



BOARD MEETING

May 17, 2023

Hybrid Meeting

UC332

5:30 pm

University of Guelph Graduate Students' Association

UC Level 5 | gsa@uoguelph.ca | 519.824.4120 Ext. 56685 & 53314

www.uoguelph.ca/gsa/ | gsaplanner.uoguelph.ca/ |  



Table of Contents

GSA Board Meeting Agenda.....	2
Executive & Staff Reports	4
President & CEO – Nabhan Refaie.....	4
VP Internal Report – Emily Minard	8
VP Finance Report – Mingze Li.....	10
VP External Report – Rebecca Randle	11
Activities and Communication Coordinator (ACC) – Manpreet Kaur	13
Office Manager – Michelle Morris	16
Arboretum Student Fee – GSA Board Position.....	17
Partnership with Navitas	19
Event Funding Request – Whine and Dine.....	23
Committee Reports	24
Departmental Updates	32
GSA April 2023 Meeting Minutes	38
GSA Executive Meeting Minutes	48



GSA Board Meeting Agenda

GSA BOARD MEETING AGENDA Wednesday, May 17, 5:30 p.m.

Please send Regrets to gsa@uoguelph.ca, no later than Tuesday, May 16, 2023 at 12 p.m.

5:30 p.m. Call to Order: Kathleen Nolan

Territorial Acknowledgement

We acknowledge that the University of Guelph resides on the ancestral lands of the Attawandaron people and the treaty lands and territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit. We recognize the significance of the Dish with One Spoon Covenant to this land and offer our respect to our Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee and Métis neighbours as we strive to strengthen our relationships with them.

Today, this gathering place is home to many First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples and acknowledging them reminds us of our important connection to this land where we learn and work.

Approval of Agenda:

MOTION #1: B.I.R.T. The Agenda for the May 17th, 2023 GSA Board Meeting, be approved as presented.

Approval of Minutes:

MOTION #2: B.I.R.T. the GSA Meeting Minutes of April 19th, 2023 be approved as presented.

5:35 p.m. CUPE #3913: Alexis Fabricius, Vice-President External

5:40 p.m. Faculty of Graduate Studies: Dr. Ben Bradshaw, Assistant Vice-President (Graduate Studies)

5:55 p.m. Lookout Finances/Operations Update: Mike Calvert, University Centre

6:05 p.m. Board of Governors Report: Jehoshua Sharma, Graduate Student Representative

6:15 p.m. Arboretum Student Fee – GSA Board Position: Justine Richardson, the Arboretum

MOTION #3: B.I.R.T. the GSA Board of Directors adopt a “yes” position in the 2023 Arboretum Student Fee Referendum.

6:35 p.m. Partnership with Navitas – GSA Board Position: Nabhan Refaie



MOTION #4: B.I.R.T the GSA Board of Directors opposes the University of Guelph forming a partnership with Navitas.

6:55 p.m. Event Funding Request – Whine and Dine: Nabhan Refaie

MOTION #5: B.I.R.T. the GSA Board of Directors allocate \$194.70 toward the Whine and Dine event held on May 3rd 2023.

7:10 p.m. Departmental and Committee Updates

7:20 p.m. Question Period

7:25 p.m. Executive & Staff Reports
(Please refer to detailed Reports included in the Board Meeting materials package.)

7:25 p.m. President & CEO: Nabhan Refaie

7:35 p.m. V.P. Internal: Emily Minard

7:45 p.m. V.P. Financial: Mingze Li

7:55 p.m. V.P. External: Rebecca Randle

8:05 p.m. Activities & Communications Co-ordinator: Manpreet Kaur

8:10 p.m. Office Manager: Michelle Morris

8:15 p.m. Arising Business

8:20 p.m. In Camera Session

MOTION #6: B.I.R.T. the Meeting move 'In-Camera' for discussion.

(Under the direction of the Chair - Staff, Members-at-Large, and Guests will be asked to leave the Meeting.)

MOTION #7: B.I.R.T. the GSA Board Meeting 'In-Camera' session end.

Adjournment

The next GSA Board meeting is scheduled for June 21st, 2023. Please send regrets no later than June 20, 2023, at 12 p.m.



Executive & Staff Reports

President & CEO – Nabhan Refaie

Hi everyone,

I wanted to first take the opportunity to thank everyone who voted in the GSA Executive Committee elections, and thank you all for giving me the opportunity to serve as the President & CEO for the upcoming year. I am looking forward to working with you all to improve the GSA, and help graduate students achieve their academic, social, and professional goals.

Below is an outline of my activities as the President & CEO from April 14th 2023 to May 14th 2023. The main issues I've worked on this month is helping the transition of our new executives, working with students from the MFA Creative Writing program on revising their student fees, and co-organizing the Whine and Dine event. Please find below a more detailed overview of my activities over the last month.

Executive Transition

Over the last month, I have worked with Michelle and the outgoing and incoming GSA executives on issues around transition. Most of the transition process is complete. See Michelle's report for more information.

MFA Creative Writing Student Fees

I had several conversations with students from the MFA Creative Writing program inquiring about their compulsory non-academic fees. These students are in a particularly odd situation, as they are students of the main campus, but their spaces are mostly located at the Guelph Humber campus. The compulsory fees that they pay are for services located at Guelph Humber. This presents several issues. First, Guelph Humber serves undergraduate students almost exclusively. Therefore, services are sometimes less equipped to deal with graduate student needs. Second, there is general confusion about whether MFA Creative Writing students should be accessing Guelph Humber or main campus services, since they are not *technically* Guelph Humber students. Third, students are sometimes refused access to services, as they are not Guelph Humber students.

These students have requested that these fees be altered, so that student fees are paid for services that they can access and are useful to them. I suggested that most student fees should be what main campus students pay, given that these services are more equipped for graduate student needs, and most have virtual options for out of town students like the Creative Writing students.



I have set up meetings with Ben Bradshaw and members of the MFA Creative Writing administration to discuss this issue further.

Whine and Dine event

I met several times over the last month with the UofG Graduate Coalition (composed of CUPE3913 members, CFS members, and other graduate students) to help organize the Whine and Dine event. The purpose of this event was to gather information from graduate students about their financial well-being and brainstorm solutions to these issues. More information is included below.

The event was held on May 3rd, and was very successful. In total, over 50 participants attended the event. We gathered a lot of information regarding student finances and funding, and will be using that information to further advocate for student needs.

GSA Restructuring Committee

We are still looking for members to join the GSA Restructuring Committee. An overwhelming number of graduate students applied to be a part of the committee. We are in the process of choosing four among those applicants. We still need four General Directors to volunteer for this committee. If you are interested in joining this committee, please let me know.

GSA Board of Directors Chair

On May 4th, the GSA Executive Committee voted to remove Sourav Hait as the GSA Chair. I met with Sourav on May 9th to let him know about the Committee's decision. We are currently looking for a new Chair. As a reminder, the Chair must have 6 months experience with the GSA Board. If you or anyone you know is interested, please apply by completing the following form: <https://forms.office.com/r/7UDtnQ2uzz>

For the May Board meeting, the GSA Executive Committee invited Kathleen Nolan (our previous Chair) to preside over the meeting. Usually, our VP Internal takes over chairing duties in the absence of a Chair. However, we thought it best to give Emily some time to adjust to the new role before chairing this meeting, given that she is new to her position, the Board of Directors, and the GSA in general. Emily will be chairing meetings moving forward until we find a new Chair.

