

Graduate Student Association UW

Council

Meeting Minutes

March 16, 2022

Special Meeting

Date: March 16, 2022

Time: 4:00 P.M. to 6:00 P.M.

Place: Virtual

Council Speaker: Tyler B. Hampton

Minutes Taker: Mavjot Kaur



MEETING ATTENDENCE

Name	Position/Faculty	Attendance*
Tyler Hampton	Speaker	P
Kalsha Diagarachchige De Silva	Health - Kinesiology	P
MK Stinson	Health - Recreation & Leisure Studies	P
Pam Hopwood	Health - Public Health Sciences (School of)	Po
Karolina Kaminska	Health - Public Health Sciences (School of)	P
Jillian Adams	Arts - Accounting & Finance	P
Rabia Ahmed	Arts - Master of Digital Experience Innovation (MDEI)	P
Chris Martin	Arts - English Language & Literature	P
Stephanie Wilson	Arts - Fine Arts	P
Nathalie Gadbois	Arts - French Studies	A
Erica Swyers	Arts - Germanic & Slavic Studies	A
Teghan Barton	Arts - History	P
Zerihun Kinate	Arts - Master of Peace & Conflict Studies	A
Cael Dobson	Arts - Philosophy	P
Kennedy Westlake	Arts - Psychology	R
Matthew Gerrits	Arts - Master of Public Service (MPS)	P
Ben Szoller	Arts - Religious Studies	P
Madeleine Pinard	Arts - Global Governance	R
Alex Dalton	Eng - Master of Business, Entrepreneurship, & Technology (MBET)	A
Manh Kien Tran	Eng - Chemical Engineering	P
Nastaran Mosavari	Eng - Civil & Environmental Engineering	R
Cindy Yang	Eng - Electrical & Computer Engineering	A
Devansh Nagpal	Eng - Management Sciences	P
Jinesh Shah	Eng - Mechanical & Mechatronics Engineering	A
Elizabeth Diederichs	Eng - Systems Design Engineering	R
Yusof Ghiasi	Enviro - Geography & Environmental Management (GEM)	P
Tia Driver	Enviro - School of Environment, Enterprise, & Development (SEED)	P
Katie Pita	Enviro - School of Environment, Resources, & Sustainability (SERS)	P
Cloe St-Hilaire	Enviro - School of Planning	A
Joseph Meleshko	Math - Computer Science	P
Alexandra Mossman	Math - Statistics & Actuarial Sciences	A

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Caleb Ryan	Science - Biology	A
Everett Patterson	Science - Physics and Astronomy	P
Antoine Hakim	Science - Pharmacy (School of)	A
Asiya Jabeen	Science - Optometry and Vision Science (School of)	P
Kevin White	Cross - Collaborative Water Program	P
Natalie Isobel DeBloeme Barcellos	Director (Board)	R
Yashesh Dasari	Director (Board)	P
Ala Mokhtar	Director (Board)	A
Jessica Lee	Director (Board)	A
Elham Mohammadi	Director (Board)	R
Samira Mehrabi	Director (Board)	A
Yi Abby Wang	Director (Board)	P
Ruby Aigbotsua	Director (Board)	P
Glaucia Melo	Interim President, Director ex-officio	P
Naima Samuel	Senator	
Onurcan Gokkaya	Senator	
Rita Cherkewski	General Manager	P

*Attendance

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

AGENDA

Time	Item		Length (min)
4:00 PM	1	Speaker’s Welcome and Opening Remarks	1
4:02 PM	2	Attendance	1
4:03 PM	3	Declaration of Interests	2
4:04 PM	4	Adoption of the Agenda	1
4:05 PM	5	Discussion on Board-Council Relationship. Continuation of March 2 meeting	45
4:50 PM		Break	5
4:55 PM	6	Confidential Session: Action by Council	
4:55 PM	6a	- Presentation by Council Speaker	15
5:10 PM	6b	- Discussion, Motion	60
6:00 PM		ADJOURNMENT	

MINUTES

1. Speaker’s Welcome and Opening Remarks 04:02pm

Hampton takes the chair and calls the meeting to order at 04:02pm.

2. ATTENDANCE 04:04pm

3. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS 04:04pm

No conflicts of interests were declared.

4. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA 04:07pm

Motion to approve the agenda. Approved unanimously

5. Discussion on Board-Council Relationship. Continuation of March 2 meeting 04:09pm

The Council Speaker commenced the discussion by asking members from the previous meeting who did not get a chance, to share their comments.

The Councillor of Physics found the changes to the By-Law #6 suspicious. He said that there were a lot of efforts put into the justification for changes, but the justification was unsatisfying. The Councillor of Computer Science agreed with the Councillor of Physics. He recalled that when he asked why the president’s vote is considered universal conflict of interest, he was told that he did not have sufficient information. He asked for specific details why it is a conflict of interest.

The Councillor of Accounting and Finance, referring to Board Chair’s want to be involved in advocacy, said that the Board Chair should consider roles of Councillor and management. She also suggested that there should be a training session regarding the Board’s role, responsibilities, and functioning.

