

Graduate Student Association UW

Council

Meeting Minutes

November 3, 2021

Primary Meeting

Date: November 3, 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
Matthew Gerrits	Arts - Master of Public Service (MPS)	A
Rabia Ahmed	Arts - Master of Digital Experience Innovation (MDEI)	P
Jillian Adams	Arts - Accounting & Finance	P
Erica Swyers	Arts - Germanic & Slavic Studies	P
Cael Dobson	Arts - Philosophy	P
Nathalie Gadbois	Arts - French Studies	A
Chris Martin	Arts - English Language & Literature	P
Madeleine Pinard	Arts - Global Governance	P
Kennedy Westlake	Arts - Psychology	Po
Sarah English (proxy)	Arts - Psychology	Po
Danielle LaBrash	Arts - Political Science	P
Jessica Gill	Arts - Sociology	P
Sarah Galarneau	Arts - Fine Arts	P
Teghan Barton	Arts - History	P
Iman Sultana	Arts - Master of Peace & Conflict Studies	P
Kevin White	Cross - Collaborative Water Program	P
Devansh Nagpal	Eng - Management Sciences	A
Alex Dalton	Eng - Master of Business, Entrepreneurship, & Technology (MBET)	P
Manh Kien Tran	Eng - Chemical Engineering	P
Carlo Rosel	Eng - Architecture	P
Cindy Yang	Eng - Electrical & Computer Engineering	Po
Anshul Goyal (Proxy)	Eng - Electrical & Computer Engineering	R
Jinesh Shah	Eng - Mechanical & Mechatronics Engineering	P
Nastaran Mosavari	Eng - Civil & Environmental Engineering	P
Nargess Heydari Beni	Eng - Systems Design Engineering	P
Yusof Ghiasi	Enviro - Geography & Environmental Management (GEM)	P
Tia Driver	Enviro - School of Environment, Enterprise, & Development (SEED)	R
Misty Matthews-Roper	Enviro - School of Environment, Resources, & Sustainability (SERS)	P
Anju George	Enviro - School of Planning	P
Kalsha Diaguarachchige De Silva	Health - Kinesiology	P
MK Stinson	Health - Recreation & Leisure Studies	P
Benjamin Anderson-Sackaney	Math - Pure Mathematics	P
Mojtaba Valipour	Math - Computer Science	A

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Asiya Jabeen	Science - Optometry and Vision Science (School of)	P
Antoine Hakim	Science - Pharmacy (School of)	P
Caleb Ryan	Science - Biology	P
Everett Patterson	Science - Physics and Astronomy	P
Naima Samuel	Senator	R
Onurcan Gokkaya	Senator	R
Natalie Isobel DeBloeme Barcellos	Director (Board)	P
Yashesh Dasari	Director (Board)	P
Ala Mokhtar	Director (Board)	R
Jessica Lee	Director (Board)	R
Elham Mohammadi	Director (Board)	A
Samira Mehrabi	Director (Board)	P
Yi Abby Wang	Director (Board)	P
Ruby Aigbotsua	Director (Board)	P
Amir Hosein Sadeghi Isfahani	Director (Board)	P
Zabeen Khamisa	President, Director ex-officio	P
Glaucia Melo	Vice-President (Administration)	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	2	
4:02 PM	2 ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA	1	For Approval
4:03 PM	3 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS	1	
4:04 PM	4 ATTENDANCE	1	
4:05 PM	5 APPROVAL OF MINUTES October 6, 2021	1	For Approval
4:06 PM	6 Organize UW Update	5	For Information
4:11 PM	7 UPDATE FROM THE BOARD	5	For Information
4:18 PM	8 Welcome to new Councillors	0	
4:25 PM	9 Update from Wellness Coordinator	15	For Information
4:50 PM	10 Council Roundtable, Student Issues	20	For Discussion
5:45 PM	11 Council Policy Second Reading - New Seats	10	For Approval
6:00 PM	Break	5	
6:05 PM	12 Presentation - Research Contract on Sexual Violence and Assault	20	For Information
6:25 PM	13 GSA Equity Strategy Phase 2 - Equity Coordinator	20	For Information
6:45 PM	14 Presentation - Partnerships Coordinator - Philanthropy Fund	15	For Information
7:00 PM	ADJOURNMENT		

MINUTES

1. Speaker’s Welcome and Opening Remarks 04:04pm

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

2. Adoption of the Agenda 04:06pm

Motion to approve the agenda. Approved unanimously.