Grad Lounge Sustainability Committee

I chaired a meeting of the Grad Lounge Sustainability Committee on April 19th. We discussed issues around student artwork submissions, including the mural to be painted on one of the Lookout walls.



Academics & Progress Committee

I attended an Academics & Progress Committee meeting on April 20th. We discussed several applications related to progress in graduate studies.

GSA Executive Committee Meeting

I organized and chaired a meeting of the Executive Committee on May 4th. More information about this meeting is included in the Executive Committee meeting minutes below.

Meeting with Grad Studies – Dr. Ben Bradshaw

I met with Ben on April 17th and May 1st. We discussed issues around the recent pause in program admissions and graduate student stipends (including when the committee examining graduate student funding will be starting).

Meeting with VPSA – Dr. Irene Thompson

Along with the rest of the Executive Committee, I met with Irene on April 28th and May 8th. We discussed several issues around mental health services, housing, getting information about services Student Affairs offers, and organizing future meetings. In particular, we discussed the prospect of the GSA exploring a relationship with Metrolinx to offer a bus pass similar to the Guelph transit partnership for out of town students. This would reduce the burden on out of town students to travel to the university, and enhance the ability of students searching or housing to do so outside of Guelph. Rebecca and I will be exploring this during the summer.

Meeting with Student Affairs – Jen Durst

I met with the LEAD Advisor (Jen Durst) on April 18th and May 8th. We discussed issues around Student Executive Council meetings, the GSA plans to restructure their operations, and other updates related to student fees. Jen offered her help in the restructuring initiative as a resource.

As always, if you have any questions or concerns, please let me know! You can always reach me by email at gsapres@uoguelph.ca.

Thank you everyone!

Nabhan Refaie
GSA President & CEO





VP Internal Report – Emily Minard

Hi everyone! I'm very excited to enter my new role as VP Internal and am eager to get to know you all! I hope you have also had some time during this summer semester to relax and enjoy the warm weather. See below for a report of my activities within the past couple of weeks as the newly elected VP Internal:

Lunch with CSA/GSA

The GSA Executive met with the CSA executive over lunch to get to know both outgoing and incoming members. Here, we discussed how there should be more collaborative projects between the GSA and CSA and that more regular meetings should be scheduled between the two associations.

Lunch with Irene Thompson and Incoming GSA Executive

I met with the incoming GSA Executive and Irene Thompson where discussions were had regarding core issues we believe graduate students at the University of Guelph are facing. These conversations centered around cost-of-living, general affordability, and accessibility of mental health resources. An agreement was made to meet with Irene Thompson bi-weekly to discuss issues pertaining to cost-of-living for graduate students.

Meeting with GSA Executive and Irene Thompson

I met with Nabhan and Irene Thompson to further discuss issues centering around housing affordability for graduate students. Irene explained that a survey on housing affordability will be distributed over the summer to students for the university to accurately gauge housing issues among students. Ideas about actionable plans following this survey were raised and discussions about their feasibility were had.

Meeting with CSA VP Academic

I met with Jun, the VP Academic of the CSA, to begin the planning of the Student Memorial Service. We agreed to plan for the service to be held in mid-to-late September and organized the goals of the planning process that we need to meet throughout the summer. We also discussed wanting to hire a University of Guelph student(s) as the event's musician rather than a musician outside the university.

Miscellaneous

- Connecting with various committees to check whether they're still active



- Connecting with a few GDs regarding committee assignments
- Getting used to the new role and trying to familiarize myself with the bylaws

If anyone has any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at gsavpint@uoguelph.ca!

Emily Minard

GSA VP Internal



VP Finance Report – Mingze Li

Hi, Everyone

My name is Marcellus (Mingze) Li and I am the new elected VP Finance of GSA. Hope you folks enjoy the beautiful weather. For now, I am still getting used to the role and here is the list of work has been done since I got elected.

Executive Meeting:

The executives met with the new office manager and discussed some steps to be taken to further improve the working of GSA.

Some decisions were also made on Grants and Bursaries (e.g. applications). We noted there are currently many issues with the Grant and Bursaries application process, thereby delaying the completion. We receive periodic follow-ups from students regarding application updates. We need to investigate a better way to construct the application process and make it more concise and less time-consuming. This should help accelerate the entire application process.

Graduate Student Consultation:

During this month, I also worked with graduate students to help them in filling the applications for the DEI bursary and cleared their confusion.

DEI Meeting:

Since I just got this role and I haven't got a chance to meet with DEI Committee yet. I am looking forward to meeting with the DEI Committee for making a decision on applications we received recently.

Please feel free to reach out to me via email at gsavpfin@uoguelph.ca if you have any questions or suggestions.

Marcellus (Mingze) Li
GSA VP Finance



VP External Report – Rebecca Randle

Hello all,

I hope that everyone is having a wonderful beginning to their summer semester and enjoying the warm weather! First, thank you all for having me back for another (first full) term as your VP External. I am very appreciative of the opportunity to continue to serve grad students in this position. It has been a quiet month in terms of committee meetings as the winter semester wrapped up and the summer semester has just begun. Please see a summary of my responsibilities since the April board meeting below:

Executive Turnover

I was fortunate enough to maintain my position, so I did not have any explicit turnover responsibilities other than submitting a turnover report. However, completing this turnover report allowed me to critically review the responsibilities of the VP External Position outlined in our bylaws. I look forward to being able to discuss, and hopefully update, some of the responsibilities of the position and the language used to convey them once our Executive Restructuring Committee gets underway.

We were also fortunate enough to also have turnover meetings with the CSA executive and Irene Thompson (Vice-Provost of Student Affairs). It was great to meet the incoming CSA executive members and discuss how we can renew our collaborative efforts to support students through the 2023-24 term.

Bus Pass S23

My primary focus this past month has been responding to grad student questions about the bus pass for the summer semester and working to resolve any issues that have arisen. As graduate programs are continuous in nature, most grad students are registered for the summer semester in some form - whether that be for a specific class or classes, or UNIV*7510 Active Full-time/UNIV*7520 Active Part-time Registration, and UNIV*7500 Research/Writing. As a result, they automatically purchase a bus pass through their associated student fees when paying tuition for the summer semester. However, we also have graduate students on campus who have taken a leave of absence for the semester or are guests on our campus as visiting graduate students. We currently do not have a system in place that would allow them to separately 'opt-in' to purchase a bus pass for the summer semester at the current student rate. CSA offers this service to select undergraduate students who meet certain criteria. I expressed my interest in seeking to extend our bus pass services to



provide some opt-in passes to the other executive members. It was agreed that there was collective interest in pursuing this option. I have reached out to the CSA's VP External to assess whether we can make these arrangements.

Please feel free to reach out to me via email at gsavpext@uoguelph.ca if you have any questions, comments, or concerns. I welcome feedback and input from graduate students and GSA members regarding anything I discussed so that I may bring your thoughts and opinions to the appropriate committee or representative(s).

Thank you!

Rebecca Randle

GSA VP External



Activities and Communication Coordinator (ACC) – Manpreet Kaur

Hello everyone,
I hope you all are having a great semester so far. Next month, I will try to organize a stress burster event.

Upcoming Events |

1. **Trivia**

Location: The Lookout on a weekly basis. Happens every Thursday.

2. **Yoga**

This summer, we are having in-person Yoga.

