services to students to make their lives easier and help them get to and from locations. Shambhavi added that BC Transit is looking at adding a new bus (#98) that would be an express route between Downtown, Rutland and UBCO, but this is still [several years away](#). Allison asked if it was possible to know how many students on campus this issue impacts, noting that a lot of students are now mainly working remote or from home. Paul confirmed that this is very field dependent, citing that students in Science and Engineering are often required to be on campus for lab work. Other students in Arts or Social Sciences may be able to work more remotely based on the nature of their research/courses.

Meeting ended 2:35pm