3. Declaration of Interests 04:06pm

No conflict of interests was declared.

4. Attendance 04:07pm

Chugh takes the attendance.

5. Approval of Minutes 04:07pm

The minutes of the October 6th, 2021, meeting was approved unanimously.

6. Organize UW Update 04:09pm

The Councillor from RLS gave an update on Organize UW. Faculty Town Hall and Academic Lecture will be held on November 29th, 2021. History of Academic Unions webinar will be held from 6pm to 8pm on November 24th, 2021.

Organize UW is ready to interact with DGSA’s if the councillors are curious about union and labor concerns.

The Councillor from Political Science asked if Organize UW would be doing the events in person or virtual. The Councillor from RLS replied that they can do whatever suits the councilors and their DGSAs.

7. Update from the Board 04:15pm

Samira Mehrabi gave an update from the Board. She mentioned that the Board discussed future requirements. The Board is creating future strategies which are going to be used in the future. Three motions were passed by the Board in October.

- *The GSA-UW Recruitment Task Force Chair and the GSA-UW Elections Coordinator are tasked with leading Board recruitment communications efforts.*
- *The GSA-UW Recruitment Task Force is tasked with reviewing GSA-UW Board applications for an interview according to the criteria passed by the GSA-UW Board.*
- *The GSA-UW Management Team is tasked with calling for nomination in the GSA-UW Board from November 5, 2021, to December 5,2021, with the possible extension to January 7,2021.*

The Board has approved Council report to the Board and the President’s Fall 2021 work plan. The President brought a proposal regarding equipment in the graduate house which was approved by the Board which was for replacing a fridge in the grad house. A collaboration proposal between GSPA-

GSA was approved. The Board approved the decision to create a GSA supported GSPA staff role titled “Graduate Student Programming Strategist”.

Samira gave an update on the GPRC and the Equity Policy. GPRC is still investigating the second reading of the policy. The Board has received a request of the Council regarding changes in GPN bylaw.

The Councillor from Accounting and Finance asked if the current recruitment is for having more directors. Samira replied that the Board has been experiencing a high turnover in terms of resignations and people finishing their degrees. Few other director’s graduates and resigned. So, there are 11 director positions with other 12 members at the Board. The Councillor from Accounting and Finance asked if there was an underlying issue in terms of time commitment or something else can be done. Samira replied that she is still understanding that. She does not think time commitment is a main issue, but different opinions could be. Tyler added that all the directors that were elected at the AGM did not resign. They are still with the Board.

8. Welcome to new Councillors

04:24pm

Speaker welcomed Everett Patterson (Councillor from Physics and Astronomy).

9. Update from Wellness Coordinator

04:24pm

Ashley Ryan gave an update on GSA Student Wellness. She mentioned that she was hired to help maintain, improve, and advocate for the overall wellness of graduate students at the University of Waterloo. Her role has three main parts: advising and support, working with stakeholders on wellness, and events.