Location: UC Multi-Faith Room 533

Tuesday, May 23, 2023

5:00 PM – 6:00 PM

3. **Workshop on Identifying and Articulating Skills and Abilities**

Location: Virtual

Thursday, May 25, 2023

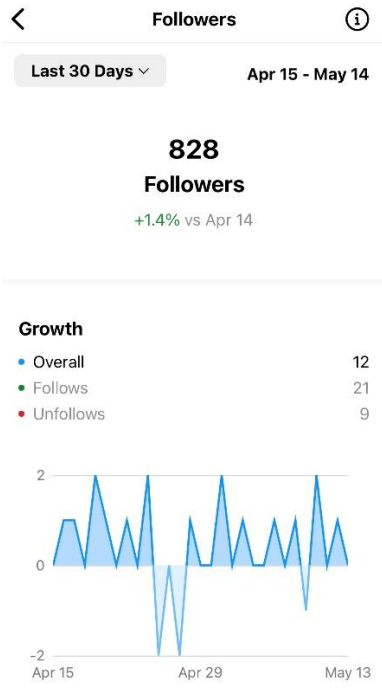
11 AM

Social Media:

Compared to the last time insights were recorded, there has been a positive increase in the following as well as content interaction on Instagram.

Instagram:

Insights – last 30 days:



Facebook:
Insights – last 30 days





As always, thanks for your attention. If you have any questions, concerns, or even guidance on how to better myself in this position, I would love to hear it. Please send me an email if you have any questions or comments about this month's report.

Manpreet Kaur

Activities and Communications Coordinator (ACC)

gsaact@uoguelph.ca



Office Manager – Michelle Morris

Hello Everyone,

Over the past month I have been working on the following:

1- Travel Grants

We have received many inquiries for financial assistance for Travel and DEI. Students were provided with the required information on the funding application process. Most applications submitted have been approved and funding completed. There are a few received over the past 2 weeks that are in the process of being approved.

2- GSA Executive Turnover/Transition

I have supported the GSA executive transition by providing the required information and documentation. All financial signing authorities are now updated. We have met as a team to discuss individual responsibilities and ongoing processes. Also, improvements to help streamline and accomplish our day-to-day workload.

3- CSA/GSA Joint Committee

Both CSA and GSA teams met to get better acquainted and discuss ways of collaboration. Some areas include:

- Student Health and Dental
- Compassionate Bursary
- Annual Student Memorial Service
- Safe Walk
- Late Night Bus Pass

Thank you,

Michelle



Arboretum Student Fee – GSA Board Position

The Arboretum has requested that the GSA Board of Directors take a position on the upcoming referendum on introducing a student fee for the Arboretum. Below, please find the referendum preamble and question:

Arboretum Student Fee Referendum

2022-2023

Referendum Preamble:

The Arboretum and Jane Goodall's Roots & Shoots: University of Guelph Chapter are proposing a joint fee to be paid by graduate students to increase capacity and student experience in The Arboretum. The internationally-accredited Arboretum, 400 acres of green space located on campus, focuses on habitat restoration, educating youth about nature, and conserving Canada's rare and endangered woody plant species. The Jane Goodall's Roots & Shoots: University of Guelph Chapter club is a recognized post-secondary chapter that aims to create engaged community leaders who understand sustainability issues and their impact on people, animals, and the environment.

The Arboretum does not currently collect any student fees. This is a new fee. The fee amount proposed is \$2.50 per semester from full-time graduate students and \$0.50 per 0.5 credit per semester from part-time graduate students.

The fee will fund a new Arboretum staff member to provide year-round, accessible, student-centred programming and services differentiated for graduate needs, and will increase inclusive access and offerings in various formats for UofG students in The Arboretum, as well as direct engagement with UofG students to access, experience, learn from, and participate in the Arboretum.

Separate referendums will be run by the Central Student Association (CSA) and by the Graduate Student Association (GSA).

GSA Question:

The University of Guelph Arboretum and Roots & Shoots: Guelph Chapter currently do not collect fees.

Do you support the collection of a student fee of \$2.50 per semester from full-time graduate students and \$1.50 per semester from part-time graduate students, to



expand student experience in the Arboretum and hire an employee to provide additional programming and services for students?

This fee will be collected each semester (Winter/Fall/Summer), beginning Fall 2023, and continue indefinitely, subject to increase annually per the Statistics Canada consumer price index average for Ontario. Students may not opt out of this fee.



Partnership with Navitas

The University of Guelph is exploring a partnership with Navitas. In short, the partnership would entail having Navitas establish a separate international college on university grounds, and recruit international students to this college. These students will study for a year under the new college, upgrading their admission requirements and completing the first-year of an undergraduate degree. Once complete, they will have the opportunity to transfer to the University of Guelph.

Since my last report to the Board about the Navitas issue, there have been two developments. First, the CSA and CUPE3913 are officially opposed to the partnership. Second, the university has indicated that they will have further meetings and town halls about this issue in the Fall, and that no decision regarding the Navitas partnership will be made before Winter 2024.

Below, I've included some resources that have been shared with me regarding the potential partnership. I've also included a summary of the partnership that I included in my VP Internal report for our April Board meeting.

-Nabhan

April Board Report Summary

Navitas is a for-profit corporation that seeks to enhance the recruitment of international students to universities, while supporting them through their first years of undergraduate instruction. Their business model relies on the recruitment of undergraduate students from abroad, who do not currently meet the admission requirements of the host university. Some of these admission requirements include English scores not being high enough, certain high school prerequisites not being completed or recognized, and lower than acceptable high school grades.

Navitas brings these students to the host university to complete their first year of undergraduate courses, and update their record to satisfy the missing admission requirements. Students brought to the host university through Navitas are not technically University of Guelph students. Instead, they become students of a separate accredited college that Navitas will found, using the University of Guelph name (e.g., Guelph International College). Once they complete their first year at this college, students may apply for entry into a University of Guelph undergraduate program (usually with second-year entry). If they are not admitted, Navitas provides a pathway to an associate degree through their College.



Navitas courses will be developed based on the learning outcomes of University of Guelph courses. Navitas will hire their own instructors for their courses, which may or may not include sessional positions for graduate students (it's unclear whether that will happen, but it has been floated as a possibility). According to the university, the development of these courses will not impede on the intellectual property of those who designed those courses. More on that later.

Navitas provides their own services to students under their umbrella. Details about these services have not been provided to us. There is a possibility that Navitas students be allocated services through the University of Guelph, but paid for by Navitas students through a separate student fee.

According to the university, Navitas student fees will be the same as University of Guelph international student fees. However, there have been reports that Navitas students pay much more than "regular" international students (see links under UGFA heading). Navitas and the university have denied these reports.

The amount of students recruited for the first year of this program is estimated to be around 30 students. The university is suggesting that only certain programs will include a Navitas pathway. No details on which programs would be affected.

Several Canadian universities have entered into partnerships with Navitas, including Simon Fraser University, University of Manitoba, Toronto Metropolitan University (formerly Ryerson and University X), and, most recently, Wilfrid Laurier University. Several other universities have discussed partnerships with Navitas, but chose not to partner with them. These include University of Western Ontario, Carleton University, and Dalhousie University. We are not aware of whether other universities are in communication with Navitas.

The university claims that Navitas is an important addition to their international recruitment strategy. Given their history in recruiting, onboarding, and retaining international students, the university is claiming that Navitas will be much more efficient in recruiting and supporting international students. In addition, Navitas pays a royalty fee for the use of University of Guelph facilities, which will generate additional income for the university. This is important from the university's perspective, given the issues surrounding their budget.

