

**Graduate Student Association UW**

# **Council**

**Meeting Minutes**

**January 12, 2022**

**Primary Meeting**

Date: January 12, 2022

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

Place: Virtual

**Council Speaker:** Tyler B. Hampton

**Minutes Taker:** Mavjot Kaur



**MEETING ATTENDENCE**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Position/Faculty</b>	<b>Attendance*</b>
Tyler Hampton	Council Speaker	P
Matthew Gerrits	Arts - Master of Public Service (MPS)	P
Rabia Ahmed	Arts - Master of Digital Experience Innovation (MDEI)	R
Jillian Adams	Arts - Accounting & Finance	P
Erica Swyers	Arts - Germanic & Slavic Studies	P
Cael Dobson	Arts - Philosophy	P
Nathalie Gadbois	Arts - French Studies	P
Chris Martin	Arts - English Language & Literature	P
Madeleine Pinard	Arts - Global Governance	P
Kennedy Westlake	Arts - Psychology	P
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	A
Kevin White	Cross - Collaborative Water Program	P
Devansh Nagpal	Eng - Management Sciences	R
Alex Dalton	Eng - Master of Business, Entrepreneurship, & Technology (MBET)	P
Manh Kien Tran	Eng - Chemical Engineering	P
Carlo Rosel	Eng - Architecture	A
Cindy Yang	Eng - Electrical & Computer Engineering	P
Jinesh Shah	Eng - Mechanical & Mechatronics Engineering	A
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)	P
Misty Matthews-Roper	Enviro - School of Environment, Resources, & Sustainability (SERS)	P
Anju George	Enviro - School of Planning	P
Kalsha Diagarachchige De Silva	Health - Kinesiology	P
MK Stinson	Health - Recreation & Leisure Studies	P
Pam Hopwood	Health - Public Health Science	P
Karolina Kaminska	Health - Public Health Science	P
Benjamin Anderson-Sackaney	Math - Pure Mathematics	A
Asiya Jabeen	Science - Optometry and Vision Science (School of)	P

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Antoine Hakim	Science - Pharmacy (School of)	P
Caleb Ryan	Science - Biology	A
Everett Patterson	Science - Physics and Astronomy	P
Naima Samuel	Senator	R
Onurcan Gokkaya	Senator	
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)	P
Samira Mehrabi	Director (Board)	P
Yi Abby Wang	Director (Board)	P
Ruby Aigbotsua	Director (Board)	P
Zabeen Khamisa	President, Director ex-officio	P
Glaucia Melo	Vice-President (Administration)	P
Rita Cherkewski	Executive Manager	P

\*Attendance

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

**AGENDA**

<b>Time</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Length (min)</b>	<b>Action</b>
4:00 PM	<b>1</b> <b>SPEAKER'S WELCOME AND OPENING REMARKS</b>	2	
4:02 PM	<b>2</b> <b>ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA</b>	1	For Approval
4:03 PM	<b>3</b> <b>DECLARATION OF INTERESTS</b>	1	
4:04 PM	<b>4</b> <b>ATTENDANCE</b>	1	
4:05 PM	<b>5</b> <b>APPROVAL OF MINUTES</b>	0	For Approval
4:05 PM	<b>6</b> <b>UPDATE FROM THE BOARD</b>	10	For Information
4:15 PM	<b>7</b> <b>Update on GSA Housing Strategy - Melo</b>	5	For Information
4:20 PM	<b>8</b> <b>Organize UW Update</b>	5	For Information
4:25 PM	<b>9a</b> <b>Introduction to Funding Discussion - Hampton</b>	15	
4:40 PM	<b>9b</b> <b>Graduate Student Funding Update - Casello</b>	30	For Discussion
5:10 PM	<b>Break</b>	5	
5:15 PM	<b>9c</b> <b>Graduate Funding Discussion - Breakout Rooms</b>	30	For Discussion
5:45 PM	<b>9d</b> <b>Return from Discussion Groups</b>	30	For Approval
6:15 PM	<b>Break</b>	5	
6:20 PM	<b>10</b> <b>Update on GSA Engagement - Bonnell</b>	20	For Information
6:40 PM	<b>11</b> <b>Update on Council Elections - Drisdelle</b>	20	For Information
7:00 PM	<b>ADJOURNMENT</b>		