*The first one is **Advising and Support**. This includes helping students to figure out the issues and ways on how to navigate the school policies through confidential advising appointments. It also includes guiding students to other helpful resources on campus.*

*The second one is **Working with Stakeholders**. This includes sitting on committees working on student mental health, Wellness Collaborative Advisory Committee, meetings with counselling services, resiliency working group, VIF working group, meeting with Campus Wellness. This is important for leveraging existing resources, to make sure graduate students are prioritized under University Administration and to be actively involved in creating new resources and initiatives across campus.*

*The third one is **Events**. It involves organizing candid talks with Grads, community strolls, and social wellness events like Grad Student Bonfire, Movie Social Nights, Haunted story adventure and Pumpkin carving.*

Ashley presented changes and updates to the advising and support services. The services were reviewed to locate the issues where improvements could be made, increase the effectiveness and efficiency of advising sessions for students, embed equity-based practices throughout the processes and increase awareness of service to graduate students’ community. Certain steps have been taken to improve the service like creation of appointment forms and Student Advising Framework. This involves including the which is the summary of the appointments and a framework to know who is responsible for specific responsibilities, policy breakdown and includes things to run an advising session. They created advising session spreadsheet which summarizes anonymous data from the

appointment forms and researched options for an improved intake form. They are in the process of creating a new intake form and updating the appointment form.

Ashley gave an update on the updates which are being reviewed. The intake form will be asking for pronouns, level of confidentiality, asking if Student Wellness can use it for future advocacy and general availability for meeting. Another update is adding equity-based concerns, resources students have tried to access on campus and permission to share with GSA staff (if needed) on appointment form. There will be E-mail follow ups to occur on a weekly basis and request for feedback from session participants at the end of each term. There will be increased advertisement of services and updating the policy flowcharts.

*The Service Name has been changed from Advocacy and Support to **Advising and Support**. It has been changed to increase awareness of the service to students.*

VP(Admin) added that Ashley's role stands directly to support graduate students' mental health and is aligned with strategic plan of promoting equity and building community to foster students' sense of belonging and enhancing involvement amongst committees.

The Councillor from Civil and Environmental Engineering asked if there has been an event in the past where Student Wellness has made a student aware of the issues that they can provide help with. She suggested to organize an event where they could make the students aware of the issues that Student Wellness can provide help with. Ashley replied that they have been thinking on increasing the material on the Advising webpage, so that students are able to identify the type of issues they can get help with. Candid Talk series is useful in these kinds of situations. Ashley pointed that international students sometimes do not realize that a certain type of behavior from their supervisor is not acceptable and legal in the country.

The Councillor from School of Planning asked for clarification if Ashley Ryan will be the first point of contact before going to the Department Head or Advisor if issues relating to the relationship with the supervisor emerge. She also suggested to reach out to the students for the issues they have been facing with their supervisors. Ashley replied that the first point of contact varies for different situations and students. It depends on who the student is comfortable with approaching them.

The Councillor from History asked what kind of protection we have for Wellness Co-Ordinator at GSA. GSA-UW President replied that depending on circumstance, Ashley can anonymize the case and tell GSA-UW President about it. The case is kept anonymous unless the student has provided permission to disclose the case with GSA-UW President. Management of the student wellness makes sure that Ashley is not burnt out.

10. Council Roundtable, Student Issues

04:52pm

Speaker mentioned that there have been a lot of issues discussed in the Council. Issues were taken on a faculty basis.

The Councillor from School of Pharmacy raised an issue related to lack of funding. He pointed that the graduate students are paid a very little amount. He mentioned that in the School of Pharmacy, the TA hours are included in the fundings. They are getting paid 1/3rd of the minimum payment.

The Councillor from School of Optometry and Vision Science mentioned that her department raised

two issues. The first one is the lack of space as they are only assigned one room to work and occupancy limit for that room is 3 students now. The second issue is related to the coursework. She mentioned that they do not get enough courses for the graduate studies. These issues were raised by the new grads that came in. Speaker asked for clarification if these courses were required for the student to graduate. The Councillor from School of Optometry and Vision Science pointed that the grad students are burdened to take multiple courses in one term as they are not offered many courses in the other terms.

The Councillor from Physics and Astronomy pointed that one of the big issues related to the funding levels is the increase in cost of living. He pointed that the base level funding has not changed much as compared to the old times.

The Councillor from Biology pointed that the professors want more TAs for the courses, but their department is having trouble gathering funding for TAs hence stopping students from TAing for the courses.