We have had several conversations with members of Senate and the University of Guelph Faculty Association (UGFA) about some concerns they have over the potential partnership. First, UGFA is particularly concerned about the use of faculty members' and sessional instructors' intellectual property regarding course design. In other



institutions, university course outlines have been used in part or in full to design Navitas courses. This impedes on the intellectual property of those who designed the initial course, as course outlines are not allowed to be used for commercial purposes (Navitas is in a grey area between commercial and academic).

UGFA is also concerned about how this partnership will affect sessional instructors and TA positions. In the future, if this becomes a much larger program, UGFA is concerned that there will be less sessional positions and TA positions for graduate students, as course sections are moved to the Navitas portfolio. If Navitas does recruit graduate students as sessionals, there are some concerns about the protections allocated to them, as they may not be covered under the

same unionized system as University of Guelph sessionals.

There are also concerns around the scope of a Navitas partnership. In other institutions, universities have delegated more tasks to Navitas, including taking on the equivalent of Open Education. Some are worried that letting Navitas into our schools will be giving it the opportunity to more easily shift difficult tasks to a for-profit company, leading to deeper privatization of the system.

The final major concern communicated to us is regarding the privatization of our education system in general. Allowing the university to partner with Navitas furthers the privatization of the university system, which may have deeper unexpected consequences. There is a fear that the little control we have in a partnership may lead to private companies chipping more and more from public universities, until the private system becomes more of a norm than a public system.

The GSA has not taken any stance regarding this issue. However, there was a recent meeting with union heads and some student leaders where a letter was asked to be signed denouncing the partnership plans. The GSA was not directly invited to sign that letter. However, we are in discussions with UGFA and other university and student groups to further examine this issue.

Links for more information:

Independent reporting

<https://theindependent.ca/journalism/faculty-students-fight-to-hold-post-secondary-privatization-at-bay/>

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/private-manitoba-college-misleading-students-some-say-1.1234870>



<https://www.guelphtoday.com/local-news/u-of-g-eyes-using-for-profit-company-to-recruit-foreign-students-6811479>

https://westerngazette.ca/news/western-looking-at-risky-for-profit-teaching-program-says-uwofa/article_0a534546-3e3d-11ea-986d-7364e62bae0e.html

Information from UGFA

<https://www.ugfa.ca/userContent/documents/Newsletters/Resisting%20Privatization%20of%20Teaching.pdf>

[https://www.ugfa.ca/userContent/documents/Newsletters/UGFA%20Response%20to%20Provost%20from%20March%2031%20\(1\).pdf](https://www.ugfa.ca/userContent/documents/Newsletters/UGFA%20Response%20to%20Provost%20from%20March%2031%20(1).pdf)

University Communications about Navitas

<https://maestro.uoguelph.ca/list/jc87gfpb/230331H/eikfkbxq42ot.vib?a0=26539>

Other organizations' responses to Navitas

https://westerngazette.ca/news/western-looking-at-risky-for-profit-teaching-program-says-uwofa/article_0a534546-3e3d-11ea-986d-7364e62bae0e.html

https://ulfa.nickpetlock.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Navitas-Position-Piece_For_-Lethbridge-University-Students-Union-1.pdf

https://ulfa.nickpetlock.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Navitas-Position-Piece_For_-Lethbridge-University-Students-Union-1.pdf



Event Funding Request – Whine and Dine

The GSA co-organized an event (called Whine and Dine) with the UofG Graduate Coalition on May 3rd. The coalition is composed of several graduate student members from different student organizations including the GSA, CUPE3913 and CFS, as well as other graduate student members not affiliated with any student organization. The purpose of the event was to discuss issues around graduate student funding with other graduate students. We also used the event to collect thoughts on funding and how to address funding gaps that graduate students currently face.

The event was well attended with over 50 participants. We collected a great amount of information on how graduate students feel about their current funding situation, what obstacles they face in receiving and keeping funding, how they are facing the current cost-of-living crisis, and what solutions they see as possible within the current framework. This information will be used to more effectively advocate for graduate students' financial well-being, and will inform future data gathering efforts. It also provided graduate students a safe space to vent about financial issues with other graduate students.

The total cost of the event was \$544.70. The event was partially funded by SLEF, in the amount of \$250 (the request was \$500). CUPE3913 contributed \$100 for the event. This leaves a shortfall of \$194.70. The student members of the UofG Graduate Coalition have paid for the rest of the event fees.

I requested that these funds be reimbursed by the GSA at our Executive Committee meeting on May 4th. After discussion, the Executive Committee agreed that this decision should be taken by the GSA Board of Directors, since this event was not solely organized by the GSA. The purpose of the proposed motion is to decide on whether the funds should be reimbursed by the GSA.

Thank you,

Nabhan

GSA President & CEO



Committee Reports

Admissions & Progress Committee

Meeting date:

Report:

Next Meeting: TBD

Advisory Committee on Student Mental Health & Wellness

Meeting date:

Report:

Next Meeting:

Academic Policies & Procedures

Meeting date:

Report:

Next Meeting:

Alcohol & Substance Abuse Advisory Committee

Meeting date:

Report:

Next Meeting:

Animal Care Committee

Meeting date:

Report:

Next Meeting:

Athletics Advisory Committee

Meeting date:

Report:



Next Meeting:

Board of Graduate Studies

Meeting date:

Report:

Next Meeting:

By-Laws & Constitution Committee (GSA)

Meeting date:

Report:

Next Meeting:

Co-Curricular Experiential Learning Integrity Committee (CELIC)

Meeting date:

Report:

Next Meeting:

Code of Ethical Conduct Committee

Meeting date:

Report:

Next Meeting:

Compulsory Fees Advisory Committee (CFC)

Meeting date:

Report:

Next Meeting:

Energy Conservation Working Group

Meeting date:

Report:



Next Meeting:

Experiential Learning Committee

Meeting date: N/A

Report: N/A (by Peter Duker)

Next Meeting: May 23

Finance Committee (GSA)

Meeting date:

Report:

Next Meeting:

Grad Lounge Sustainability Committee (GSA)

Meeting date:

Report:

Next Meeting:

Graduate Student Learning Initiative Committee

Meeting date:

Report:

Next Meeting:

Graduate Student Mental Health Curriculum Committee

Meeting date:

Report:

Next Meeting:

Hate Activity Committee

Meeting date:

Report:



Next Meeting:

Health & Dental Plan

Meeting date:

Report:

Next Meeting:

Homecoming Committee

Meeting date:

Report:

Next Meeting:

Hospitality Services Advisory Committee (HSAC)

Meeting date:

Report:

Next Meeting:

Human Rights Advisory Group

Meeting date:

Report:

Next Meeting:

Information Technology Student Advisory Committee

Meeting date: NA

Report: The committee did not meet this month.

