



GSA COUNCIL

Notice of Meeting

August 5, 2020

4:00PM – 7:00PM

Zoom Meeting (Details in Outlook Invitation)

AGENDA

Time	Item	Action
4:00PM	1. SPEAKER'S WELCOME AND OPENING REMARKS	-
4:05PM	2. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA	For Approval
4:06PM	3. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS	For Information
4:07PM	4. ATTENDANCE	For Information
4:08PM	5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES a. July 8, 2020	For Approval
4:10PM	6. REPORTS a. Update from the Board – Stirling (10 mins) b. Update on the Fall semester – Casello (20 mins) c. Advising the President – Samuel (50 mins)	For Discussion
5:30PM	7. PRESENTATION a. Municipal Housing Issues – McCulley, Revington (15 mins) b. Ends of the GSA – Robbins (15 mins) c. Governance – Hanmer (30 mins)	For Discussion
6:30PM	8. UPDATE ON COUNCIL'S JULY E-VOTE (20 mins)	For Discussion
6:50PM	9. ADJOURNMENT	-
—		

MINUTES

1. Speaker's Welcome and Opening Remarks 4:00

Robbins took the chair and called the meeting to order at 4:00. Robbins commenced the meeting by beginning with a land acknowledgement, recognizing that this is one small step towards decolonization and reconciliation. Robbins also reviewed the speaking protocol, going over new stipulations of using +1 and/or "I agree with _____ about _____". Robbins discussed the need to ensure respect and accessibility when speaking, and that those who wished to voice concerns anonymously due to discomfort, to message him.

2. Adoption of the Agenda 4:04

Motion to approve the agenda. Approved unanimously.

3. Declaration of Interests

Robbins reviewed the agenda quickly and asked if anyone wishes to discuss anything further before continuing on with the agenda. No questions or concerns were raised.

4. Attendance 4:05

Sgandurra took the attendance.

5. Approval of Minutes 4:05

a) August 5, 2020

Approved unanimously.

6. Reports 4:05

b) Update from The Board – Stirling 4:05

The Board received feedback for GP-10,16 and accepted into public minutes – the Board is meeting tomorrow to discuss policy. The Board needed some housekeeping and non-contentious policy changes, communicated those to the Speaker. The final year end reports from the Board and joint committed were accepted into the public minutes. The AGM has not been formally announced, but an informal date has been set. The Board received Council's decision regarding the unionization vote and will be moving forward with Council's decision. The July council report to the Board did not contain any requests, so the Board Chair asked if there are any questions. The

Councilor from Philosophy asked about the legal student fee being non-optional and wants to hear about why that happened so quickly since Council previously raised concerns. The President stated that there were multiple attempts to reach out to one of the Councilors to discuss the specifics of the concerns, but never heard back, and therefore decided to go ahead with the legal program based on the referendum. Any previous concerns that were articulated to the Board has been addressed to the best of their ability. As far as opting out goes, one is able to opt out later rather than at the time of payment (and therefore get a refund). The only optional opt-out fee is the Grad House fee. The President reminded all Councilors to save similar questions for the President's update.

Robbins proposed a modification to the agenda to move to discussion of ramifications to Unionization Vote. Passes Unanimously 4:12

7. Update on the Council's July E-Vote – Robbins 4:13

Total votes were 33, with about 7 being invalid (incomplete, ineligible). The results of the invalid votes did not sway the results. 22 voted in favour of unionizing with CUPE

A Board member was hoping to reach out to those who submitted invalid entries in order to prevent this from happening again in the future (specifically for those whose student numbers did not match the names so that the GSA can avoid any systematic issues).

Councilor Germanic & Slavic Studies asked if any issues could have occurred based on a browser issue. Speaker states that he double checked it in multiple browsers on both PC and mac, and therefore did not foresee any issues. Councilor of Germanic & Slavic Studies suggests making instructions more clear for selecting browsers, which Robbins responded was included in the initial email.

Councilor of Mechanical & Mechatronics Engineering asked for clarification on the results – there were two questions in the survey, but the results for the second question only had 3 results.