**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 04:05pm**

*Motion to approve the agenda. Approved unanimously*

**3. Declaration of Interests 04:06pm**

*No conflicts of interests were declared.*

**4. Attendance 04:06pm**

**5. Approval of Minutes 04:06pm**

*The minutes of the November 3rd, 2021, and December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021, meetings were approved unanimously.*

**Council Speaker 04:08pm**

*The Council Speaker mentioned that job opening for GSA Council Minute Taker has been posted.*

*The Council Speaker provided the tentative timeline of the process to appoint next Speaker of the Council. The formal announcement for the position and call of nominations will be held in February. Council Executive Committee (CEC) will review the applications and hold interviews in March. In April meeting, voting by council will be held for Speaker appointment.*

*The Council Speaker mentioned that terms of CEC members are expiring during the process of Council Speaker appointment and suggested options for conducting interviews. He further proposed to resolve this matter offline and discuss the outcomes in the February meeting.*

**6. Update from the Board 04:14pm**

*Samira (Board Chair) gave an update from the Board. The Board successfully held elections and appointed new Board Deputy Chair, Chief Returning Officer, and Chairperson for the AGM 2022. The Board approved and passed the amendments in EL-2.12 and EL-2.15 in second reading of Equity Policy. The Board has approved the revised budget for the Graduate House Equipment (fridge).*

*Tyler asked about inviting talks regarding future strategic planning concerning structure and governance of GSA. Samira clarified that the meeting is going to be held in the beginning of February and the council member are invited to attends the meeting.*

**7. Update on GSA Housing Strategy – Melo 04:22pm**

*VP(Admin) gave an update on GSA Housing Research & Action Group. She mentioned about the commencement of Phase 1 of the Housing Research and Action Group plan. The job opening is posted on the GSA-UW website.*

*VP(Admin) shared information for events taking place in January like Speed Friending, Grad Community Stroll, and various training update sessions. VP(admin) briefed about online resources*

*like Candid Talks posted to the YouTube channel, International Student Discord, and International Graduate Student Blog.*

**8. Organize UW Update**

**04:26pm**

*The OrganizeUW Representative shared about the ongoing drive for the formation of Union of graduate student workers (TAs and RAs), as well as sessional instructors. The Union provides unique legal protection for workers which cannot be covered by GSA. OUW is supported by CUPE. The CUPE was chosen because of its long-standing expertise in the academic sector and the presence among universities across the country. UW is one of the last schools without a union for graduate student workers.*

*She explained the process to get a union by card signing. Around 40-50% of the employees need to sign the card, which is followed by approval from Labour Board. The last step is voting. Weekly open-door meetings are held through video calls for any queries regarding the union.*

**9a. Introduction to Funding Discussion – Hampton**

**04:32pm**

*The Council Speaker commenced the presentation by giving an overview of the accomplishments made by GSA and graduate students in the past two years including:*

- *formation of OUW*
- *increased TA rate*
- *20hour per week work cap*
- *Advocacy resulting in GSA Housing Research and Action Group.*

*The Council Speaker listed some open-ended question for the Councillors to discuss after Dr. Casello Update.*

- *GSA's approach to mitigate barriers to pursue graduate education in Ontario.*
- *How current issues (high debt burden, very low funding) makes education more attainable for wealthy*
- *GSA is at a new inflection point: increased staff, increased advocacy portfolios, increased independence, engagement beyond the ring road and advocacy targeted beyond level UW Admin.*
- *What should graduate education mean? Who should have access? What is the university? All questions we should debate to inform advocacy for the long-term evolution of graduate studies at the University of Waterloo.*

*The Council Speaker asked the Councillors if they have any questions regarding Dr. Casello's Presentation Slides which were shared pervious week.*