The Councillor from Cross-Collaborative Water Program mentioned that funding is a concern for most of the students with the cost of living going up. Students are unable to find an affordable place to live.

Speaker clarified that funding has been one of the council's agenda's main items. GSRC will ask GSA in 2022 to endorse funding levels.

The Councillor from Physics and Astronomy asked clarification if the funding levels are the base funding levels. Speaker clarified that it is minimum funding level satisfied by various means and is up to the department on how to pay the base funding.

The Councillor from Cross-Collaborative Water Program asked for clarification on the extent of funding level determination. He wants to know who is responsible for setting the base amount. Speaker clarified that the number is set by the university through the bunch of committees and GSRC does not have a giant power.

The Councillor from RLS suggested to use the housing survey information for advocacy for the funding levels. She also suggested to have a working group to discuss on the funding levels for the next few months.

The Councillor from History added that we need make a shift in our language when we talk about funding. We should replace it with poverty with regards the living expenses.

The Councillor from Accounting and Finance suggested to have a way forward by taking everything in consideration that has been done in the past with respect to the funding levels.

The Councillor from Pure Mathematics pointed that in his faculty, roughly 4 professors are non-compliant with the vaccine mandate. With UW going in person learning, some of the professors will be going on leave and the graduate students of those professors are concerned what will happen to them. He pointed to have better job opportunities. There are graduate students who would want to take an extra term/year to grow in their academic career. GSA-UW President clarified that funding and non-compliance against vaccine are a cause of concern. She will bring it up with Jeff Casello and professors. She asked for more concrete information for funding related issues.

The Councillor from RLS mentioned that her department had departmental led Anti Racism Task Force committee and comprehensive exams review process at a consultant level. She felt that these processes were killed by bureaucracy and she wants to know if there is a way of intervening in these processes. GSA-UW President clarified that if the department had put together a report or a document, these can be sent to GSA and GSA can have a conversation that goes beyond the department. These reports are important for the GSA as these are the main things that the councillors can offer to the GSA.

The Councillor from MBET raised three major issues from his department. The first issue is travel issues like travelling to competitions, business case competitions events etc. The second issue is related to tuition fees as there is no reduction in tuition despite of reduction in facilities and other elements one would expect in person. The third issue is unique to the three-year part-time program which is instructors at tuition. He pointed that a lot of professors from MBET program quit due to them switching to different professions. This has disrupted the coursework as with the incoming of the new instructors, the quality of the teaching has gone down. Speaker asked if the department has rehired professors/instructors for the specific positions. The Councillor from MBET clarified that the department has been trying to maintain the number of hires and not double up the instructors. However, the part time is one set of class per month, and they have some time on their hand for the courses, but the full-time graduate students have been with an instructor for over two years. This creates a lot of uncertainty with having new instructors on board. Speaker mentioned that the UW is opening international travel at a quicker rate now.

The Councillor from CEE raised a concern regarding working hours for the library. She suggested to have the library return to its normal hours as it was before Covid19. Speaker asked for clarification if it was engineering space library and is it needed for accessing space. The Councillor from CEE replied that library is required to take help of physical reference material and have a study space.

The Councillor from SYDE raised a few concerns which are specific to their department. She mentioned that SYDE department is understaffed, so the students have suffered a lot. The SYDE coordinator left her job. She pointed that there is no departmental GSA for SYDE. Some international students have issues related to their internship issue because as an international student, you cannot have an internship for more than 4 months in Canada as this causes an issue with the post graduate work permit. Also, the number of courses is limited that are offered at once to the graduate students. Speaker suggested that faculty might be the best resource for putting a mandate on the issue of hiring a new coordinator.

The Councillor from MME added that even if international students apply for an internship on their own, the UW does not allow them to pursue the internship. UW might either ask to take a break or drop the internship. If the student opts for a break, this affects the post graduate work permit. The other issue raised by one of the graduate students was regarding networking with the employers due to absence of job fairs. Speaker mentioned that this issue could be taken up with GSPA.

