

Graduate Student Association UW

Council

Meeting Minutes

July 7, 2021

Primary Meeting

Date: July 7, 2021

Time: 4:00 P.M. to 7:00 P.M.

Place: Virtual

Council Speaker: Tyler B. Hampton

Minutes Taker: Niveta Chugh



MEETING ATTENDENCE

Name	Position/Faculty	Attendance*
Tyler Hampton	Council Speaker	P
MK Stinson	AHS - Rec & Leisure Studies	P
Kalsha Diaguarachchige De Silva	AHS - Kinesiology	P
Sue Sherifali	AHS - Public Health & Health Systems	P
Danielle LaBrash	Arts - Political Science	P
Elizabeth Scarlette	Arts - MPS	A
Ethel Zlotnik	Arts - MDEI	P
I. S.	Arts - Peace & Conflict Studies	A
Jessica Gill	Arts - Sociology	R
Kennedy Westlake	Arts - Psychology	P
Jillian Adams	Arts - Accounting & Finance	P
Khusro Mir	Arts - Economics	P
Lara El Mekkawi	Arts - English Language & Literature	P
Lisa Duggan	Arts - Religious Studies	P
Madeleine Pinard	Arts - Global Governance	R
Sam Schrim	Arts - Germanic & Slavic Studies	P
Sarah Galarneau	Arts - Fine Arts	A
Tasneem Alsayyed Ahmad	Arts - Philosophy	P
Teghan Barton	Arts - History	P
Akshat Atray	Eng - Management Sciences	A
Nastaran Mosavari	Eng - CEE	P
Jared Uramowski	Eng - MME	P
Mozhgan Sadeghianlemraski	Eng - ECE	P
Nargess Heydari Beni	Eng - SDE	P
Wali ur Rehman Zia	Eng - MBET	P
Anju George	Enviro - Planning	P
Yusof Ghiasi	Enviro - GEM	P
Tia Driver	Enviro - SEED	P
Misty Matthews-Roper	Enviro - SERS	R
Jyler Menard	Math - Computational Math	P
Mojtaba Valipour	Math - Computer Science	A
William Bell	Math - Applied Mathematics	A
Caleb Ryan	Science - Biology	P
Jesse St Jean	Science - Pharmacy	P
Juliette Teodoro	Science - Optometry and Vision	P
Michael Chapman	Science - Physics and Astronomy	P
Joshua Woodcock	Theo - Theological Studies	A
Naima Samuel	UW Senate	R
Onurcan Gokkaya	UW Senate	P

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Max Salman	UW Senate	
Cyrus Fiori	GSA Board	A
Nicholas Palaschuk	GSA Board	A
Elham Mohammadi	GSA Board	A
Samira Mehrabi	GSA Board	P
Yi Abby Wang	GSA Board	A
Ruby Aigbotsua	GSA Board	P
Amir Hosein Sadeghi Isfahani	GSA Board	R
Twesh Upadhyaya	GSA Board	A
David Benjamin Billedeau	GSA President	P
Cindy Yeung	GSA VP Administration	P
Zabeen Khamisa	GSA VP Communication	R
Karen Farley	Research Contractor, guest	P
Katherine Arnold	Policy Coordinator, guest	P

*Attendance

P – Present , Po – Proxy , R – Regrets , A – Absent (no regrets)