Next Meeting: TBD, they did not mention

Judicial Committee

Meeting date:

Report:



Next Meeting:

Late Appeals Committee

Meeting date:

Report:

Next Meeting:

OUTline Committee

Meeting date:

Report:

Next meeting:

Parking & Traffic Appeals Committee

Meeting date:

Report:

Next Meeting:

Positive Space Committee

Meeting date:

Report:

Next Meeting:

Sexual and Gender-Based Violence Advisory Committee

Meeting date:

Report:

Next Meeting:

SHINE Mental Well-Being Week Committee

Meeting date:

Report:



Next Meeting:

Special Grants & Speakers' Fund Committee

Meeting date:

Report:

Next Meeting:

Student Assessment Committee

Meeting date:

Report:

Next Meeting:

Student Budget Committee

Meeting date:

Report:

Next Meeting:

Student Executive Council

Meeting date:

Report:

Next Meeting:

Student Leaders and Administration Committee

Meeting date:

Report:

Next Meeting:

Student Life Advisory Committee

Meeting date:

Report:



Next Meeting:

Student Life Award Committee

Meeting date:

Report:

Next Meeting:

Student Organization Policy Steering Committee

Meeting date:

Report:

Next Meeting:

Student Rights & Responsibilities Committee

Date:

Report:

Next Meeting:

Student Transit Committee (GSA/CSA)

Meeting date:

Report:

Next Meeting:

Teaching and Learning Network

Meeting date:

Report:

Next Meeting:

Town and Gown

Meeting date:

Report:



Next Meeting:

Student Experience

Meeting date:

Report:

Next Meeting:

Student Wellness Advisory Group (SWAG)

Meeting date: NA

Report: SWAG only meets 4 times a year and does not meet in the summer. However, as the Chair of SWAG, I have been having ongoing conversations with them about how to increase student engagement and help amplify the voices of students. We are currently in the process of revamping the SWAG Terms of Reference and will continue to make changes throughout the summer. Please follow up with me (Kimber Munford, kmunford@uoguelph.ca) if you have any questions or suggestions.

Next Meeting: NA

University Centre Board

Meeting date:

Report:

Next Meeting:

UC Digital Signage Content Review Committee

Meeting date:

Report:

Next Meeting:

Volunteer Committee (GSA)

Meeting date: The Volunteer Committee did not meet this month.

Report: N/A

Next Meeting: TBD



Departmental Updates

Animal Bioscience

Report:

Report by:

Biomedical Science

Report:

Report by:

Black Student Representatives

Report:

Report by:

Business Administration/Management

Report: The Lang Leadership Conference was held this month, to connect incoming/existing/graduating Masters students.

Report by: Yang Hoong

Chemistry

Report:

Report by:

Clinical Studies

Report:

Report by:

Computing & Information (Computer Science)

Report:

Report by:

Economics and Finance

Report:



Report by:

Engineering

Report:

Report by:

English & Theatre Studies

Report:

Report by:

Environmental Design & Rural Development

Report

Report by:

Environmental Science

We have concluded our graduate student wellbeing survey but need more time to compile it into a report. Please keep an eye out!

Report by: Kimber Munford

Family Relations & Applied Nutrition

Report:

Report by:

Fine Arts & Music

Report:

Report by:

Food Science

Report:

Report by:

Food, Agriculture & Resource Economics

Report:



Report by:

Geography

Report: Kayla Wicks and I have been (slowly) relaunching our departmental graduate student organization, the Geography Graduate Student Society, after an extended hiatus during the peak COVID days. So far, we have facilitated one speaker series event in which we had one of our resident postdocs give a 30-minute presentation followed by a Q+A. We intend to have a few more over the summer before launching a more regular series in the fall semester.

Report by: Peter Duker

History

Report:

Report by:

Hospitality, Food & Tourism

Report:

Report by:

Human Health & Nutritional Science (HHNS)

Report:

Report by:

Indigenous Student Representatives

Report:

Report by:

Integrative Biology

Report: Please see below for the highlights of IB this month! 😊

- **Integrative Biology has secured 5 NSERC student scholarships this year!!!** This is amazing news for not just IB, but the University of Guelph as a whole.
- **It's conference season!** The largest is the Canadian Society of Zoologists (CSZ) which is occurring in Saskatoon May 15th-19th. Many of our department



members (grad students and faculty) will be in attendance and many will also be presenting talks and posters, making this week a great networking and skill development opportunity!

- **The Graduate Student Symposium (GSS) took place on Friday, May 5th and was a huge success!** We had 4 talk sessions, a poster session, keynote speakers, and a wonderful catered lunch. It was a great day spotlighting the amazing work of all CBS graduate students.
- Planning for **Cardiovascular Research Day** (June 14th), organized by the Centre for Cardiovascular Innovations (CCVI) is in the works!
- **Departmental seminars wrapped up** for the semester this month. These will be paused during the Summer and resume in the Fall.
- **USRA students have started their summer work terms** in labs across the department.
- Planning is in the works for a **departmental retreat** sometime this Spring/Summer, where one of the major topics of discussion is finding a way to increase the minimum graduate student stipend within CBS.

Report by: Liz Manchester

International Student Representatives

Report:

Report by:

Languages & Literature

Report:

Report by:

LGBTQ2SIA+ Student Representatives

Report:

Report by:

Marketing & Consumer Studies

Report:



Report by:

Mathematics & Statistics

Report:

Report by:

Molecular & Cellular Biology

Report:

Report by:

Pathobiology

Report:

Report by:

Philosophy

Report:

Report by:

Physics

Report:

Report by:

Plant Agriculture

Report:

Report by:

Political Science

Report:

Report by:

Population Medicine

Report:



Report by:

Psychology

Report:

Report by:

Sociology & Anthropology

Report:

Report by:

PhD in Social Practice and Transformational Change (SOPR)

Report:

Report by:



GSA April 2023 Meeting Minutes

Hybrid Meeting

Wednesday, April 19, 2023: 5:30 p.m.

Present

Executive: Nabhan. Refaie, Acting President; Avneet. Singh, VP Finance; Rebecca. Randle, VP External

General Directors: David Bahrami & Janan Shoja Doost, Biomedical Science; Akierah. Binns, Mavis Opoku, Black Student Representatives; Yang Hoong, Karan Raj Singh, Business Administration/Management; Mingze Li, Economics and Finance; Kimber Munford, Samantha Reynolds, Environmental Science; Peter Duker, Geography; Isaac Toyin, History; Elizabeth Manchester, Integrative Biology; Dipendra Karki, Molecular and Cellular Biology; Jacob Yates, Pathobiology; Daniel Colcuc, Plant Agriculture

Regrets with Notification: Alice. Hinchliffe, General Director English and Theatre Studies; Aiyu. Liu, General Director, Family relations and Applied Nutrition.

Regrets without Notification: Manpreet. Kaur, GSA Activities and Communications Co-ordinator; Mitul Gohil, Engineering; Jeet Alpesh Shah, Engineering; Parabhsimranjeet Singh, Mohinder Sethi, International Students; Anmol Samra, Population Medicine; Colleen Davies, Psychology

Guests: Alexis Fabricius, CUPE #3913 Vice-President External; Ben Bradshaw, Assistant Vice President Graduate Studies; Mike Calvert, Senior Operations Manager, University Centre Services; Stephanie Lam, Department of Animal Biosciences; Alvaro De la Mora Pena, School of Environmental Sciences; Amanda Meuse, Kathleen Nolan, Integrative Biology; Joshua Budd, Human Health & Nutritional Science; Emily Minard, Psychology

Staff: Michelle Morris, GSA Office Manager

5:30 p.m. Call to Order: Sourav Hait, Chair

Territorial Acknowledgement

We acknowledge that the University of Guelph resides on the ancestral lands of the Attawandaron people and the treaty lands and territory of the Mississauga's of the Credit. We recognize the significance of the Dish with One Spoon Covenant to this land and offer our respect to our Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee and Métis neighbours as we strive to strengthen our relationships with them.