The Councillor from Global Governance pointed that her constituents have raised an issue regarding international travel. She mentioned that her department was informed that students should not plan for any kind of fieldwork which would require international travel. The research for most of the students would take place in developing countries with low vaccination rates. Other issues are related to housing accessibility. There is a growing discrepancy in the funding as the program is a joint program dealing with Wilfred Laurier and University of Waterloo.

The Councillor from History raised a concern regarding administrative assistance. Her department is incompetent. The graduate systems need to be made aware of how to navigate the resources in the History department. She pointed those good administrative practices are carried out in the departments which make good money.

The Councillor from Philosophy mentioned that her department has disabled students who cannot serve as TAs. So, the recent funding allocations moving from scholarships to TAs has affected the disabled students. Students are told to talk to their supervisors for having funding related issues but the supervisors in the Arts department do not have funding to provide to the students.

The Councillor from Accounting and Finance pointed that her program has a ban on accepting international students and the ban has been extended for another year. She also mentioned that her program has reputational issues on the funding side too. Wilfred Laurier's PhD program offers substantial funding for Accounting and Finance.

The Councillor from Political Science mentioned that funding is an equity issue. She pointed that Jeff mentioned in one of the council meetings that some students are not able to go to grad school due to lack of funding, but university still gets a lot of applications. Danielle raised a concern that this is also an equity related issue. Her constituents have also raised a concern on finding a suitable place to live.

The Councillor from MPCS pointed that localizing the wellness events would be of great benefit to the graduate students. She suggested to have mental health advocates at a departmental level.

11. Council Equity Policy

05:53pm

Speaker presented Council Equity Policy. Council Policy Constituencies Report was sent to the Council before the council meeting. This report described the proposal to add two new seats to the Council, to represent the voices of the Indigenous and Black graduate students at UW. This idea came from the discussions in the Council in May 2021 when Equity Strategy Phase 1 was discussed. The Council passed changes to the first reading to the Council policies. There are changes that are yet to be made to the policies.

Speaker mentioned that GSA can work on helping on populating the seats and few of the councillors roles would be governed by GP8 and bylaws even if the policies are supposed to be changed. He mentioned that the motions can be approved, and seats can be filled.

Motions were raised.

***“BIRT the Council approves in the second reading changes to Policy CP-2.” (Hampton/Patterson)
(28-0-0)***

***“BIRT the Council approves in the second reading changes to Policy CP-4.” (Hampton/Patterson)
(28-0-0)***

The motions were approved unanimously.

Break

06:00pm

12. Presentation- Research Contract on Sexual Violence and Assault

06:05pm

Skylar presented the research contract on Sexual Violence and Assault at UWaterloo. She mentioned that data was largely incomplete as she had the data until the year 2018. She pointed that the data she presented did not have the unreported cases of sexual assault or other forms of sexual assault. The Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Office (SVPRO) collects this data for UW. A spike was reported for the number of cases reported in the year 2019 and this was due to the increased awareness and accessing the services. There was a decrease in 2020 due to aspects related to Covid19 pandemic. Sexual assault is continuously highest in number.

UW created Policy 42 in the year 2017 which is Prevention of, and Response to, Sexual Violence. UW created the SVPRO in the year 2018 and the first staff position for SVPRO was created by UW in the year 2019.

University's role is to address sexual violence and provide forms of redress outside of criminal justice system.