AGENDA

Time		Item	Length (min)	Action
4:00 PM	1	SPEAKER’S WELCOME AND OPENING REMARKS	7	
4:07 PM	2	ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA	2	For Approval
4:09 PM	3	DECLARATION OF INTERESTS	1	
4:10 PM	4	ATTENDANCE	2	
4:12 PM	5	APPROVAL OF MINUTES - June 3, 2021	1	For Approval
4:13 PM		Need grad representative for Animal Care Committee	2	For Information
4:15 PM	6	UPDATE FROM THE BOARD	5	For Information
4:20 PM	7	Organize UW Update	5	For Information
4:25 PM	8	Intellectual Property – Karen Farley	15	For Discussion
4:40 PM	9	Graduate Students On-Campus Residence Experience – Onurcan Gokkaya	15	For Discussion
4:55 PM		Break	5	
5:00 PM	10a	Presentation on Ombudsperson - Katherine GSA Policy Coordinator	15	For Information
5:15 PM	10b	Breakout Rooms on Ombudsperson	25	For Discussion
5:40 PM	10c	Synthesis from Breakout Rooms	20	For Discussion
6:00 PM		Break	5	
6:05 PM	11	Confidential Session - VPNC Recommendation, re VP Comms	30	For Approval
6:35 PM	12	Flexible Time for Continued Budget Discussions from Joint Session	25	For Discussion
7:00 PM		ADJOURNMENT		

MINUTES

1. Speaker's Welcome and Opening Remarks 04:03pm

Hampton takes the chair and calls the meeting to order at 04:03pm.

2. Adoption of the Agenda 04:07pm

Agenda adopted by unanimous consent.

3. Declaration of Interests 04:08pm

No conflicts of interest were declared.

4. Attendance 04:09pm

Chugh takes the attendance.

5. Approval of Minutes 04:09pm

The minutes of the June 06, 2021, meeting were approved by the unanimous consent.

KPI Report Feedback 04:13pm

The VP(Admin) gave an update on the feedback gathered on the KPI Report. She mentioned that the reports will be sent out monthly to the Councillors. She clarified that the initial questions related to it will be answered by Jacqueline Harper (GSA Data Analysis and Report Design Coordinator). The KPI report highlights the previous months' stakeholder meetings which are attended by the GSA as a management, events and initiatives held by the GSA, Council updates mentioning Council Representatives and the budget, project highlights including reopening of the Graduate House and hiring new coordinators, partnership highlights including Equity and service updates regarding the UPass.

The Council Speaker asked for an update on the appointment of an Equity Coordinator. The President mentioned that the interviews will be held for the position in the coming two weeks.

6. Update from the Board 04:18pm

Samira Mehrabi (new Board Chair) gave an update from the Board. The Board spent part of the June meeting electing the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Board. Ruby Aigbotsua introduced herself as the newly elected Deputy Chair.

The Board discussed modifications to policy EL-2 (respect for persons, society, and the environment) that allowed for better protection of confidential GSA materials. The Board approved a Student Design Competition to be held for designing the GSA-UW Logo with a cash prize worth \$1000. There is an ongoing discussion on the merging of GSI-GSEF and the Board is discussing the procedural outcome for it.

The Board is recruiting and has some vacancies. The Board vacancies will be filled by appointment, not an election like the AGM. There are also two positions open on Joint Policy Review Committee (JPRC), that councillors could fill.

7. Organize UW Update

04:26pm

Lara El Mekkawi provided an update from Organize UW. Organize UW will be organizing outdoors at the Waterloo Park on July 10th and July 14th. The Cheriton School of Computer Science had a town hall on 3rd June. The Return to Campus webinar was held on 9th June.

Organize UW had published an article detailing the Waterloo-specific practices of clawing back graduate student funding.

The Councillor from Accounting and Finance asked if the signed cards ever expire. The Councillor from English Language and Literature clarified that they expire after a year.

The Councillor from RLS said that an e-mail would be sent out after a year from an admin person regarding the re-signing of the card. Lara said that resigning can also be done through the website.

8. Intellectual Property- Karen Farley

04:31pm

Karen Farley presented the Intellectual Property Policy at UW. She presented the aims for the research. The main issue discussed was Intellectual Property Policy 73 which is based on “creator-owned” model and says that intellectual property (IP) ownership is granted to the inventor under Policy 73. There are several gaps related to this policy which means students are not protected as they should be.