Speaker clarified that the results were broken up into the four possible responses across both questions.

Senator asked if the results been communicated to the administration, and does the GSA know their reaction?

The President answered that the GSA has communicated results to admin, and had been told that there will be no major impact in the relationship, and rather that the admin wishes to keep working with the GSA regarding graduate student issues

Motion that the data for Council's e-vote on unionization be destroyed. Seconded by GSA President. (19y/0n). Passes.

Councilor of Philosophy asked how the GSA can destroy the evidence if it has already been presented it to Administration. Speaker clarifies that he means to destroy names associated with the numbers/data (to maintain confidentiality).

Councilor Germanic & Slavic Studies asked if the breakdown was shown to the administration or just the numbers. The Vice President responded that no confidential information (i.e. who voted for what) was shared with the administration.

Speaker proposed to continue the meeting with the next section of the Agenda while awaiting for Casello to arrive

8. Reports Continued

b) Advising the President – Samuel 4:23

Thanked councilors who shared information from their constituents. Would like to focus on issues and concerns from constituents, level of engagement with constituents during the Spring term, particularly because of COVID and any issues that came out of that, and finally support needed to represent constituents effectively (i.e. social media

or resource support). Beginning with Councillors in Math, the President called on said councillors to present their concerns. No Math councillors spoke up. The President called upon Environment Councillors.

Councilor of School of Environment, Resources, & Sustainability (SERS): began with thanking the President for this feedback approach, as it better informs their role as a councilor as well as allowing for a more direct way to speak to constituent concerns. Began in April a “what do you need survey” to try to gauge what constituents needed due to COVID. Held a department and faculty wide town hall, and an open doors meeting as well as an anonymous google form in July to share concerns and issues. Actively hosting dialogue with students, administrators, and directors of the department to share updates and concerns. In terms of actual issues, a big one that relates to quality of work and productivity surrounds mental health issues. Many students have expressed issues with limited direct access to resources and field work. There was some issue with communication with administrators and the department at the beginning of the term, but managed to establish monthly updates. Constituents are looking for accommodations such as extended funding and extended research deadlines, mainly due to the increased costs caused by issues of COVID. Much of the funding for domestic students comes from the dean’s Doctoral initiative, and since the research is delayed, there is concern that the funding will end before the research is finished. Constituents have also expressed interest in being involved in anti-racism on campus, but that structural/institutional issues prevent barriers for them being able to do so. There is also concern for the health and safety risk for returning to campus.

President addressed Councilor of School of Environment, Resources, & Sustainability: Re: the email sent out about mandatory return to work training, the university did acknowledge the issues and that it could have been handled differently, so now students should notice that emails are being sent to all graduate students, even if said students are not TAing.

c) Update on the Fall semester – Casello

4:32

Discussion on return to campus: What has happened is that the Office of Research throughout the summer has been receiving applications to re-open spaces for research, including graduate student research. It started out with an extremely limited definition of which research was going to be allowed – specifically for COVID-related research or those who would experience a substantial loss. As the province began to open up, the office of research began to broaden this definition to early career research as well as graduate students who are near the end of their program who needed access of their facilities to complete their program. The PIs would have needed to apply with a work safety plan so that students could return and remain safe. Currently, with the most recent relaxations from the province, the definition has been opened again, and PIs can apply for any student. However, there is an issue with common spaces, such as a research lab that only has one washroom shared between several other labs. It is necessary to make sure that all safety measures are in place to ensure social distancing on campus. A physical need to be on campus is still a requirement, then one can apply. But if it is just for office use space, that is not yet approved in order to ensure less people are on campus. Some of the return to office space is being handled at the faculty level. Field research requests have been coming in and are being vetted in the same way – most of those have been for in-province activities, anything that requires inter-provincial travel are being approved by the President of the University himself.

Councilor of Germanic & Slavic Studies asked regarding working from an office – if some students have accessibility reasons for needing/wanting to work in an office, are there any accommodations in place for them?