*The Councillor of Pharmacy expressed his concern for a mere increase of 1.59% in the 'other' category (referring to Dr. Casello's presentation) while the increase, in case of food, has been 15-20% in the past couple of months. The Council Speaker asked the Councillor of Pharmacy to mention this point during the discussion with Dr. Casello. The GSA-UW President clarifies that the data presented is for next year. GSA's incorporation in feedback process is something which was not practiced before. We may not get clear answer for mentioning about food or housing concern, but this would be on record. The GSA would be able to question about the unsatisfactory answer in the the meeting with Graduate Student Relations Committee.*

*The Councillor of Recreation and Leisure Studies asked what the voting is for as it was not mentioned in the agenda. The Council Speaker clarifies that after the Breakout group discussion, the*

*Council Speaker would ask to vote whether the councillors endorse the 1.68% change in minimum funding level for PhD.*

**9b. Graduate Student Funding Update – Casello**

**04:53pm**

*Jeff Casello updated on the Graduate Student Funding. Casello mentioned about GSRC's tasks for setting Graduate funding levels for FY 22/23,*

- *Determination of hourly rates for TAs and RAs*
- *Establishment of University minimum funding level for PhD students (GSRC does not set minimum funding for to master's students)*
- *Discussion of other issues related to graduate student support*

*Casello mentioned about past year's work, which is the starting point for this work. In last year, substantial change was made in the TA rates. The funding was regularised by making it on hourly basis instead of lumpsum every month. He explained that per 'Provincial Bill 124', the TA and RA wage increase is limited to 1%. However, minimum funding for PhD students is not bound by the Provincial Bill 124. There is flexibility in sources like scholarship, awards, or other non-employment compensations, as they are not limited to 1% increase.*

*Casello said that the university recognises the enormous contributions of graduate students in University's missions of teaching and research. Simultaneously, graduate students come here to advance their own well being by deriving utilities from the university. There are series of consideration for providing financial support to graduate students. Firstly, making it financially feasible for graduate students. Secondly, acknowledging the contribution of graduate students in teaching and research at university. The university is committed to provide transparency for students in both the University-based support and University-controlled costs they incur during their studies. The university may also provide 'financial safety nets' through bursaries and loans in case of short-term circumstances experienced by students.*

*Casello mentioned that Institutional Analysis and Planning (IAP) made a report on year-over year changes in domestic and international tuition fee of master's and PhD students, and changes in cost of living & housing cost in Waterloo Region. These year-over-year changes are compared with previous estimates (3-5 years). The University's funding level is also compared with peer institutions. The changes are also bound by the financial well-being of the university and changes in support if other university cohorts (faculty and staff).*

*Casello provides the process and timeline for this work, which was discussed in the Graduate Student Relations Committee (GSRC) in December.*

*For FY 2022/2023, the GSRC received cost of living changes estimates, which was a breakdown into sub sections- tuition, incidental fees, shelter, and other. For domestic master's, domestic PhDs, and international PhDs, there was a total increase of 1.29% and for international research master's student, the total increase was 2.27%.*

*Casello provided an explanation on estimating shelter cost. For off-campus housing, the estimates are received from Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) on the availability and average rent of various types of apartments in Waterloo Region (including Waterloo and Kitchener). The weighted average of rent per bedroom is estimated and 20% occupancy charges are included (to*

account for utilities). Similarly, for on-campus housing weight average of rent per bedroom is calculated. Then, weighted average of both is estimated, resulting in a an estimated increase in housing expenses of 1.68%.

The Councillor from Physics asked about consideration of inflation in IAP's Consumer Price Index (CPI) models. Casello replied that he is unaware whether it is considered in the evaluation. Since the results are produced by an external source which produces CPI locally.

The Council Speaker added that UW rely on CMHC, which is independent of UW, for estimates. Hence, UW does not cause any inaccuracy in the estimate.

The Councillor for Recreation and Leisure Studies (RLS) mentioned that the weighted average of 1.68% puts international students at disadvantage and higher average of 2.27% should be considered so that international students are not under cut due to domestic students. Casello replied that the same comment came back last year to GSRC, and international students value was adopted. The decision lies with the President.