Karen explained it with the help of examples which had happened in the past related to IP ownership. IP is protected by several acts including the Patent and Copyrights Acts which provides legal protection to anything that has real or potential commercial value. IP Rights Policy 73 extends the IP protections for academic activities resulting in creation of intellectual property, intended to foster open sharing of ideas in an academic sharing and limitations in the scope and application of these protections.

Policy 73 applies to all UW members including staff and students except to the ones who are not Canadian citizens or those who reside outside of Canada. Policy 73 provides ownership of IP created by students during the course-based activities including assignments, exams, discussions etc. Also, for the externally sponsored student research which includes funding through government grants and corporate sponsorship, the IP in such cases is determined by the terms of the contract governing the research. IP ownership should only be modified with informed consent in writing, and this is important in cases which has external partnerships or collaborations.

IP support comes in various forms including WatCo (Waterloo Commercialization Office). This covers disclosures by supervisors as opposed to students.

*The first area that was researched was the **Comparison of Policies for Student Created IP in Canadian Universities**. The IP Policy in top 10 Canadian Universities were compared. Most of the universities have followed a similar model to UW like the “creator owned”. One exception was University of Toronto which has a Co-owned model in which the university and the student both can claim ownership. The accessibility to these IP policies has a legalese accessibility for UW. University of British Columbia has a scenario-based policy. Some other universities have Q&A style. University of Alberta has Intellectual Property Awareness Checklist which can be used*

by the student and the supervisor to discuss different aspects of IP and how it affects a specific student research project.

*The second area of research was **Best Practices to Protect Student IP through the Innovation Process**. Karen mentioned that she didn't find any such practice which is related to University's context. She recommended that GSA could start with WIPO (World Intellectual Property Organization) as they serve as the toolkits for developing IP policies and IP Commercialization and Knowledge Transfer policies within a university context.*

*The third area is **Areas UW Students' IP Rights are not protected by Policy 73 are: Students studying outside of Canada**. Canadian IP laws are limited to protecting the IP rights of Canadian Citizens. There was an update on the remote teaching and learning. The webpage was published on the UW website on May 22, 2020 for the students' notice. She mentioned that most of the events were covered under Policy 73 and some events did have a public disclosure like GRADFlix, Three Minute Thesis and Concept 5K top 10 Teams. There was no IP information on events like Hult Prize, World's Challenge Challenge and Hack the North.*

Karen listed the key recommendations for the issues seen in IP Policy at UW:-

- a) For the Poor accessibility of Online information on Policy 73- University of British Columbia's Intellectual Property guide could be used to improve the accessibility.*
- b) Limited Availability of training on Policy 73- UW can develop an IP LEARN module either as on demand or as a mandatory training to improve the availability.*
- c) Lack of Information on Policy 73 in Course outline- UW can have a State IP policy for each course activity in all graduate course outlines.*
- d) No Standardised process for Communication of IP Policy between students and supervisors- UW can provide graduate students and the supervisors with a tool to promote discussions on how the IP Policy relates to the student's research project. This can be based on University of Alberta's guide for IP policies and would help students in getting a clarity on IP disclosure requirement and/or process for supervisors to disclose student created IP or provide graduate students with access to the online disclosure form.*
- e) Limitations to IP Rights of Students outside Canada- UW can provide a legal clarification of the validity of Policy 73 for international students and students studying remotely outside of Canada.*
- f) Unclear IP Rights for Students Participating in Competitions and Events- UW can state IP Policy clearly for all competitions and events available to UW students. UW can create a student representative process to review and sign off on the IP Policy for external events if Policy 73 is not applicable to that event.*
- g) Review of future changes to Policy 73- UW can implement a student representative review process for any reviews or updates to Policy 73 and can include the GSA-UW.*

The Councillor from History asked questions with respect to "turnitin.com" which disproportionately affects undergraduates. The wording on "turnitin.com" says that they own intellectual properties because they hold it to scan against other things. She asked how such complexities would be handled and what kind of experience one needs to have to use it. Karen said that this didn't come up in her research but needs to be looked upon.