Casello stated that if there is a technology, wellness, or health reason, that is absolutely something that one can approach a supervisor for and can be accommodated

Councilor of Biology asked regarding office space – there's confusion in Biology as to how much students can use office space while waiting for experiments to finish. What is the policy?

Casello stated that they are trying to be careful. Suppose a student has an experiment, and another start in 30 minutes – it seems counter intuitive to be forced to leave the building. If a student is there by themselves and social distancing, it should not be a concern. The University wants to work collectively towards the goals, which is returning to research in the safest way.

Councilor of Global Governance flagged in terms of accessibility constraints, those who struggle with childcare constraints. Is the University addressing childcare issues when considering these applications? And further, for international travel – are there any updates?

Casello stated that the University wants to be respectful of everyone's working environment. If working from home is difficult, the University does have an academic readiness bursary for students who have incurred costs from having to work from home, which is intended for technology and childcare costs. Unfortunately, the University can't do much in terms of international travel, but it can provide resources to help support remote research for international travel or work with the international partner to bring the resource to Waterloo, or help find a new partner to ensure graduation.

Councilor of Kinesiology asked if there are there any updates for when the University thinks human participant data collection will be back?

Casello stated that there is eagerness to work with those who have ethics approval for that type of research – reach out to Julie from the Office of Research directly and she will help, but students should expect formal guidance within the coming weeks

Councilor of Kinesiology asked is there a sequential order in terms of the type of participants for human research? Or should councilors/graduate students reach out to Julie Joza?

Casello responded: there is going to be a need for safety plans, and there will be scrutiny of said plans, so the requirements will most likely change depending on the type of participants. But definitely reach out to Julie to share your ethics approval number.

The Speaker asked questions from Slack – what about students who are outside of Canada and unable to do online Tas?

Casello responded: if a student is an incoming graduate student who has never been to Canada, the normal process is that said student is given a study permit while in their home country, and then said student would get a SIN number when they arrive in order to pay. Finance has said considering students as independent contractor is too high a risk. If a student cannot get a SIN and have never been to Canada, they will be unable to be a TA/RA this term. However, if a student has a guaranteed funding package, they will be re-shuffled and they will TA/RA in another term. If a student is an international student and have a social insurance number, but they're not returning to Canada, there

is a risk because they are subject to their home country's taxation laws that the university will be unable to help with. That student can still most likely be employed as a TA or RA, but a final decision has not been made as of yet. So far, only those who are precluded from being a TA or RA next term are those who do not have a SIN.

Councilor of Physics and Astronomy asked: Access to COVID training on Workday - students have had to request their own training completion records and if that has been addressed? Maybe it is because students are not considered employees in every term according to Workday?

Casello responded that it has not been brought up but making a note of it. Will be checking in on that.

Councilor of Germanic & Slavic Studies asked: Students noted that in some departments, students got a blanket email: if students are not in Canada, they cannot TA. This has caused a lot of scrambling and panic to students. Is there a way that students could receive an update along the lines of what councilors have just been told?

Casello responded that one challenge is that faculties have different needs and move at different paces. For instance, one department has taken on way more undergraduates than it ever has to help meet the operation budget. Therefore, some faculties have moved faster than the rest of the university. Therefore, the University is hoping to get this information into student's hands as soon as possible.

Councilor of Mechanical & Mechatronics Engineering asked: considering that students may have already been to Canada, and therefore have a SIN, but are currently not in Canada and for those who don't have guaranteed funding?

Casello stated that it's not confirmed, but that the University thinks that those who are eligible because they have a Canadian SIN and a Canadian bank account, they should be able to be paid and therefore be TAs. However, if said students get a scholarship, but there's no way to pay them, the student's account will simply maintain a positive credit until payment can be issued. That being said, there may be a challenge with TAing/RAing if there's no way to send pay to said students.