Today, this gathering place is home to many First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples and acknowledging them reminds us of our important connection to this land where we learn and work.

Approval of Agenda:

MOTION #1: B.I.R.T. The Agenda for the **April 19th, 2023 GSA Board Meeting, be approved as presented.**

Motioned by N. Refaie, seconded by J. Yates. Motion carries.

Approval of Minutes:

MOTION #2: B.I.R.T. the GSA Meeting Minutes of the **March 29th, 2023, be approved as presented.**

Motioned by J. Yates seconded by N. Refaie. Motion carries.

5:35 p.m. CUPE #3913: Alexis Fabricius, Vice-President External

A. Fabricius shared the following updates:

- Trivia Night scheduled for Friday April 20th from 5pm to 7pm. Good opportunity to connect and ask questions.
- Looking for new college and department Stewarts to increase Members of Good Standing in the Union. This will be a great way to get involved with CUPE.
- Current members asked to vote on Budget Motion.
- Current members recently voted on a Perks Survey to increase discounts for graduate students. Report on the outcome of this survey to be shared with students.

5:40 p.m. Faculty of Graduate Studies: Dr. Ben Bradshaw, Assistant Vice-President (Graduate Studies)

B. Bradshaw shared the following updates:

- Memo regarding programs – Intakes paused for 2023.
 - Overall, 8 graduate applicants are affected. Looking into alternatives and refunding of registration fees for those affected by the pause.
 - University Structural Deficit (expenses exceed revenues) is being corrected with cuts across the board and revenue initiatives.
 - Looking to revitalise and grow intake programs with low enrolments.
- Growing cost of living for Graduate Students
 - Inflation of Food and Rent with a 10% cut in Tuition by the provincial government. This is affecting all graduate students both funded and unfunded.
 - An advisory committee is being setup with representation from 7 colleges, faculty and graduate students. Require assistance from GSA to seek these graduate students.



Question Period:

- K. Nolan posed a question regarding the rationale behind the University of Guelph advertising small class sizes for undergraduate students and simultaneously cutting down on those small class sizes. B. Bradshaw responded stating small classes can be enriching. We need to strike a balance between a good learning environment and affordability. Bearing in mind no support from the provincial government after the 10% cut freeze which created the deficit. Looking to deliver on mandate keeping in mind the costs involved. K. Nolan further referred to the Biodiversity Capstone course she attended with a total of 6 members which proved to be very enriching one with a publication. Adding that faculty members teach multiple courses at times.
- K. Munford commented on the freeze in Tuition cuts and questioned the reasoning behind increasing tuition rather than petitioning for increased funding from the government. B. Bradshaw responded the important job is to acquire recognition that the tuition freeze is harming the sector and they were working with their counterparts to bring an end to this, also that grant funding is now frozen. University of Guelph uses an incremental budget model which is designed to enable us to remain comprehensive as opposed to other universities following an activity-based model which connects the activity of units to the revenue that pays for faculty. A non-collegial approach to budgeting. When resources do not match up to activity, costs need to be considered.
- K. Munford followed up on TA Sessional opportunities reducing. B. Bradshaw confirmed the following:
 - Class sizes - small sessions might be reduced as opposed to regular class sessions.
 - Graduate students can have guaranteed work as part of their offers.
 - No impact on TA ships since we require TA support for undergraduate teachings.
 - Graduate student packages will not be changed.
- K. Munford shared the idea of converting current salaries of those on the sunshine list to living wage. B. Bradshaw commented the current increase in starting salaries will eventually have most faculty on the sunshine list. A cut would mean we lose them to other universities.
- R. Randle sought clarification on the rationale behind not accepting additional students at this time of year rather than being delayed for later. B. Bradshaw responded this was necessitated based on our financial situation. Currently covering our deficits on reserves that are managed by our board which is now terminated.



5:55 p.m. Lookout Finances/Operations Update: Mike Calvert, Senior Operations Manager University Centre Services

M. Calvert shared:

- The Patio at the lookout is now open for the season.
 - Looking at some upgrades, adding a herb garden and improvements to furnishings.
 - Productive meeting with the sustainable committee to add a mural and artwork.
- Looking to gauge feedback from all graduate members to enhance the menu and services.
- Working with the GSA to open an online survey to all graduate members for feedback to enhance the experience. This information will be shared over the month of May.
- Annual Fiscal statements will be available and shared in the May Board Meeting

Feel free to reach out with any questions or part time employment inquiries.

6:05 p.m. Board of Governors Report: Jehoshua Sharma, Graduate Student Representative

J. Sharma was not in attendance to give an update.

6:05 p.m. Arboretum Fee Proposal: Justine Richardson, Director of the Arboretum
J. Richardson shared details on the arboretum giving more insight on the proposal.

- 400 acres on the edge of campus
- A place to walk, relax and connect with nature.
- 32 rare and endangered species
- Accredited at a level 4
- Small number of staff, with significant budget cuts.
- Increasing awareness on what role the arboretum can play on student experience
- The student fee of 2.50 cents for full time and 1.50 cents for graduate students will go towards specific programming tailored to graduate students.

If the graduate students choose to support the fees, the funds will be used towards grad student programming and working with representatives determined by GSA to create differential programs for graduate students.

K. Nolan inquired if donations would be accepted to support the Arboretum. Justine confirmed this was acceptable and donations were raised in the past for specific infrastructure projects.

MOTION#3: B.I.R.T. the GSA Board of Directors accepts the referendum question regarding the introduction of the Arboretum Student Fee

Motioned by N. Refaie seconded by D. Colcuc. Motion carries.



6:15 p.m. PDR Application–UoG Toastmasters: Daniel Colcuc and Alvaro De la Mora Pena

A. De la Mora Pena began the presentation by highlighting the main points:

- Leadership, Communication and Project Management (3 main skills for graduate students)
- UofG Toastmasters is a non-profit that helps members develop these skills
- Chartered in January 2020 with most members being graduate students
- Low membership fee of \$60
- Despite the high graduate turnover, they have 1-3 guests per week
- Aims to expand graduate outreach through promotional events
- Hosting collaborative events

Event details

- Scheduled to be held on Monday April 24th 7 to 9pm at Peter Parker Hall
- Confirmed registrants – 77; Expected to attend – 100+
- Free of cost
- Open to Students, Faculty and Staff

D. Colcuc touched base on the agenda of the event confirming

- Mainly a graduate student eve
- Working on communication skills that is essential for graduate students
- 2 Public Speaking Workshops
- Table topics – for impromptu speaking
- Multiple graduate student speakers
- Promotions through Posters, Eventbrite, social media and CSA Clubs
- Leigh West to promote to graduate student listserv
- Event is free
- Budget of \$1,297.47 includes costs for venue, catering, equipment, promotions and prizes

Question period

- P. Duker inquired what the membership fee included. D. Colcuc confirmed the fee was to have access to the curriculum created by Toastmasters Intl.
- K.R. Singh inquired about funding the event through the CSA. D. Colcuc responded they missed the CSA deadline to submit their request for funding. K.R. Singh further inquired how the event would be promoted to graduate students, D. Colcuc confirmed they have reached out to Leigh West in communications outreach to promote it through Listserv and hope to include their upcoming events in future GSA newsletters.
- N. Refaie had a question regarding recognition of the GSA should this PDR be approved. D. Colcuc confirmed this was possible.
- K. R. Singh shared his opinion with the board stating if Toastmasters are part of the CSA Club, they should be reaching out to the CSA first.
- A. Singh seeked clarification on the student membership prizes and proposed these prizes preferably be given to graduate students should the PDR be approved. N. Refaie agreed we could add this as a condition to the funding.