*Best practices that are to be followed should include **education and training**. There are no mandatory trainings that grads and undergrads are supposed to take. The second practice is **reporting and data collection**. UW is doing a fair job in collecting data. UW can increase its data collection accuracy. UW should start collecting data on how the survivors are coping up, so that we can know if the supports are effective for survivors. The third practice is **responsiveness to intersectionality**. UW could do a lot more in this area as university has not implemented existing Indigenous-led solutions aimed to end gender-based violence against Indigenous women, girls, Two-Spirit, and non-binary people. There is no specific for international students. There is no information on how to access Policy 42. The fourth practice is **University Policies**. University does not demonstrate an understanding of the gendered nature of sexual violence and its intersections with systems of oppressions. The fifth practice is **University Responses**. This is needed to determine how university responds to disclosure. Does the reputation of the university take precedence in it over providing care for a survivor or not? Campus alerts should be screened by sexual violence experts to ensure they provide sufficient information to safeguard the campus while respecting the confidentiality of the survivor.*

Skylar recommended that there should be increase in awareness of Policy 42. More data could be collected in different areas. University should advocate for permanent funding to be allocated for the two additional SVPRO positions that were added in 2021 on a contract basis. She suggested to remove the message from the provost listed on the UW Police website under the "Sexual Assault".

The Councillor from Physics and Astronomy asked what the duration of the contract is for contract-based positions. Skylar replied that it is a one-year contract.

The Councillor from Pure Mathematics asked for elaboration on audience specific training. Skylar replied that there is a lot of research for providing training to faculty, incoming undergrad students, incoming grad students. For faculty members, it could be refresher courses every two years.

Speaker asked if the training would also help to familiarize students with the North American language and if there would be power dynamics involved like funding changes when someone close (supervisor) victimizes the international students. Skylar replied that research is being done on it as the international students have this fear of getting their visa taken away. It is a great suggestion to have a language-based training at UW.

VP(Admin) asked for elaboration on intersectional approaches. Skylar clarified that she presented the identity specific groups who have higher prevalence of sexual violence due to oppressional structure in the society like anyone who is typically marginalized.

Speaker asked for clarification from Ashley Ryan on helping with Policy 42. He asked if the students could go to Ashley for issues with Policy 42 or somewhere else. Skylar replied by saying that collecting data to the person's experiences will be the guiding force for providing the aid. This is very subjective question, and she is not the best person to answer this question. VP(Admin) clarified that Ashley Ryan and VP(Admin) herself sit into the office to investigate the cases. She mentioned that under the summary reports that Ashley Ryan, there is no report which was filed under Policy 42 in the past year. Skylar mentioned that it is difficult to draw conclusions from the data they have gathered.

The Councillor from History mentioned that each department has a person to whom the student discloses their issues. GSA could help with providing training to this person on how to handle student related issues.

13. GSA Equity Strategy Phase 2 – Equity Coordinator

06:28pm

Mariam Lahlou gave a presentation on GSA Equity Strategy Phase 2 for 2021-22. She described the equity communication strategy. She mentioned that identifying monthly equity themes would help them in developing communications strategy for month themes on social media.

Mariam mentioned that they want to strengthen relationship with Campus Partners. They want to partner with Human Rights Equity Office and more LGBTQ2+ focused groups.

Mariam presented the Equity events. They have BIPOC Discord channel where they have monthly BIPOC Collectives as well as bi-weekly drop off hours. She mentioned that they want to work for BIPOC Research Symposium which is set for Fall 2023. GSA wants to advocate for an equity related scholarship which is awarded to graduate students (Scholarship proposal by end of January 2022). This scholarship is permanent for self-identified BIPOC students, and it aims to help the graduate students throughout their graduate studies.

Mariam mentioned that they want to update and complete the research report from 2020-2021 and create equity survey for GSA-UW (launch in Spring 2022).

For services and governance structure, they want to expand GSA Advising Services to provide equity resources and advocacy for graduate students, work with GSA Council to fill seats for Black and Indigenous students on the Council, work with campus partners to provide equity training to the GSA Council that they requested in May 2021.

As per the challenges, BIPOC channel has been an online platform right from the start, so it would be a challenge to move from online to hybrid/in-person events in Winter 2022 term. Partnering with the campus partners would also be a challenge.

A Director asked if we have any efforts for the refugee students and will GSA-UW help them on the campus. GSA-UW President replied that there are refugee students on the campus and GSA will help them. There is an International Student Coordinator who will be delegating these types of issues.