Casello added an additional update: during the fall term, the expectation is that the University will have a return to campus for graduate students. A Board of Governors meeting will be happening this week to get a sense of which services will be operating remotely and which students will be open during the fall. There will be some in-person courses operating during the fall as well. The University does want to invite back as many graduate students as possible, particularly research students, while maintaining safety.

c) President's update Continued

5:02

Councilor of School of planning. Had a town hall between school of planning, the DGSA, and themselves. The School of Planning sent out a survey to students. Within this faculty, students are not engaging online as much as initially hoped for. Mainly low attendance to online events. Out of approximately 100 students, there are many who did/do not live in Waterloo even prior to COVID. Concerns relating to tuition fees being quite high even going into the fall semester, particularly for international students. Students are also concerned about their delays for their research, as well as being unable to complete internships and access studio spaces/complete studio courses. This is an example of something that did not translate well into the remote atmosphere. There is also an issue with not getting clear information from administrator and general

communication issues. Also concerns with mental health issues, and projecting it becoming even more challenging. Started and will continue to send out email updates to students to help streamline communication.

Councilor of School of Environment Enterprise and Development – sent out a survey about student concerns. Had a good response, but many of the responses have been discussed by others (financial issues, etc). Many brought up delayed milestone extensions. Concerns for PhD students in particular who rely on GDI funding from faculty who now have to do at least one more term from the fall and they don't have that funding. Working with director for some possible back up funding. Also issues with suitable workspaces at home. Concerns have also been raised with field work/data collection from humans.

Councilor of Global Governance – engagement has been somewhat low. Survey responses did ask for payment holiday on tuition – the bigger takeaway is that students are asking for extensions on milestones and funding. Pushing the administration to allow some travel, even if it isn't all travel, for research.

Councilor of Statistics & Actuarial Sciences – nothing new to add, most of the concerns have been brought up by other directors beyond issues of international students getting stuck.

The President calls on Faculty of Arts:

Councilor of Philosophy – engagement: the PGSA has been in communications with entire student body; have been communication through Facebook, weekly email updates, and online meetings with constituents. In terms of support, funding, timeline extensions, accommodations with mental health concerns, many students have moved away from KW and would like to see continued support for remote learning and remote work. Would like ways for students to use resources outside of UW and closer to where they live (i.e. accessing a different library as things begin to open up).

Councilor of English Language & Literature – Engagement: the DGSA did a survey initially for COVID concerns - had a lot of responses. Also had our yearly survey and our AGM. Things have been ramping up, but there was some concern that students didn't initially respond, but created a discord channel that is constantly being used. There is a high degree of insecurity in terms of online learning and online teaching. A lot of people were having issues with the online learning situation and felt they didn't get a lot of support in that process, especially in the way Tas have been heavily encouraged to be lenient towards Undergraduates. Students are feeling lost in terms of how to transition into online teaching. Mental health is also an issue. There's been a lot of support for working towards anti-black racism. A task force of students was created and the department has now created a department level task force due to these concerns. There's an issue with fees – a sense of dissatisfaction with full tuition fees even though the university is not functioning at full capacity (at the university level)

Councilor Germanic & Slavic Studies – small department, with about half being abroad. Most concerns are relating to international students, particularly those from Germany who have moved back. Students were concerned about TAships because they weren't told that before leaving and now will not be able to come back. Concerns with funding and time limits on research and milestones – it adds barriers for students, with some students going inactive and others dropping out. Students have not been very responsive throughout the summer, but hoping that with the summer ending that will get better. Pushed department to do a survey for graduate students in terms of returning to work. Concerns about mental health as well, as well as office space post-COVID closures.

Councilor of History – A few international students who were set to start this fall who have deferred for a year. Library opening up has been a big deal, and are working with librarians to get access to the other libraries. A lot of students are also working with archivists to scan documents from the archives, which has caused administrative and cost issues. Most other concerns have been voiced. Engagement has been pretty good.

Councilor of Accounting & Finance – issues that inhibit the natural flexibility of the program. There was some trust issues, but the GSA has done well to address those. Would like for more events to be done online to boost engagement.

President moved to general Q and A session:

Thanked all councilors sharing all concerns and updates, but if anything comes up, councilors are encouraged to alert the President directly.

Councilor of Computer Science – What about the Graduate House? There is a price for those who can opt-out, but it would be good if there are any services similar to that that are not accessible to students if those can also be opted out.

