

**Graduate Student Association UW**

# **Council**

**Meeting Minutes**

**May 4 , 2022**

**Primary Meeting**

Date: May 4 , **2022**

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

Place: Virtual

**Council Speaker:** Sidra Khan

**Minutes Taker:** Mavjot Kaur



**MEETING ATTENDENCE**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Position/Faculty</b>	<b>Attendance*</b>
Sidra Khan	Speaker of Council	P
Kalsha Diaguarachchige De Silva	Health - Kinesiology	P
MK Stinson	Health - Recreation & Leisure Studies	P
Pam Hopwood	Health - Public Health Sciences (School of )	P
Jillian Adams	Arts - Accounting & Finance	P
Rabia Ahmed	Arts - Master of Digital Experience Innovation (MDEI)	A
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
Michelle Brown	Arts - History	A
Zerihun Kinate	Arts - Master of Peace & Conflict Studies	P
Cael Dobson	Arts - Philosophy	P
Kennedy Westlake	Arts - Psychology	P
Matthew Gerrits	Arts - Master of Public Service (MPS)	A
Ben Szoller	Arts - Religious Studies	P
Madeleine Pinard	Arts - Global Governance	A
Alex Dalton	Eng - Master of Business, Entrepreneurship, & Technology (MBET)	P
Manh Kien Tran	Eng - Chemical Engineering	P
Nastaran Mosavari	Eng - Civil & Environmental Engineering	R
Cindy Yang	Eng - Electrical & Computer Engineering	P
Devansh Nagpal	Eng - Management Sciences	A
Jinesh Shah	Eng - Mechanical & Mechatronics Engineering	A
Elizabeth Diederichs	Eng - Systems Design Engineering	P
Yusof Ghiasi	Enviro - Geography & Environmental Management (GEM)	A
Tia Driver	Enviro - School of Environment, Enterprise, & Development (SEED)	A
Katie Pita	Enviro - School of Environment, Resources, & Sustainability (SERS)	P
Cloe St-Hilaire	Enviro - School of Planning	P
Joseph Meleshko	Math - Computer Science	P
Alexandra Mossman	Math - Statistics & Actuarial Sciences	P
Caleb Ryan	Science - Biology	A
Everett Patterson	Science - Physics and Astronomy	P

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Antoine Hakim	Science - Pharmacy (School of)	P
Asiya Jabeen	Science - Optometry and Vision Science (School of)	P
Kevin White	Collaborative Water Program	P
Elham Mohammadi	Director (Board)	A
Samira Mehrabi	Director (Board)	A
Yi Abby Wang	Director (Board)	A
Ruby Aigbotsua	Director (Board)	P
Mohammad Barkhori	Director (Board)	P
Tia Driver	Director (Board)	P
Teghan Barton	Director (Board)	P
Kaylee Biggart	Director (Board)	P
Everett Patterson	Director (Board)	P
David Billedeau	Director (Board)	A
Glaucia Melo	President, Director ex-officio	P
Tyler Hampton	Vice-President (Communication)	P
Naima Samuel	Senator	A
Onurcan Gokkaya	Senator	A
Aiman Fatima	Senator	P
Jack DeGooyer	Senator	A
Aiden Huffman	SGRC	P
Sophia Sanniti	SGRC	A
Jennifer Reid	SGRC	A
Rita Cherkewski	Executive Manager	P
Christy Racho	Office Coordinator	A

\*Attendance

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

AGENDA

<b>Time</b>	<b>Item</b>		<b>Length (min)</b>
4:00 PM	<b>1</b>	<b>Opening Remarks</b> - Speaker's Welcome - Land Acknowledgement	2
4:02 PM	<b>2</b>	<b>Attendance</b>	1
4:03 PM	<b>3</b>	<b>Declaration of Interests</b>	1
4:04 PM	<b>4</b>	<b>Adoption of the Agenda</b>	1
4:05 PM	<b>5</b>	<b>Approval of Meeting Minutes</b> - March 2 - March 16	5
4:10 PM	<b>6</b>	<b>Introductions</b>	15
4:25 PM	<b>7</b>	<b>Update from the Speaker</b>	5
4:30 PM	<b>8</b>	<b>Update from the President</b>	8
4:38 PM	<b>9</b>	<b>Update from the Board</b>	8
4:46 PM	<b>10</b>	<b>Update from OUW</b>	5
4:51 PM	<b>11</b>	<b>Discussion on Council Format</b>	
4:51 PM	<b>11a</b>	<b>- Council Meeting Dates and Times (first Wednesday 4-7 PM)</b>	10
5:01 PM	<b>11b</b>	<b>- Councillor Handbook</b>	15
5:16 PM		<b>5 minute break</b>	5
5:21 PM	<b>11c</b>	<b>- Format and Election of Council Executive Committee</b>	15
5:36 PM	<b>11d</b>	<b>- Format and Election/Appointment of Deputy Speaker Role</b>	15
5:51 PM	<b>11e</b>	<b>- International Student Concerns at Council</b>	15
6:06 PM	<b>11f</b>	<b>- Council Cost of Governance Budget</b>	10
6:16 PM		<b>5 minute break</b>	5
6:21 PM	<b>12</b>	<b>President Nominating Committee Presentation</b> - Confidential Session	40
7:01 PM		<b>ADJOURNMENT</b>	