The Councillor from Collaborative Water Program asked about the criteria for deciding minimum funding for PhD. He mentioned the gap between minimum funding and cost of living, which is roughly 30% higher. Casello referred to the university's principles and clarified that university's intention is not to provide support as per the cost of living but to provide transparency in the support that is available to the graduate students to decide regarding affordability of graduate studies.

The Councillor of Electrical and Computer Engineering (ECE), referring to the councillor of Physics query, asked about the 'Other' cost's figure of 1.59% and how it is justified considering the inflation. She elaborated by giving an example of bottled water, which is basic amenity and mentioned the price increased by 30% in past three months, making the value 1.59% unconvincing. Casello replied that he is unaware of the estimation process but will provide the source. He further asks to provide any sources which the council thinks can be considered in the estimation.

The Council Speaker asked if the inflation issues could be assessed at a broader level, as this issue it not only graduate student focused but involves faculty and staff as well. And 1% cap cannot justify this unforeseen inflation. Casello clarifies that if IAP calculates different value after considering the inflation that does not mean 1% cap will be altered as this depends on Provincial Bill 124.

The Councillor of School of Environment, Enterprise and Development (SEED) asked about allocation of the 1.68% increase in minimum funding and whether it would reflect in the form of increased TA rates or Scholarships. There is tax deduction on funding generated through TAs while scholarships are bursaries are tax free. She mentioned that last year's increase in TA rates increased gross funding but net funding after tax deduction was reduced. Casello said that the most probable distribution would be, TA rates are increasing 1% and the remaining would be allocated to scholarships. However, if there is evidence that net funding is less, they would want to make sure students don't see a decrease in net funding.

Karolina asked about how COVID-19 factors were considered in the cost. Dr. Casello replied that no unique consideration for COVID-19 had been incorporated in the assessment. The Assessment process is based on the methods and factors used in previous years. The Councillor added that the COVID-19 factors are not included in the increased minimum funding level, but Emergency bursaries mentioned in the presentation might have factored COVID-19. Dr. Casello mentioned that the university introduced



*'Academic Readiness Bursaries' for the cost related to transitioning of students from in-person to remote learning. The Council Speaker acknowledges the significant amount of funds endowed in that bursary.*

*The Council Speaker mentioned that Councillor of Civil & Environmental Engineering's question about how university's claim of more applications having justify that they do not need to work on improvement, would be taken up in the GSRC meeting the next day.*

### **9c. Graduate Funding Discussion - Breakout Rooms**

**05:38pm**

*Speaker listed the questions that were to be discussed in the breakout rooms amongst councillors.*

*The questions for the councillors were:*

- *What are concerns/feedback about the consultation process between GSA Council, GSRC, Provost?*
- *What are concerns/feedback about the calculations and data presented today?*
- *Are there student needs that should be factored into this discussion on funding?*
- *How to vote with regard to Council motion to endorse funding levels?*
- *Future pathways to increase accessibility of graduate education (last section of Tyler's report)*

*The Councillors were separated into different breakout rooms to discuss the graduate funding as Councillors.*

#### **Breakout Group 1**

- *Question regarding criteria followed to appoint members in GSRC.*
- *Attending grad school and taking financial burden does not guarantee high paying jobs*
- *Concerns about highly qualified international students receiving insufficient funding.*
- *The University's inability to calculate off campus housing rent. The city and region have data regarding average rent and how it is changing. Is survey an option to evaluate average rent?*
- *Questions regarding whether utilities and internet costs being incorporated in the shelter cost data, if yes, then how?*
- *International students with external fundings which may be insufficient are not considered for university funding.*
- *Scholarships solely does not pay tuition. If TA and RA ships are not available, graduate students consider leaving due to financial burden.*

#### **Breakout Group 2**

- *Information about IAP's data sources would help in contributing alternatives.*
- *University needs to provide higher minimum funding levels.*
- *Transparency on comparisons between universities would be appreciated with a focus on cost of living. The legitimacy of this comparison was questioned.*
- *Travel expenses of students not living in KW region need be incorporated in cost of living.*
- *Regarding Cost of shelter, will GSA be able to offer data collected from ongoing Housing Advocacy project in few years?*
- *Information regarding rent increase and other factors can be collected from the students.*