President: the GSA shut down the grad house in the Spring term and therefore did not charge fees. In the fall term the GSA is collecting the fee because the GSA is intending to open it with all the restrictions and guidelines in mind. Trying to keep services as consistent as possible with relaxations of restrictions moving forward. Students also have access to the graduate house space without needing to purchase any food, so keeping it open as study space is also available. Sent instructions for the opt-out process for graduate house. The GSA has put a pause on room bookings for the Graduate House.

Vice President added that the GSA still working with campus and regional stakeholders to ensure the Grad House meeting all COVID-19 hospitality requirements. Coupons are not being distributed, but if grad students paid their fees, they would get a small discount (the number is being decided). The Grad House will be operating on reduced hours in the fall term. Fall hours will most likely be 11am-6pm, focusing on take-out, offering a study space during working hours. Full details will be communicated to all members in the coming two weeks, as the GSA is still working with campus admin for what can and cannot be done.

Councilor of Pharmacy – Suggestion: to support what the Councilor from German and Slavic Studies said about having the Bursary more widely known to constituents, and wants to ensure our students are taking advantage of these, especially as they are first come first serve.

Councilor of Global Governance – the GSA newsletter noted that the details will be coming soon with the GRT fees, and was wondering when constituents should be looking out for that.

President – yes, the GSA is collecting the fall fees for the GRT. It is universal (not able to opt-out), but students can apply for a refund if they are elsewhere and therefore not using the GRT. Students would have to send details to the GSA and have the GSA will verify some information and look into refunding the student. Criteria for the rationale is: if a student is a research based student not in the region and said student is working on field work outside of the region; if a student holds certain permits for accessibility; details will be provided once the agreement has been signed. The flexibility in this agreement with GRT allows for every graduate student to get a refund once per year.

Councilor Germanic & Slavic Studies – declared status off campus through GSPA, so if students who have done that, could that be proof through the registrar and be used as rationale?

President – generally fees are assigned to students who are registered full time and who are in the region. Those who are not in the region but are full time would have probably been assessed a fee previously, but with this new program, that would absolutely qualify.

Speaker on behalf of a different councilor who was not here: if supervisors who may be cash strapped will have to be the ones to provide guaranteed funding?

President – it has been reiterated that the expectation that the supervisor should provide funding, but if they cannot, support will be provided to students by other means. Encourage students to reach out to the GSA or associate Deans in their faculty, and the GSA can step in and support. Sometimes students do try to reach out and get support without the GSA and sometimes the response isn't the best, but when they come to the GSA the GSA is able to step in.

7. Presentation

5:40

Speaker proposes a 3-minute recess to wait for the next presentation to begin. Passes unanimously.

a) Municipal Housing Issues – McCulley, Revington

5:45

Key takeaways: Back in March, McCulley and Revington received the research contract, as they are both in the School of Planning. Drew upon a variety of secondary sources and own work to determine the housing related challenges experienced by students at UW. Found many major issues that are in the end of the report. Working with other stakeholders that are already involved in housing initiatives in the Waterloo region. Recommendations include: the GSA should better leverage existing and new relationships with other stakeholders to advance housing advocacy on behalf of its members, exploring alternative housing opportunities, rejecting the student/non-student binary (creating tensions in the community, restricting student housing choice), update political positions and ends to explicitly recognize widespread housing challenges and prioritizing advocacy.

Question from Councilor of Physics and Astronomy – Are there possibilities for partnerships with public housing in the region?

McCulley & Revington responded: Effectively, across Canada, the cost of housing has increased disproportionate to wages, so currently people are waiting 13 years for social housing in KW. Need to recognize that there are different priorities: No one would want students to be homeless, but it is necessary to recognize our privilege that others might need social housing more than students. Social housing, therefore, might not be an immediate solution right now, but possibly something the GSA and/or the University could work towards in the future. Given the amount of need in the community for social housing, looking to that as a way to solve issues for students is a valuable long term goal, but realistically in the short term, the scope for that type of solution is minimal.