**MINUTES**

- 1. Opening Remarks** **04:01pm**  
-Speaker’s Welcome  
-Land Acknowledgement

*Khan takes the chair and calls the meeting to order at 04:01pm.*

- 2. Attendance** **04:03pm**  
*Kaur takes the attendance.*

- 3. Declaration of Interests** **04:03pm**  
*No conflicts of interests were declared.*

- 4. Adoption of Agenda** **04:04pm**  
*Motion to approve the agenda. Approved unanimously*

- 5. Approval of Meeting Minutes** **04:04pm**  
-March 2  
-March 16  
*Tia (Director) had an issue with how her statement was recorded in March 16, 2022 meeting minutes. The Statement is to be revised from “The advocacy effort done in the Council is contingent to reputation and governance of the Council” to “The advocacy effort done in the Council is contingent on the reputation and governance of the GSA and its Board”.*

- 6. Introduction** **04:05pm**  
*The Council Speaker introduced herself as the New Council Speaker. She further asked the members of GSA to introduce them. Everyone present in the meeting gave an introduction.*

- 7. Update from the Speaker** **04:25pm**  
*There was no update from the Council Speaker.*

- 8. Update from the President** **04:26pm**  
*VP Comm updated on the Graduate House Orientation events. The welcome events being hosted are faculty specific. He also presented the schedule of these events which will be published in the graduate newsletter.*

- 9. Update from the Board** **04:30pm**  
*There was no update from the Board.*

- 10. Update from OUW** **04:30pm**  
*OrganizeUW (OUW) representative gave an update on the state of OUW Campaign. The drive is 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.*

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*The OUW is no longer offer online drop-in session, however, it is offering in-person session ‘Stammtisch’ every Monday from 5-7pm at the Graduate House. The OUW is expecting to one event each month in the summer semester. The information regarding these events will be posted on their social media platforms.*

### 11. Discussion on Council Format

04:33pm

#### **-Council Meeting Dates and Times (first Wednesday 4-7 PM)**

04:33pm

*The Council Speaker asked about the Council Meeting Date and timing for this year. She further added that the Councillor of Electrical & Computer Engineering has conflict with the timings. The first Wednesday of every month from 4-7pm was selected with unanimous consent.*

#### **-Councillor Handbook**

04:35pm

*The former Council Speaker, Tyler, amended the Councillor Handbook and asked for feedback on these amendments. One of the Councillors said that the Handbook is great and comprehensive. The Councillor of Recreation & Leisure Studies also said that it is comprehensive. She added that there can be discussion about rules and protocols for the meeting format later, if the meeting are in person.*

### 12. -Format and Election of Council Executive Committee

04:42pm

*The Council speaker said that there will be updated about the format and election Council Executive Committee (CEC) in the following days after the meeting.*

### 13. -Format and Election/Appointment of Deputy Speaker Role

04:52pm

*The Council Speaker mentioned that the role of Deputy Speaker is mainly to substitute in case of emergency. The VP Comm mentioned that the role of Deputy Speaker is described in GP-8. The Council Speaker added that the Deputy Speaker is automatically part of the Council Executive Committee. The Council Speaker further mentioned about the appointment process. The nominees will be finalised, and voting will be held. This whole process of appointment will be in-person.*

#### **-Council Cost of Governance Budget**

04:57pm

*The Council Speaker commenced the discussion by informing that the Council Chair is being paid \$25 per hour whereas TA and RA are being paid around \$45/hour. She added that to encourage the students to join for the GSA instead of opting TA/RAships , they need to be paid at the level of TAs and RAs. The GSA-President informed that there are plans to renew the GSA budget plan for this year, therefore, it is the right time to make suggestions for any changes. She added that the major expense of GSA is staff, other than housing plan. She also asked to consider the time commitment of the directors who participated in committees. The current policies do not talk about paying the directors for those extra hours. The VP Comm said that the staff have not got a raise in the past few years and even the GSA fee has not been raised. The GSA fee increase is Board’s matter however the Council can talk about the staff pay rates.*

*The Councillor of School of Environment, Resources, & Sustainability (SERS) said that people should be remunerated for their work. She supported the increase in wages of the GSA staff.*

*The Councillor of Accounting & Finance asked whether the discussion is about the pay rate increase of all the paid members or some specific members. She also asked if the discussion is about paying*