The Councillor from SEED said that the GSA has its legal protection program which is being piloted right through StudentCare but their legal representation does not cover IP. She asked how the GSA can ensure that the students are able to get access to legal representation if they have complicated IP issues. Karen replied that legal advice on IP is expensive, and she mentioned that Policy 73 is supposed to protect students for which the University paid for the legal representation of the supervisor involved. She said that there is no specific recommendation, but this could be considered in terms of integrating IP and commercialization into any legal support that the students can get.

9. Graduate Students On-Campus Residence Experience- Onurcan Gokkaya

04:51pm

Onurcan Gokkaya presented the on-campus residence experience. His research was exclusively about grad on-campus experience. The purpose of the research focusses on the on-campus experiences for grad students and families. He mentioned that only Columbia Lake Village (CLV) is run by the Campus Housing. He presented the specifications of CLV. Families rent an entire townhouse at CLV. CLV is located beside Columbia Lake. There's a free shuttle between CLV and the campus. On the other hand, St. Paul apartments are run by St Paul's apartments and are available to graduate students, post-doctoral fellows and visiting professors at UW. St Paul apartments are very flexible.

Onurcan mentioned that in the past 5 years, one bedroom's apartment price went up by 40% in Waterloo. CLV north is competitive with respect to the market prices, but CLV south is not advantageous for graduate students. St Paul's houses cannot compete with CLV if you rent it for 3 terms, but St. Paul apartments are not affordable if you rent it for 4 months or 8 months. CLV gives the opportunity to rent for 4 months, and you do not have to rent for an entire year. This is flexible for students. St Paul's is affordable to rent for a year.

Onurcan mentioned that across Ontario, University of Toronto is expensive than UW. UW does a great job to compete with prices at Laurier, so UW is cheaper than Laurier but since Laurier is in Uptown location, so it is in more attractive location unlike UW. Western University offers the best rent for graduate students with rent starting at \$1000 but you do not get amenities like furniture, desks etc. like CLV. UW provides competitive prices for students (grad) but competitive prices does not mean an affordable price. Woodnote Co-operative Apartments are one of the most affordable and better-quality services with respect to housing in Concordia.

Onurcan presented the numbers for the availability for CLV North and the number of families that are still in the waiting list. Graduate students do not have many options for on-campus housing and the number of applications exceeds the availability.

CLV has great services and amenities. Family houses at CLV does not come with any furniture. He showed the results with respect to satisfaction levels for physical amenities at CLV. 10% of the people were dissatisfied with the internet connection at CLV. People said that they made a wise decision on staying at CLV during Covid19 pandemic and they were satisfied with the requirements and the physical changes, the residence had done. CLV is diverse in terms of demographics, cultures, religions, race etc.

The pros of staying on-campus are an easy application process, lower deposit, organized neighborhood, community support, friendly management, and great price for families. The cons

are internet connectivity, location as compared to other on campus residences, lack of A/C and water quality and garbage collection.

The recommendations for UW are updating the internet, sorting of garbage bins, expanding campus housing and to have a Graduate Families Council. There should be an interactive Dashboard showing updated available rooms for the students to have some knowledge about availability. GSA and WUSA could act as a pioneer and push the University to create a vision for affordable housing development for University of Waterloo students. University of Waterloo campus housing has the potential to create real value for students. It could create partnership with the stakeholders to develop affordable units for within the University's borders.

The Councillor from Accounting and Finance asked about the status of future housing and asked if the research included future housing plans of UW. She raised a concern that Jeff Casello said that there was no need to increase the minimum funding as the amount of graduate student applications were higher than the usual number. Onurcan replied that UW should have some plans housing and his research didn't include that as the President is changed. The Council Speaker mentioned that UW owns land, which is to the north of CLV, and it is being planned for development purposes.