Councilor of Statistics & Actuarial Sciences – questions about the false dichotomy of student versus non-student housing – it feels like students have very specific needs

that are specific for them. Given that there are differences between average renters and student renters, how is rejecting that dichotomy advocating for students?

McCulley & Revington responded: That is a good point – need to balance kind of issues that may come up for students that don't come up for others, such as quick turnover. However, there are issues that are shared with those in low-income as well, such as inadequately addressing maintenance requests, lack of ability to afford housing, so the GSA would get further by focusing on that. The other issue, is that there is market segmentation and an artificial segmentation between students and non-students that creates a student sub-market, which artificially constrains what housing is offered to students in very insidious ways and restrict where students live. This allows for Property Managers and Landlords to extract higher rents from students. That's the business strategy behind this recommendation.

Councilor of Global Governance – question re: political positions – why adequate over appropriate? And also does the GSA have to be more clear about what is meant by “nearby” housing or “nearness”.

McCulley & Revington responded: As grad students who may be more comfortable taking the LRT or have a car, what is near for them is different than what is near for undergraduates. It is up for debate about actual changes/revisions. Leaning towards leaving that definition up to the students. Changes can be discussed in future revisions.

Councilor of Biology asked – In terms of recommendations: some have a lot of direct involvement from the GSA, but there are a fair number of issues with Landlords illegally treating tenants. Is there a way for the GSA to release a “non-legalese, these are graduate students’ rights” for tenants?

McCulley & Revington responded: WUSA already has that, so the GSA would want to avoid duplicating work. However, there should be some resources allocated to this, so there may be a way to streamline these resources through legal aid. The resources are out there, the GSA may need to do a better job about what things the GSA may want to add that are specific to grad students.

Councilor Germanic & Slavic Studies asked - 2 years ago, UWaterloo did a housing survey – every question was targeted with whether or not to compete with this kind of housing, but it was geared to undergraduate students. Could the GSA be an advocate for these kinds of things at UWaterloo, as it doesn't seem to be on the radar for them?

McCulley & Revington responded: Have communicated with On-Campus housing before. UW has started coming around to the fact that there aren't as many resources available for housing graduate students and improving those resources. But there is absolutely room for the GSA to reach out and advocate for that.

Councilor of History would like to offer help to the two researchers, as they have practiced housing law.

Offer was met with enthusiasm

b) Ends of the GSA - Robbins

6:09

Survey sent out about the Ends of the GSA. To summarize the feedback: several of the ends sounded like political positions, so sub-ends were consolidated, one specifically is to remove the environmental sustainability as it isn't in the GSA's jurisdiction, differentiation between mental health and mental illness was

recommended, and increase the specificity about what the ends were saying. President commented: This is being done as part of the strategic planning process. Looking at the summary of the survey and applying it to the ends. One has been to keep ends as broad as possible so that the GSA can later on put more things under that umbrella as the organization advances. Another thing was to keep things high level. Adding some qualifiers to every end rather is being done on every end based on the feedback. Consolidating the ends is currently being done. President commented that if Council felt there is a need to spend more time on the ends, this can be pushed to next semester and exclude it from the strategic plan. Councilors can propose revisions/recommendations/changes at any time throughout the term.

A Board member asked – does the council have to vote on this today?

Speaker responded – this is more of a general discussion since it came out at the last minute and it would be improper to have councilors vote without having familiarity

President responded – this is part of the strategic process, so not looking for motion, but rather consensus. But the GSA doesn't have to revise the ends for the strategic plan. The GSA can postpone, but councilors can also submit changes/revisions at any time.

A Board member commented – important for councilors to keep in mind the difference between political positions and ends – political positions are purely advisory. So there's no requirement for the President to follow the advice of these positions. However, the ends are mandatory for the President to proceed. It's important for the President to interpret the ends, and the board must decide if the President's interpretation is reasonable. Therefore, it's important to consider when making ends less specific, as GSA Councilors/Board members can lose control. It's important when demoting/deciding ends to think long-term about what it means for the GSA in the future. Had a concern with the change from cost of living to funding, as a future President can interpret that to mean funding package, think that it has been fulfilled, and choose to defund this end. Another is that it used to say students should have good mental and physical health, but now it says support for good mental and physical health. Currently, there are various resources for those, and therefore in a sense it has been met, however the answer based on surveys and feedback is that "no", the need has not been met. Therefore the end is met, but the problems still exists.