#### **Breakout Group 3**

- *The turnaround time between GSA council consultation and GSRC is not enough to share all the feedback. The time to review the presentation was also insufficient.*

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- *There might be loss of information in the multi-step process from council to GSRC to provost.*
- *The data sources for calculating specific values should be shared with GSA Council.*
- *The data collected by the CMHC does not include rents based on per room which is methodological discrepancy. Other research methods could be used to collect information on the rental/housing costs.*
- *It would have been better to present the data for each group of students separately. It's important to be mindful of the diversity of experience in the group.*
- *Other sources of data are needed to supplement the CMHC data. There is a need for data triangulation to capture what is going on locally. And capture COVID-19's impact on living costs.*
- *Standard of living, equity, and dignity for students needs to be considered. Other qualitative data should be included.*
- *Critical to keep EDI in mind, including equity in terms of class/SES.*

### **Breakout Group 4**

- *Like the co-op consultation fee: Transparency on process, public discussions, etc. Then, consultation with stakeholder groups, and then official recommendation to the provost should be proposed.*
- *Extreme situation of COVID cannot be ignored while considering housing.*
- *Surveys can be conducted for student's expenses and housing data.*
- *Comparison with other universities regarding their approach to funding and COVID response.*
- *Both 1.68% and 2.27% are very low values as compared to real world living cost.*
- *Use of Tiered system for access to on-campus housing?*

### **Breakout Group 5**

- *The calculations are unrealistic to replicate given cost of living.*
- *Housing issues: students being desperate to find housing leads to scams. Little/no protection is provided against such scams.*
- *Graduate students take a big opportunity cost in pursuing graduate studies. It has now become a common belief that if you choose graduate studies, you explicitly choose to not make money.*
- *Graduate students deserve to live with dignity. They grow up to be the top of tops, yet they are expected to live with the minimum conditions. They choose to pursue continued education for self-actualization and cognitive needs, however, they are unable to meet the bottom requirements of the Maslow's hierarchy of needs, such as physiological and safety needs.*
- *It is also important to recognize the unique needs of grad students as opposed to undergrad students.*
- *There is no reduction in fees, however working from home has increased bills significantly.*
- *Graduate students received no additional stipend for COVID remedy while other universities provided compensation for office supplies.*

### **Breakout Group 6**

- *There seems to be a divide between what the university thinks funding means and what students think graduate funding means.*
- *The metric of graduate students still coming to UW doesn't mean that the funding is good.*
- *There is disparity between the value grad students bring compared to the funding given.*
- *TAs have had to pivot for COVID multiple times.*
- *Grads hide external scholarships or else their department funding is pulled. There should be a guaranteed minimum funding despite any other funding the student brings in.*

- *Transparency of funding across faculties and departments including break down of internal, external, government funding.*

## **9d. Return from Discussion Groups**

**06:06pm**

### **Breakout Room 1**

- *The Councilor of Civil & Environmental Engineering mentioned that financial statistics were discussed and what domestic and international students could face. International and other minor students have limited access to external fundings. These external findings are subject to changes in unforeseen circumstances like COVID.*
- *The Councilor of Civil & Environmental Engineering pointed out Dr. Casello's comment on considering change unnecessary because of high application rate. She added that it is not justified. The graduate students' contribution to the society should be acknowledged by the University and support them by improving the conditions.*
- *The Councilor of Civil & Environmental Engineering asked about the effect on minimum funding level increase if the council does not vote in favor of it. The Council Speaker clarifies that if Council rejects the proposal, this will not affect the increase of 1.68% in funding level.*

### **Breakout Room 2**

- *The Councilor of Physics mentioned that more transparency is required regarding the source of data.*
- *The Councilor of Physics mentioned that Housing Advocacy Project (student) data can be potentially used as a substitute for CMHC (national) data.*
- *The Councilor of Physics suggests that university, being a top-tier institution, should not settle for provide minimum increase in funding level.*

### **Breakout Room 3**

- *The Councilor of School of Environment, Enterprise, & Development mentioned that CMHC does not consider individual room rentals. The university would have to use student data as CMHC's data is unreliable.*
- *The Councilor of School of Environment, Enterprise, & Development mentioned that the university needs to incorporate qualitative data (standard of living, equity) along with quantitative data.*