The Councillor from Germanic and Slavic Studies asked if the research compared the absolute prices of the rent and the proportions of how much funding a student should get and how much gets used on housing if the students stay on campus. Onurcan clarified that "affordable" means that the 30% of a student's income goes into housing. If the amount is greater than 30%, the housing is not affordable. Also, he didn't compare the absolute prices of the rent and proportions of the funding that goes into housing as it was out of the scope of his research.

The Councillor from SDE asked how the pros and cons were concluded. She asked if there was any portal to provide campus housing feedback. Onurcan asked her to message and mentioned that the research was editable.

Break 05:15pm

10a. Presentation on Ombudsperson – Katherine Arnold (GSA Policy Coordinator)

05:21pm

Katherine Arnold presented the role of an ombudsperson on campus. She mentioned that the Council moved into supporting an on-campus ombudsperson in Nov 2020 with an open letter. The functions of an ombudsperson on campus would be to provide help to resolve concerns and assist individuals in generating and evaluating options to determine an appropriate course of action, intervene to attempt the resolution of a concern, publish an annual report containing statistical information on cases handled, general trends and not seeking to replace established procedures or make determinations in place of university decision. Katherine presented some common concerns faced by the students at Brock University that are in the scope of ombudsperson.

An environmental scan of the research-intensive Universities in Canada and Ontario wide universities was carried out. UW is the only one of six Ontario based Research Intensive Universities that does not have an ombuds office.

The academic scope of an ombuds person is to make grade appeals and help against academic

misconduct. Some ombuds will support faculty and staff, some will support post doc students, and some will support admissions. The scope is determined by the funding and the institution. Non-academic scope will have residence and housing, fees and financial issues and student employment on campus. University of Ottawa has ombudsperson who has legal authority to support off campus legal issues like landlord issues and notary related issues.

*Katherine laid out the actual function of an ombudsperson. **Advising Students** would help the students to explain and explore university options, identify, and explain relevant university policy and procedures, assist in preparing documents and arguments for appeals and hearings. This would require training with the university's policies and procedures and training in conflict resolution. The associated risk with it would be in the cases when ombudsperson would give students a bad advice like wrong process or inappropriate documentation could damage a student's ability progress.*

*Another prominent role of the ombudsperson is **Advising the Institution** would promote professional development to the student-facing faculty and staff, proactively review policies, procedures, and decision-making frameworks of the university. This would require training with the university policies, procedures, and processes. An associated risk with this would be that an ombudsperson may suggest the policies that negatively impacts or harms the students and due to their authority in the university, the university might accept their suggestions which can give rise to further problems.*

***Confidentiality** is a very big aspect of an ombuds role. The students want their matters to be dealt with in strict confidence and will not be discussed with anyone without your written approval. It does require commitment from an ombuds person. The associated risks would occur when an ombudsperson may reveal information that causes harm to a student's academic, professional, or personal life.*

*An ombudsperson can perform **Investigation**. An ombudsperson can investigate student complaints in an impartial fashion that may arise against the university, matter affecting the fundamental rights, justice, and fair treatment of the members of the university community. This requires familiarity with the university policies, a platform for providing recommendation and authority to question and access documents. The associate risk would be making inappropriate recommendation, not following the processes, and ignoring cases that should be investigated.*

*An ombudsperson can offer **Mediation**. This can be in person resolution process, non-biased intermediary between parties in discord and helping them to reach a mutual agreement without direct contact. This would require training with university policies, procedures, and processes. The associated risk would be when an ombudsperson may ignore cases that should be investigated, damage parties' academic and professional reputation.*

An ombudsperson cannot deal with matters outside the jurisdiction of the Governing Council, make decisions on behalf of the university, overrule university policies or procedures, intervene if the regular processes provided by the university have not been used, give legal advice, and provide counselling (counselling services).