The President proposed that the GSA does not change the ends currently and put through the old ends into the strategic plan, but rather let council review the ends more carefully. The President withdrew consideration of the item for now

Multiple councilors seem to agree with concerns previously raised.

A Board member agreed with Dimitri about being informed before making these decisions, however disagreed about the interpretation of some of these points. For instance, organizational ends being long term and not changed as frequently. The Board member wanted to know what information council needs to make decision on these ends and how they would like to be involved in part of this process.

Councilor of Pharmacy – thought council would want to be involved in the creation and reviewing process. Some of the subends seem to be overlapping with political positions and some not, so political positions seem to be moving forward more quickly than the ends, and it seemed a little cherry picked.

President responded: wanted to capture everything necessary without changing the broadness of the ends and recommended keeping old ends for now and thinking about this for changes for next term.

Speaker – tabled issue for now, and in the future can revisit this discussion.

c) Governance – Hanmer

6:25

Board Chair – Hanmer is part of an organization that assists non-profits with Governance. However, Hanmer had an emergency and was unable to attend today, hoping to be part of September's meeting.

8. Reports Continued

6:27

a) President's additional update – exit remarks

6:27

Exit remarks – this is the President's last term and wanted to provide exit remarks. The President first summarized her background, which gave her a unique perspective before reviewing the highlights of her term (since April 2018). In the beginning, onboarding was very challenging as there were major staffing changes at the GSA with only had one staff person to support and not much information available. Having learned from previous experiences, her first goal was to set up a team. An overhaul of governance model was also done in April of 2018, which posed challenges in the first semester. In Fall 2018, there was another transition, which included a hiring of a new general manager. In March of 2019, a challenge was the Student Choice Initiative, which was a difficult time for the GSA. In the 2019-2020 academic year, there were issues with leadership and council, followed by COVID-19. This discussion of the President gave everyone an idea of a lot of the big things that had to be addressed on the go while providing support and communicating with everyone. Being President is not an easy job and includes lots of meetings on top of regular graduate studies. The President has the following lessons for Council: being aware of own biases, listening, persuasion and awareness, building empathy, and foresight. The President had the following recommendations: try to build these core fundamental values: learning because Councilors and Board members need take time to learn the systems in place, collegiality is important because Councilors and Board members have to remember Councilors and Board members are all graduate students, trust is critical, because there is a lot of accountability built into the system and that everyone involved in the GSA gives a certain level of trust to other individuals in the organization, and accountability for everyone in the GSA. As long as Councilors and Board members keep that in the back of their minds, they will build a strong organization.

7. Update on the Council's July E-Vote (continued at the request of the Councilor of Philosophy)– Robbins

Councilor of Philosophy asked – given the results of this unionization, what should counselors be doing to support these results? Board Chair responded that once the public minutes from the board are approved, there are recommendations available in there. The Vice-President responded that the push for unionizing will still be very much up to the student-led committee working with CUPE. The GSA's involvement will be to forward people to that student organization. This means that the Board has allowed the use of GSA resources to point people towards this student organization. The GSA, councilors, and those involved should not be going out and twisting arms to get people to sign cards, but rather to provide information.

Further updates: Speaker mentions that, from the previous meeting, there was a request from the President to give her a response from the Speaker's position as to how the GSA can move forward with this situation. From what the Speaker has found, at the end of the day, it is important to have good communication between the board and council, and that it is important to note that conflicts of interest also refer to conflicts of commitment.

Motion that council goes into confidential session (Stirling/Barton). (14y,0n).

Moved to confidential session 6:49

8. Adjournment 6:56

Motion to adjourn the meeting (Speaker/Salahub). (18y/0n).

Meeting adjourned at 6:57PM.