### **Breakout Room 4**

- *Karolina mentioned that transparency of data source, standard of living were discussed.*
- *Karolina mentioned that other nuances like family should also be considered while calculating the living costs.*

### **Breakout Room 5**

- *The Councilor of Accounting raised concern about the living cost data, she mentioned that it is not possible to replicate it.*
- *The Councilor of Accounting mentioned that the housing needs of grad students can be compared with undergrads.*
- *In reference to Jeff's perspective on Graduate students choose to be at university, The Councilor of Accounting mentioned that graduate students' aim is to provide great research, and this is not possible if they are concerned about their budgets.*
- *In reference to Jeff's comment on not considering COVID costs, Western University gave stipend*

*to the TAs for office supplies.*

**Breakout Room 6**

- *The Councilor of Master of Business, Entrepreneurship, & Technology mentioned that the group had similar thought to other groups.*
- *About transparency, The Councilor of Master of Business, Entrepreneurship, & Technology mentioned that more information on breakdown of of internal, external, government funding across faculties and departments is required.*
- *The Councilor of Master of Business, Entrepreneurship, & Technology raised a concern about the large gap between the value grad students bring to the university and reciprocity of university thinks grads value.*
- *The Graduates are taken for granted as they university thinks the institution’s reputation attract students to come irrespective of the cost.*

*Tyler raised the motion.*

***“BIRT that Council supports the 1.68% increase in PhD minimum funding levels and advises the GSA Representatives vote in favour of this proposal at the January 13, 2022 meeting at the Graduate Student Relations Committee.” (Hampton / Patterson) (0-2-23) (Y-A-N)***

*The motion failed. The second motion was raised.*

*The Councillor of Recreation and Leisure Studies asked if there is a chance of increase in the number 2.27%. She added that Dr. Casello was sensitive on this number as similar situation occurred last year. The Council Speaker clarifies that a motion was not passed last year in Council asking for larger number. The GSA-UW President adds that last year the increase was 2% while council asked for 4%. They settled for bare minimum increase. The GSA-UW President asked to have a realistic number for increase. For the upcoming year, the council may discuss the issue much early in the year and refer to the data for the same. The GSA-UW President mentioned that 2% is a realistic ask.*

***“BIRT that Council supports a minimum 2.27% increase in PhD minimum funding levels and advises the GSA Representatives vote in favour of this proposal at the January 13, 2022 meeting at the Graduate Student Relations Committee.” (Patterson / Driver) (18-4-4) (Y-A-N)***

**10. Update on GSA Engagement – Bonnell**

**06:35pm**

*Kevin introduced himself as the GSA-UW Student Engagement Coordinator. He is PhD candidate in the School of Planning. He was involved in various student affair roles including Board of Director in Undergrad, involvement in as staff in university residence programs, Social Justice and Equity Coordinator Grad.*

*Kevin defined his role and responsibilities:*

- Support GSA in its outreach
- Responsible for growing membership/participation on GSA Board and Council, Departmental GSAs.
- Explore collaboration opportunities with dGSAs
- Primary aspects are supporting the dGSAs and grad reps on Campus-wide Committees
- Support Council Training and the Recruitment Task Force for the Board of Directors.

*Kevin elaborated his responsibilities for dGSA and Campus-Wide Committees, which are*

- Support fee collection and dGSA payment/transfers
- Update contact list
- Training, Workshops, Events
- Attend dGSA events
- Support GSA representatives' recruitment

*Kevin further highlighted the importance of this role:*

- Student volunteering engagement through training the Representatives
- Provide committee training to present a clear picture of GSA's goals and advocacy
- Incorporate volunteers interested in supporting organization's operations into GSA events and initiatives.