There are specific gaps on campus that can be addressed by am ombudsperson on campus. An ombudsperson could provide professional development for professors. They can provide students with transparency to know where in the visible process their documents are and how long before they move forward. They can keep data and tracking of issues students face including discrimination, and human rights violations, and academic processes. There should be a recognizable person on campus to whom the students can go for support. The University shall ensure the Office of the Ombudsperson is enabled to carry out its mandate and is respected by the

faculty.

There is a related oversight for the funding structure for the role of an ombudsperson. There are 3 primary funding structures: Joint Structure by the University and the Student Union, Funding by the University and Funding by the Student Unions.

The discussion topics were:

1. Scope

- a) What topics should an ombudsperson be able to cover? (Academic, Non-Academic, Off-Campus)*
- b) Who should the ombudsperson be available to? (Undergraduate Students, Graduate Students, Post-Docs, Staff, Faculty)*

2. Functions

- a) What are the department's views on the following proposed functions of an ombudsperson based on the presentation's proposal?*
- b) Which of the 5 functions would the departments want the ombudsperson to have?*
- c) Are there any functions the departments think are not necessary?*

The President mentioned that GSA's negotiations with UW on ombudsperson front are on pause while both GSA and WUSA have their respective discussions with their members. Next step would be to get to the table with the representatives at WUSA to determine what GSA and WUSA have in common in terms of goals for ombudsperson.

10b. Breakout Rooms on Ombudsperson

05:41pm

10c. Synthesis from Breakout Rooms

06:17pm

AHS & Science

- Majority of Councillors pointed that they are not clear on the purpose of the discussion and the role of an ombudsperson.*
- A lot of functions of an ombudsperson are already being filled by other resources and other representatives on campus at all levels.*
- Questions on whether this role will be entertaining the legal conflicts.*
- Councillors saw this role as an advantage in the cases where the student does not know where to go and what to do. This would be a great role in providing options available to the students.*
- Overall agreement that the role of an advisor and mediator might be the most useful function.*
- Councillors saw this role as an advocacy role which would support the students.*

Arts I

- The ombudsperson role needs to be refined to make it more useful.*
- The role would be good for institutional memory and consistency and to negate the turnover inherent of both WUSA and GSA. It would be good if someone could continue with policy knowledge.*

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- *The authority of the position might assist with the consequences of the University issues that arise as there are no consequences on-campus.*
- *Issues like pressure from University might create conflicts. Limiting the scope might help in negating these issues.*
- *The person who will be hired shall be highly skilled and trained in the role as a mediator.*
- *Concerns regarding having another person who would just smoothen things for the University and weigh down over the student turnover.*

Arts II

- *Councillors had a positive experience with the ombuds office in the past at their previous universities.*
- *Councillors want to have a “one stop shop” in the form of an ombuds office.*
- *This shouldn’t be another bureaucratic step but should work with other offices on campus on navigating universities’ policies more efficient.*
- *The role should do justice to the new students at UW.*
- *Ombudsperson should be available to a wide variety of people as ombudsperson would help the graduate students to form a strong relation with the University.*
- *Advising function is more important than any other function with respect to an ombuds role.*
- *All the functions are desirable.*
- *Risks associated with the investigations and intervention seemed real and they should only go as far as the students tell them to. Students should be having a control in every way that an ombuds person is serving them.*

Eng & Math & Enviro

- *They believe that an ombudsperson plays an intermediary role between the institution and the students.*
- *The three primary functions that are important are mediation, investigation/intervention and advising in an ombuds role.*
- *Concerns regarding the associated risks which turn serious in the actual scenario like delaying in graduation.*
- *Suggestions to have a risk mitigation plan if there was an ombudsperson.*
- *Concerns regarding whom should the ombudsperson be available.*
- *Concerns if the ombudsperson would be available to post docs.*

The President said that the next steps would include meetings with WUSA for the remainder of the spring term. Ideally, WUSA and GSA would present the scope of an ombud at a higher level. After that, the President would then get back to the respective councils for the feedback.

11. Confidential Session- VPNC Recommendation, re VP comms

06:31pm

Adjournment

06:56pm