



**GSA COUNCIL**

Notice of Meeting

Wednesday, November 6, 2019

4:30PM – 6:30PM

NH 3318

**AGENDA**

Time	Item	Action
4:30PM	<b>1. Speaker's Welcome and Opening Remarks</b>	-
4:33PM	<b>2. Adoption of the Agenda</b>	For Approval
4:35PM	<b>3. Attendance</b>	-
4:40PM	<b>4. Approval of the Minutes of the Previous Meeting</b> a. August 7, 2019 b. September 4, 2019 c. October 2, 2019	For Approval
4:45PM	<b>5. Presentations</b> a. Federal Election Review – Matthew Rafuse ( <i>15 mins</i> ) b. Advocacy Training – Kevin McKay ( <i>10 mins</i> ) c. GSA Social Media Training – Zabeen Khamisa ( <i>10 mins</i> )	For Information
5:20PM	<b>6. Small Group Discussion</b> a. What does success look like for the GSA Council? b. Does the structure of Council require updating to achieve success? c. Are there Winter-term initiatives that Council can champion?	Discussion
6:30PM	<b>7. Adjournment</b>	-
<b>RECEPTION FOR COUNCIL</b> <b>6:30PM – 8:00PM</b> <b>Grad House, Second Floor</b> <b>Free Food + Drinks!</b>		

## MINUTES

### 1. Speaker's Welcome and Opening Remarks 4:30

*Billedeau takes the chair and calls the meeting to order at 4:30.*

### 2. Adoption of the Agenda 4:31

**Motion to approve the agenda (Billedeau/Haque). Approved unanimously.**

### 3. Attendance 4:32

*Billedeau and Little take the attendance.*

### 4. Approval of the Minutes of the Previous Meeting 4:33

a) October 2, 2019

**Motion to approve the minutes (Haque/Sargent). Approved unanimously.**

### 5. JRPC – Overview and Nominations 4:34

*Call for a nomination was opened to the floor; no volunteers at this time.*

### 6. Presentations 4:36

a) Federal Election Review

*A presentation was delivered on the results of the 2019 federal election. Election results, initial actions, broad trends, and surprises were commented upon. Impacts on graduate students: climate action, research and innovation, and affordable education.*

*A document summarizing the relationship between federal policy for affordable education and provincial cuts to OSAP - and the implications for graduate students - may be helpful to disseminate to the student body. It may also represent an opportunity for lobbying by the GSA to the provincial government for interest-free payment periods. In 2019, public health agencies from Waterloo and Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph regions were proposed to form a collaboration related to climate action; this may be a team the GSA can investigate further for environmental initiatives.*

b) Advocacy Training

*The executive manager presented on the advocacy efforts carried out by the GSA. The GSA helps students with Policy 70: Petitions and Grievances through communication initiatives, service navigation, and direct assistance, such as support in meetings. Policy 33: Ethical Behaviour is another relevant policy that the GSA may assist students with. Clarifying policy, identifying problems, providing moral support, and brainstorming solutions are general activities that the GSA fulfills for students. Results from the Student Advocacy Project were shown. Advocacy efforts are funded through the GSA Representation Fee and Advising Fee, which are optional.*

*A flow chart is being created for certain policies that outline problems students may encounter and the corresponding services and solutions. There are mechanisms for a student to anonymously report problems with a supervisor or*

*instructor. If a student opts out of the advising fee, they can only consult with lawyers if they pay an hourly consulting fee. Opting back in to fees is being considered currently.*

c) GSA Social Media Training

*The director of communications and events presented on the social media strategy for the GSA. Increasing communication and visibility of the GSA and the Grad House through various social media platforms is an overarching goal. Call for councilors and directors to engage in social media efforts by liking and following GSA content, as well as posting pictures and tagging the GSA during events. Another platform that is useful to the GSA is LinkedIn.*

*The GSA has access to Reddit and a strategy for utilizing it is being constructed. Determining how many followers are actual graduate students is not possible due to anonymity of accounts and information.*

**Commented [JL1]:** The Board has a rule about not disclosing internal strategies in public meeting minutes. What are your thoughts on that as it relates to this part here?

## 7. Small Group Discussion

5:29

*The interim speaker spoke to the responsibilities of the role, as well as plans for the near future. Issues spoken to included activities, membership, and governance.*

a) What does success look like for the GSA Council?

- *Formation of a union, which would allow graduate students to have greater advocating power. Realities of the formation of a union were discussed, e.g. relationship with University, TA compensation, GSA role as a union in bylaw, funding changes, and bargaining power for working conditions. In the early winter, a presentation will be delivered summarizing the pros and cons of unionization. Councilor champion for this issue: Sargent.*
- *Communicating with graduate students; gauging how aware the GSA is of student needs and transparency of addressing issues. Director of Student Engagement will collect data on this issue and present it to council. No councilor champion to work with the director of student engagement currently; discuss during next meeting.*
- *Review the scope of political positions and evaluate which are relevant to graduate students. Councilor champion for this issue: van Dyck.*
- *Attempt to create a more standardized method for addressing student needs across faculties and departments. The feasibility of including each department in a 2-hour council meeting was noted as a problem. Councilors can send in the departmental issues they would like to discuss a week before the agenda is released; overlapping needs can be consolidated by a volunteer. No councilor champion to work with the director of student engagement currently; discuss during next meeting.*

b) Does the structure of Council require updating to achieve success?

- *Slack appears to enhance the efficiency of meetings; maintaining uptake of this platform is helpful. Roberts Rules may not be conducive to encouraging new members to speak up during meetings; they may feel uncomfortable by the formal structure. Deliberations on alternative procedures will be discussed in future meetings.*

- *High councilor turnover was addressed. To improve perceptions of GSA efficacy, it may be beneficial to focus on 1-3 main objectives at a given time and report on tangible progress of these goals. PDF of policy overview is available on the GSA website.*
- *Informal events can improve engagement and collegiality, such as attending the grad house after meetings.*
- *Once more councilors are obtained, how do we collect feedback for each department in an efficient manner? One solution is to have department representatives submit a brief report to be placed directly into the minutes.*

c) Are there Winter-term initiatives that Council can champion?

- *Political positions may be prioritized differently within and across departments, but only so many can be addressed at one time. Councilors can seek input from their constituents about their priorities for political activities, which can then be presented to the larger council in January. It was suggested that a survey could be disseminated to rank political positions. Robbins and Grimmer will lead a discussion about the pros and cons of a survey in the December meeting.*
- *'Meet the GSA' event at the grad house. Training for new members, such as meeting procedures and role expectations. Begin concerted work on the strategic plan.*

## **8. Adjournment**

**6:41**

*Meeting adjourned at 6:41*