*Kevin shared the information regarding workshops held previous term (Fall 2021) like, SGSA Workshop: Edi and Communication Strategies and Advocacy Tactics Workshop Session.*

*Kevin shared Current Strategic Plan. He mentioned about promoting GSA and its advocacy in students by being the front face. This would further enhance in student participation and increased number of councils. The plan had also resulted in the role of election coordinator.*

*Kevin mentioned about the connection of his role with larger GSA. The prominent one is to work towards engaging smaller groups and communities and integrate their work in GSA's wider engagement.*

*Kevin listed his goals:*

- Aware dGSA of the GSA-UW and how they can support
- Get buy in for grad students on campus wide committees
- Building a toolkit for dGSAs and committee reps
- Improve training material and outreach by participation in event, increase social media engagement etc

*Kevin gave a review of Fall 2021. He mentioned about the workshops held last term. He added that communication strategy was improved, and they are much more structured. The goal for Winter 2022 is to ask for feedback without asking for feedback and participate in more dGSA events to build connections. Kevin further laid tentative plan for Winter 2022 for both dGSA and University-Wide Committees.*

## **11. Update on Council Elections – Drisdelle**

**06:49pm**

*Sarah introduction herself the Election Coordinator. She was master's student from Sept 2018-Dec2020. She held various positions in GSA-UW like Office Support Staff, Student engagement coordinator, Election Coordinator and Chief Returning Officer.*

*Sarah mentioned that the Student engagement coordinator had a larger portfolio. Therefore, to support all areas effectively, the Student engagement coordinator was split into two roles and Election Coordinator position was created in January 2021. The Election commission primarily supports planning and execution of items related to student governance within the GSA-UW and secondary tasks include orientation events, training sessions and document creation.*

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*Sarah mentioned that the roles and responsibilities are different for Election Coordinator and Student Engagement Coordinator but there is a lot of overlap between the role as it was one position before. She highlighted her primary roles, that is, Council Election & training which includes organizing elections for each department on the GSA-UW council, developing and hosting training sessions each term for new councilors, assisting GSA-UW councilors with inquiries about student governance. Sarah presented the data regarding GSA-UW Councilor Seats 2019-2021. There has been a significant increase in filled councilor seats. Integration of cross-departmental positions has begun. But one-third of seats are yet to be filled.*

*Board of Directors Support is another primary role which includes, co-organizing Board Training events and special events and aiding with new Director recruitment & AGM within capacity. Being part of the recruitment task force is listed in the job portfolio. However, Chief returning Officer position is an extra responsibility and not a requirement for Election Coordinator.*

*Another chief role is dGSA & Committee Elections. In this role, the Election Coordinator supports elections for various dGSA's and committees and assist with the creation or revisions of policy documents and constitutions.*

*Sarah mentioned about her Secondary roles that is, GSA-UW Orientation & Onboarding. This role includes presenting on behalf of GSA-UW at orientation sessions for new students and providing information about student opportunities etc. Sarah mentioned that this task is not independent of the position. There are many orientation sessions and other GSA-UW representative are also asked to interact with new students. Another part of the GSA-UW Orientation & Onboarding role is creating informational booklets and resources for new GSA-UW employees to familiarize themselves with student governance and help them onboarding. She mentioned that she will be co-creating a GSA-UW Operations Manual in 2022.*

*Sarah highlighted the tasks performed for 2021.*

- *Many elections were conducted for different departments of GSA-UW Council and different committee organizations.*
- *Onboarding training sessions for various positions in GSA-UW and board*
- *Acted as Chief Returning Officer for AGM 2021*
- *Severed as Member of the Recruitment taskforce.*

*The Future Goals for the year 2022 are:*

- *Continue conducting and normalizing GSA-UW councilor elections*
- *Increase the number of filled seats on Council*
- *Continue to serve on RTF*
- *Facilitate Director elections as the 2022 Chief Returning Officer*
- *Assist in the creation of a GSA- UW Operations Manual*

*The GSA-UW President asked what inspired you to be involved in student advocacy. Kevin replied that the excitement dGSA show to start their own organisations irrespective of the fact that it may be draining sometimes. The diversity of people joining the team and different opportunities to collaborate with people from diverse research areas is also exciting. Sarah agreed with Kevin and further added that it is exciting to not just learn about this role but other areas of advocacy and surround yourself with people having great thoughts and ideas.*

**Adjournment**

**07:08pm**

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