*the non-paid members as well. The President said that currently there are no specifics. She added that by staff she meant president, vice-president, coordinators, and volunteering staff who works a lot more than their initial contract. The Councillor of Accounting & Finance suggested the practices followed in Western University, that is, to include honorarium in the Budget which can be given to volunteering staff for their outstanding service. The Councillor of SERS support the idea suggested by the Councillor of Accounting & Finance. The VP Comm mentioned that few years back the paid staff included the President, the Vice-President, and General Manager, however, the current staff includes the President, two VPs, General Manager and 12 Coordinators. In the past, the roles of Coordinators were handled by Commissioners which were part of the Council, these commissioners were given honorarium.*

*The Council Speaker asked about any disagreement on the increase in wages or honorarium. The Council did not show agreement.*

*The Council Speaker asked about the next step in the process now that the Council agreed to the renewal of budget. The President clarified that the Management time will initiate further conversations with the General Manager, Accountant and other people who are involved in the budget planning.*

*The General Manager mentioned there should be a consideration whether to increase the current monthly paid honorariums or introduce flat amount honorariums.*

*The Councillor of Computer Science suggested to discuss the specific proposal rather than a general discussion about the budget.*

#### **-International Student Concerns at Council**

**05:14pm**

*The Council Speaker said that the Councillor of Master of Peace & Conflict Studies brought up the challenges faced by the international students, be it housing issue or culture difference. The President added that it is good idea to invite Jeff Casello in the next meeting to discuss such issues.*

*The Council of Master of Peace & Conflict Studies raised the various concern that international students faced. He highlighted that in the past, there had been incidents where international students have been forbidden to take leadership roles in the GSA. Considering the significant number of international students in the University, a conscious approach needs to take to include them in the organisation. He added that there is a need to understand that international students have different needs. There should be a specific resource available to them to look for the information required. Along with this, there should a certain contact, email or phone number, where they can reach for such inquires. This could be achieved by international office in alliance with the GSA. He suggested to have a welcome event to guide them where to go or whom to contact for different problems. He also mentioned that there should be so social and psychology support provided to the international students. He proposed to design a program and consults various stakeholders in the University including the international community on how to address their issues through meetings.*

*The Councillor of Statistics & Actuarial Sciences voice the international students' concern of renting a place when the University was transitioning back to in-person classes. The problem was not finding a place but also the of being scammed. The students who are moving to waterloo from other countries and even other provinces should have awareness about their rights as a tenant in Ontario. There should be resources which should be easily accessible for them.*

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*The Councillor of Accounting & Finance asked for more context in this topic to discuss it with her constituents. The President clarified that the matter is being discussed broadly right now. However, in case of Jeff Casello is invited for discussion on this matter, the Councillors will be informed so that they can discuss it with the constituents. The Council Speaker suggested to have a mentor from their culture for each student from the peer group whom the student can contact for all general queries. She further shared her personal experience with the therapist which was assigned to her. She said that half of the time she had to explain the cultural context on why she is experiencing such issues. She suggested either to have an international therapist or to have a therapist who understands where the student comes from. The President considered the feedback from the Council Speaker and mentioned that this will be discussed in the next GSRC meeting as Counselling Services Director is being invited to the meeting. She added that they recently hired a person who focuses on international students. They are currently working with the international student coordinator however they are not a counsellor. The President also supports the idea of one-on-one mentoring program. She also said that there is useful information available through GSPA and GSA but seem to be not accessible enough for students.*

*The Council of Master of Peace & Conflict Studies mentioned that the issue diversity and inclusion is being overlooked. Even the GSA should try to contemplate the diversity and inclusion in their division. He further suggested to have a tailored approach to address this issue. The GSA setting might look into it as these issues cannot be handled within the existing framework. There should be a responsible division within GSA to manage and handle the issue of culture and race so that a person could approach them in the GSA office.*

*The VP Comm mentioned that the student feedback on graduate student orientation 2021 was not positive. He said that this is broader conversation, so there can be discussion on what is the first set of resources that students need. He added that resources related to housing, scams and other major needs of the students are available on the website, but they are poorly organized. He said that the Council has a general idea about their basic need of resources and this conversation can focus on it.*

*The Councillor of School of Environment, Enterprise, & Development suggested to avail these resources on GSA website, and these can be accessible in different languages for those whose first language is not English.*

*The Councillor of School of Planning asked the Council Speaker to reach out the international students about their views on this topic to have discussion about it in the next meeting. She also suggested to discuss about the tax filing, not only encourage them to file the taxes but provide them resources as the current resources are scattered. The President said that the tax filing services are already being offered by the GSA. She also asked the Councillor of School of Planning to not wait for the meetings to discuss such issues but reach out to her directly.*

*Mohammad (Director) said that the directors receive a document as they are transitioning into the new role and suggested to use a similar approach in case of students.*



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**-Confidential Session**

**Adjournment**

**6:45pm**