MOTION: Be it resolved; the GSA Board of Directors approves the PDR application of 1,297.47 for UofG Toastmasters with a condition that complimentary memberships be given to Graduate Students

Motioned by A. Singh, seconded by N. Refaie. Motion carries.

6:35 p.m. PDR Application–Science 2 Business Network: Joshua Budd

J. Budd shared the following event details:

- The Guelph Science 2 Business Network organizes outreach and networking events for graduates to complement their academic training.
- Aiming for students to gain professional training and garner connections between students and industry.
- Organized to assist graduate students strategize how to land a job
- Speaker Greg Langstaff hired to help students with various aspects of their job search. Live review providing realistic feedback.
- 208 graduate registrants
- The final count of 80 attendees on zoom
- PDR amount requested is to cover the cost of the speaker for one hour

Question Period

N. Refaie clarified the number of graduate and undergraduate students who attended the event. J. Budd responded they did not have an exact breakdown. With a total of 80 attendees, the event was advertised to graduate students and their events are also predominantly attended by graduates.

A. Singh, N. Refaie and D. Colcuc agreed this was a good initiative. D. Colcuc shared his opinion that GSA's involvement be recognized in their future events since this event has already taken place. R. Randle added recognition can be shared via social media or email to establish and show the GSA's support.

MOTION: Be it resolved; the GSA Board of Directors approves the PDR application of \$452 for Science 2 Business Network

Motioned by P. Duker, seconded by D. Colcuc. Motion carries.

6:45 p.m. PDR Application – College of Biological Science Graduate Student Symposium:
Amanda Meuser

A. Meuser shared details of the 18th Annual Graduate Students Symposium:

- Graduate student run conference, predominantly only for graduate students



- Opportunity for graduate students to connect and build networks with other students and faculty.
- Scheduled to held on Friday May 5th at the Science Symposium in a hybrid format
- Virtual presentations in the morning and in person afternoon session
- Free event including lunch, Afternoon Poster sessions with appetizers and a cash bar
- Keynote speakers and in person oral presentations
- Graduate students' social at the Lookout including free Trivia – revenue option for the GSA!
- Last year's totals:
 - 180 attendees last year
 - 134 grads and 46 non-grads
 - 130 in person
- Promotions through social media and posters

The requested amount of \$500 from the GSA would cover lunch for 22 students @\$23 per head.

Question Period

- K. Munford questioned if this event would be open to other students as attendees. A. Meuser confirmed this was possible just as attendance since the abstract deadline was now passed.
- R. Randle asked for a breakdown in the catering budget. A. Meuser explained the breakdown of rental, setup and cash bar. The food was a set amount of \$1000 for the afternoon. K. Nolan shared a breakdown of costs confirming free snacks were included, the food was ordered through hospitality and not bull ring which was the reason for the hike in cost.
- A. Singh requested clarification on the charges for the venue. A. Meuser shared a breakdown of individual costs explaining different scheduled sessions at the Atrium and Lookout which are charged separately. K. Nolan added the rental charges paid to the lookout technically benefit the GSA.
- K.R. Singh shared his concern of being unsure if LANG would benefit from this event. A. Singh responded appreciating K.R. Singh's concern, also stating every department is welcome to host their own events to support their individual departments. Expenses and details provided in the presentation were clear and he supports approval of the application, bearing in mind the GSA does have a reserve of \$5000 from the winter semester that can be utilized. P. Duker and K. Munford shared her acceptance.

MOTION: Be it resolved; the GSA Board of Directors approves the PDR application of \$500 for the College of Biological Sciences Graduate Student Symposium as compensation for the lookout fee for part of their event.

Motioned by R. Randle, seconded by J. Yates. Motion carries.



6:55 p.m. Departmental and Committee Updates

K. Munford spoke about a Nationwide walkout for support our science scheduled for May 1st

- Tri council scholarships have not increased since 2003
- Universities have based their stipends on these scholarships
- Organized by the university of guelph graduate coalition.
- Looking to spread the word to all students and departments

Question Period

P. Duker asked for clarification on the term “walkout” to share details with his department. K. Munford responded that the intention is for all students to gather by UC with signs.

7:05 p.m. Executive & Staff Reports

7:05 p.m. VP Internal Report – Nabhan Refaie

N. Refaie shared the following:

- Advisory Committee representing students and faculty for student stipends
- Executive Update on restructuring the GSA executive committee
 - Increasing ability to be more transparent
 - GSA Executives voted on approving the restructuring committee
 - The committee will generate recommendations that will be brought back to the board.
 - General communication will be sent out to seek participation in the committee
- Navitas
 - Full profit company that recruits international students to join UofG
 - Helps students update their skills in their first year and later allows them to apply for their second year of programming.
 - GSA has not taken any official position with this partnership
 - Other unions within the universities have spoken against this partnership
 - GSA is looking for discussions and views from the board on this partnership

K. Munford shared links in the meeting chat to give members more information on the subject. A. Singh agreed we need to educate ourselves to be able to extend support. R. Randle confirmed this was also discussed at the SLAM meeting. Details of the minutes could be shared if required. In view of the potential effects on graduate students with limited TA, it would be beneficial to reach out to other graduate student organizations to see how this has impacted them. N. Refaie confirmed he reached out to a few organizations awaiting responses and shared it would be beneficial to set up a time during the next board meeting to discuss GSA's involvement in this partnership. R. Randle followed up should we not hear back from



other organizations, reaching out to universities who have rejected the partnership would be beneficial. N. Refae confirmed this was initiated.

7:15 p.m. VP Finance Report – Avneet Singh

A. Singh shared the following updates:

- Meeting with new office manager to discuss improvements to the working of the GSA
- Restructuring committee
 - Transition documents to be created to help new executives transition into their respective roles
 - Changes to the Grants and Bursaries Application Process
- Graduate Student Consultation for Travel grants and Bursaries
 - Assisting graduate students with the completion of the DEI application
 - Upcoming meeting with DEI to follow-up on the process
- Recent launch of DEI Meeting
 - Met with DEI committee to discuss budget of \$4000 for promotion within GSA and graduate students.
 - Committee recommended simplifying the application process and making it less time consuming
 - Application submission deadline was April 14th 2023

K. Munford inquired about DEI related student concerns. A. Singh confirmed DEI was a new committee launched last month and they could connect to discuss the student concerns in detail.

7:30 p.m. VP External Report – Rebecca Randle

R. Randle shared the following updates:

- Summer Bus Pass
 - Summer Bus Pass fees included in graduate student tuition for those registered for Summer 2023.
- Sexual and Gender-Based Violence and Advisory Committee
 - The committee is working towards making sexual and gender-based violence training mandatory across the campus.
 - Training needs to be navigated through the central approval process and implementation through the registrar.
 - Currently requires voluntary participation in training.



7:40 p.m. Activities and Communications Co-Ordinator – Manpreet Kaur

M. Kaur was not in attendance to give an update.

7:40 pm Office Manager – Michelle Morris

M. Morris shared an update on her past 3 weeks in the role as GSA Office Manager stating her experience has been very engaging, learning and understanding the varied aspects of the job and the UofG. M. Morris appreciates the support she has received from all the GSA executives.