Natalie (Director) thanked the Councillors for the accountability that was offered through the comments on By-Law #6. She added that these changes are significant and require informed discussions. However, the Councillors did not have sufficient time to review the changes. She also voiced her support for joint council and board meeting in spring, to build relationships. She asked what the councillors need from the Board to rebuild the trust between them.

The Councillor of Geography & Environmental Management said if president’s voting right in the Board is a concern for the Board, then there is a need for training the Council to understand the Board’s responsibilities and role. However, this concern is for an individual then there is a need to provide some evidence on some kind of behaviour which has led to this change in the By-law #6. The President asked the Council Speaker to provide some information to the Councillor of Geography & Environmental Management regarding the powers of the Council. The Council Speaker replied that he will provide clarification in the Confidential section later in the meeting.

The Councillor of Recreation & Leisure Studies said that, after the responses she got in the last meeting, a good will is not expected from the Board. She also agreed with other councillors about providing a clear justification on the changes made to By-law #6. She mentioned that it is not possible to enact the trust between the Board and Council. This is a valid reason to ensure that there are no secret meetings and By-law changes without consultation.

The Councillor of Physics supported the idea of a casual meeting with the Board, to know them and their role and responsibilities, as both the Council and Board work for the GSA. This will be helpful in developing connections with the peers and achieve the goals of the organisation.

The Councillor of Computer Science asked about the intended goal at the end of this discussion, whether the goal is structural changes in the Board-Council relationship or a just an effort to try and turn up the good will agreement between the two bodies.

The Council Speaker stated the purpose of the discussion today is to ensure that the Council is working on the same goals. He further elaborated the goals of the Council. The Council's goal is to propose the ends of the GSA. The stated goal of the GSA is to operate a club and to operate a graduate student society that advocates for the needs of graduate students. In terms of Council-Board relationship, the Council does not have the unilateral power over the ends. The Councils role is to propose the ends and any changes to ends. The Boards weigh the proposal whether they are reasonable within the interpretation of the Articles of Incorporation. Another role of the Board is to assess that those Ends do not put the organisation into (unreasonable) risk. The Board oversees the President and their progress towards the Organization's Ends. While the Ends cannot be achieved in a single year, progress is expected. If the current Board-President relationship is hampering the President's work, then this is a concern for the Council. He said that the progress in achieving the ends and goals have not stalled but more could be achieved if the Board-Council relationship was on better terms. In response to the Councillor of Computer Science, the Council Speaker clarified that the goal of the discussion is to get the organisation back on track and progress towards the Ends. According to speaker's opinion, the goal is coming to consensus of role clarity, that is, the Council keep working towards the ends and the others with little role in advocacy to continue to do their part in the progress of the organisation. The Councillor of Recreation & Leisure Studies said that revoking president's voting right on Board is not the way by which the Ends of the GSA can be achieved.

The Councillor of Collaborative Water Program asked about the Board-Council relationship prior to COVID-19. What the kind of relationship was, whether the two bodies worked at a distance, or they socialised in person. The Councillor of History replied that there has been ebb and flow between the two branches of the GSA but there was less of a wall as they could socialise after the meetings. The Council Speaker added that there was a similar tension on the roles of the different arms of the GSA in 2020 before the pandemic happened. He also added that the Board can advocate in terms of introducing services for the graduate students. However, the Council is prioritized when it comes to advocacy.

The Councillor of School of Environment, Enterprise, & Development said that the current relationship between the Council and the Board is not sustainable for the organisation. The advocacy effort done in the Council is contingent to reputation and governance of the Council. An open and closer relationship with the Board will be helpful in releasing the tension. Hence, she is in favour of having more frequent communications and get-togethers.

The Council Speaker asked to develop their thoughts about the get-together and express it to the next Council Speaker.

The Councillor of Computer Science asked if Councillors attend the board meetings. As a part of the issue is less representation of the Council in the Board, not in terms of voting but what is happening in the Board. The Council Speaker mentioned that the policy outlines that the councillors have the right to attend the Board meetings. However, there has been no formal invitation or update regarding the Board meetings by the current and the past Board Chairs. He added that if the Council wants, they

can request for updates and invitations regarding the Board meetings. The Councillor of Computer Science said that the part of the issue is stemmed from the council being entirely excluded from the Board meetings. There might be some inconvenience that Council is more accessible than the Board in general. However, presence of a councillor in the Board meetings is a good trust building measure. The Councillor of Recreation & Leisure Studies and the Councillor Geography & Environmental Management agreed on the presence of Councillor as a witness in the Board meetings.

Yi (Director) said that according to her, the tension rose while discussing about the president's voting right at the board meetings. She mentioned that the role of the Board of directors is that the GSA achieve appropriate results for appropriate persons at appropriate cost. This is the reason behind rejection of some proposals. The way of interpreting the policy is one of the reasons for the tension. This interpretation depends on how the conflict of interest is determined. She said that removing a person from their position is not appropriate. The ideal way is better definition of the policy, so that this issue does not rise in future. She further supported the idea of Council joining the Board meeting to know their point of view. There has been miscommunication and lack of communication which has led to trust issues and there is need to rebuild this trust.

Speaker moved the meeting into Confidential Session, approved by unanimous consent.

6. Confidential Session

05:10pm

Refer to the Confidential Meeting Minutes.

Adjournment

6:50pm