14. Presentation – Partnerships Coordinator- Philanthropy Fund

06:36pm

Nicholas Palaschuk (GSA Partnerships Coordinator) gave a presentation on GSA Partnership Development and Philanthropy Efforts. The partnerships coordinator's role is an amalgamation of the previous campus partnerships which include on-campus stakeholders and off-campus stakeholders. The role is inward facing which includes organizing programming and events with on-campus stakeholders that supports GSA's vision of fostering a positive social, academic, and intellectual campus experience. The role is outward facing as it involves getting engaged with off-campus stakeholders to bring more government enterprises to help address the industry needs by applying great experience. The key goal is to deepen university-wide grad student collaborations to build cross-disciplinary and cultural competencies, expand current experiential and applied research offerings for graduate students to deepen professional development and non-academic matriculation and to support grads by mobilizing an ethics of care in partnerships to position them for success beyond time at UW. He mentioned that this role is new, and he thinks strategically about this role to meet the KPIs and to measure progress.

Nicholas mentioned that philanthropy efforts are directly working towards engaging off campus stakeholders throughout Waterloo region. Those organizations should align with GSA's political positions and help creating a flourishing community. These engagements would help in leveraging the community developing. The Board has committed to a budget of \$4k CAD to support local philanthropy efforts to improve the off-campus stakeholder reach, to create new opportunities and services to support graduate student experience, as well as support improvements in the welfare of university's broader community.

Nicholas presented the references to the four political positions of the GSA.

Political position 1: *Ensuring ethical and equitable academic, employment, and social policies for UWaterloo Graduate Students.*

Political position 2: *Mitigating barriers to pursuing graduate education in Ontario.*

Political position 3: *Encouraging the University of Waterloo and wider Region of Waterloo community to be leaders in sustainability.*

Political position 4: *Supporting student mental wellness.*

Nicholas mentioned that a call for the political positions should be included in the monthly newsletter of the GSA. He suggested the councillors to reach out to him for the suggestions related to philanthropy efforts.

*The past philanthropy efforts related to **Political position 4** included Sexual Assault Support Centre (Kitchener, ON) which provides online and in-person education, counselling and support services using an intersectional feminist approach to transform systems promoting gender-based violence. Another effort was related to **Political position 3** included Wisahkotewinowak Indigenous Garden Collective (Waterloo, ON) which is an urban Indigenous Garden collective building land-based relationships across the Grand River Territory and includes four different country gardens.*

Nicholas mentioned that philanthropy efforts would help in deepening community partnerships. This can be done by building a database highlighting organization in the region in alignment with GSA's political ends to promote further engagement, maintaining a values-based approach to create a caring and respectful school environment, mobilizing partnerships to support experimental learning and applied research opportunities to enhance student marketability and connecting UW grad community

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with a broader range of key stakeholder, companies, and government structure.

Nicholas added that community organizations which are eligible are the ones which are local non-profit and grassroots organizations, but the priority is given to registered charities. Also, the budget of \$4k CAD is allocated over 3 semesters and each \$1K is allocated to each GSA political position.

Nicholas mentioned that graduate students and councillors are invited to participate by nominating local community-based organizations with a focus on environmental sustainability, mental wellness, and accessibility to graduate students. He mentioned that he wants the council to vote by January 7th, 2022.

Speaker asked for clarification that if the deadline revision is needed for nominations as the Council meeting is scheduled before the voting deadline. Nicholas clarified that this was a hypothetical deadline, and it can be revised.

The Councillor from Political Science asked for clarification if there is any burden on the selected organizations with the events or with reporting. She asked if there are any reporting requirements for the recipient organizations. Nicholas clarified that the only real burden is to participate in “Politictoday” events. So, the organizations are burdened to participate in the events and not on the reporting side. GSA-UW President clarified that if the organization wants to go beyond the events and wants to partner with GSA in other activities, this would be reported on in terms of feedback.

Adjournment

07:05pm