7: 50 p.m. Business Arising

N. Refaie spoke about an upcoming event scheduled to be hosted on May 3rd 12pm-1pm pm in collaboration with the Graduate Coalition, CUPE and CFS to discuss any issues faced by graduate students.

7:55 p.m. In Camera Session

MOTION #4: B.I.R.T. the Meeting move 'In-Camera' for discussion.

(Under the direction of the Chair - Staff, Members-at-Large, and Guests will be asked to leave the Meeting.)

Motioned by N. Refaie, seconded by K.R. Singh. Motion carries.

MOTION #5: B.I.R.T. the GSA Board Meeting 'In-Camera' session end.

Adjournment

The next GSA Board meeting is scheduled for May 17th, 2023. Please send regrets no later than May 16th, 2023 at 12 p.m.



GSA Executive Meeting Minutes

GSA Executive Meeting Minutes

May 4th 2023

Virtual Teams Meeting 1:00 pm to 2:30pm

Present: Nabhan Refaie, President; Rebecca Randle, V.P. External; Mingze Li, V.P. Finance; Emily Minard, VP Internal; Manpreet Kaur, Activities and Communications Coordinator; Michelle Morris, Office Manager

The meeting commenced at 1pm with N. Refaie welcoming the team and individual introductions.

Topics of Discussion:

1:10 – 1:20pm Executive Meetings: Purpose, Frequency, Format

N. Refaie discussed the following:

Purpose

- Past issues regarding executive meetings being unstructured and infrequent.
- The above is outlined in Bylaws 5.1.
- Executives to update the team on their individual portfolios
- Reach out for approvals from executive committee when required

Frequency

- Suggested by-weekly meetings, since monthly meetings do not suffice

Format

- Follow a structured and scheduled format

All executives were in favor of the above format changes.

1:20 – 1:30 pm Executive Expectations: Portfolios and Working Hours

Expectations:

- Expectations were unclear in the past.
- Focus on priorities and be more efficient in own roles
- Balances roles with study time
- Review roles in by laws to have a better understanding
- Ensure we understand each role and seek clarification if required.



Portfolios:

VP Internal

- Academic related issues and queries
- GSA Operational issues and queries

VP External

- Maintaining relations with external student organizations (e.g., other university bodies) and internal organizations (e.g., CSA and Transit)
- R. Randle asked for clarification on the aspect of the VP External's involvement in summarizing elections and OSAP news. N Refaie suggested VP Internal look into the by-laws and confirm the expectations.

Activities and Communications Coordinator

- Oversee GSA Newsletter and all Social Media Platforms.
- To coordinate with VP internal for the newsletter and VP External for social media

GSA President

- Setting Priorities
- Providing Direction

N. Refaie shared his opinion on the President not being involved in each executive's portfolio thereby ensuring each one is autonomous in their own roles.

Office Manager

- Foundation of the GSA
- Managing daily routine administrative and financial tasks and activities
- Support system of the GSA
- Committee assigned to each GSA Executive
 - President – Grad Lounge Sustainability Committee
 - VP Internal – By Laws Committee
 - VP External – Transit Committee
 - Activities and Communications Coordinator – Volunteer Committee

Working Hours

- Ensure executives use their time efficiently. N. Refaie spoke about the Project by experiential learning and confirmed GSA executives will have their time spent at GSA attached to their transcripts



- Weeks hour expectations
 - GSA President – 15 – 20 hrs. / week
 - VP Internal, External and Finance – 10 – 15 hrs./ week
 - Activities and Communications Coordinator – No more than 10 hrs./week as per by-laws
 - Office Manager – Full time 35 hrs./week
- Need to discuss and address the situation if responsibilities exceed expected working hours.
- Email and Calendar
- Official GSA accounts to be the main point of contact.
- Regularly update GSA calendar with availabilities
- Ensure emails are achieved in appropriate folders for ease of accessibility
- In person and Virtual Office days
 - Look into office hours to be more accessible to graduate students and have a physical presence.
 - Pick a weekday to be in office on a regular basis

R. Randle suggested having a virtual office schedule would also be a good idea to open the line of communication for students. Some flexibility on in office days is required/

N. Refaie suggested a rotating schedule between the team. M. Li clarified if this new schedule would start in fall since he could not commit to in office hours over the summer. However, a virtual schedule would work. N. Refaie confirmed an in-person requirement for financial sign offs. M. Morris added grants and funding communication and approvals could be dealt with virtually. R. Randle suggested a google calendar for easy access to the teams' schedules.

1:30 - 1:40 pm Priorities for the Summer: What are your priorities?

- Plan for work to be accomplished over summer
- New Re-structuring Committee in order to be more transparent with graduate students.
- Improvement with our communications to students
- Build on internal and external relationships across campus

R. Randle suggested clearing up the boardroom to make it more functional for a hybrid setup. Also, to have the counselling and mental health area up and running.

N. Refaie confirmed his intention of reaching out to each executive individually to discuss their priorities.



1:40 – 1:50 pm GSA Involvement with CFS

- R. Randle shared links via the Teams chat to shed more light on the topic.
- Majority of Student population may not be in favor
- The CFS meeting structure involved:
 - Monthly or Bi-monthly meeting in different cities
 - Travel and Accommodation expenses not covered by CFS
 - No Hybrid Option
 - Mostly caters to undergraduate issues
 - Attended by government executives and student organization representatives.
 - Biggest goal achieved of reducing student tuition.
 - Current student fee increased from 4 – 10\$

R. Randle asked if this is a good investment for GSA executives and a useful prioritization of our time and money.

N. Refaie shared thoughts of opting out if it does not add value to the GSA or only attend when it relates to Graduate students. Speaking to other internal student bodies for their views would be beneficial. E. Minard shared her agreement.

1:50 – 2:10 pm Chair Discussion

- Issues with the inefficiencies of the current chair
- Past issues regarding the inabilities
- Past conversations with chair to confirm and discuss
 - E. Minard confirmed there is disorganization with the current chair.
 - M. Morris added her opinion on the chairs' inability to cope as a host and lack of time management.
 - R. Randle shared a chair needs to be able to manage the meetings and disagreements more authoritatively. Since there is an expense in having a chair for every meeting, not getting value for this is a key area of concern.
 - N. Refaie added that there have been attempts to train the chair, with little success
 - N. Refaie discussed options of changing the chair as per the by-laws.
 - Getting K. Nolan to host the upcoming meeting until V.P Internal is familiar with the process.
 - R. Randle added getting one of the executives to cover makes sense until a new chair is appointed by the end of June.
 - M. Li suggested reducing the time at the board meetings.
 - N. Refaie asked for a vote to remove the current chair. A unanimous vote for removal was received.



2:10 – 2:30 pm Other Executive Updates/Questions

- M. Morris shared updates on the transition reminding the executives of the collection of office keys and token and that she will be away for the next week.
- N. Refaie shared an update on the Wine and Dine event held on Thursday May 3rd at the lookout.
- 50 – 60 students attended the event.
- Expense for the event was a total of \$544.70.
 - \$ 250 – SLEF Funding
 - \$100 – CUPE Donation
 - \$50 – offered by K. Nolan

Can the balance be covered by the GSA? R. Randle suggested we discuss this with the board since the total exceeds the allocated amount of \$150. M. Li suggested we gain more information on the by-law policies before we present them to the board. E. Minard agreed.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 2:36pm.