**Graduate Student Association UW**

**Council Meeting Summary**

**August 8th , 2024**

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| **Primary Meeting**  Date: August 8th , 2024  Time: 5:30 P.M. to 8:30 P.M.  Place: GSA Boardroom (Hybrid) |  |

**Council Speaker:** Abhishesh Homagain

**Minutes Taker:** Natalie Lok Yee Tong



August Council Meeting Summary

The meeting started with the information and approval of the two new VP staff hired in the GSA. VP admin had 22 external applications, among which 4 of them were selected to interview. Meray Sadek was recommended by the VPNC and approved by council to serve as VP Admin from August 2024-2025. Motion Passed unanimously.

VP Advocacy had an internal hire, Thabie Lechesa, who was previously the GSA Advising Coordinator. Being experienced in working in NGOs and collaborating in advocacy initiatives in the past, the exec team saw it a good fit to move from the GSA Advising position to VP Advocacy. Council agreed and passed the motion to unanimously approve Thabie Lechesa as VP Advocacy for August 2024-2025.

Council then discussed about having a start-of-term council event, for all members as teambuilding/social event. A bonfire on campus was decided as the best event.

Board Chair Kaylee then gave a presentation about the hierarchy of the GSA and how the main branches (executive, council, and board) operate within the organization.

SERS councillor provided information on potential issues affecting graduate students doing remote work, citing complaints brought up by the student regarding proper compensation, safety training, and lack of proper safety and well-being measures. Councillors discussed their department’s approach in remote work and remote field collections citing that each department had proper training prior to being sent out to the field. The SERS councillor was advised to reach out to their department first and then return to council if the situation was not handled from the department level. The Speaker also suggested to bring this issue up to GSRC if further assistance was needed.

After updates from the (current) VP Admin about current vacancies in the GSA (can be found in the GSA website for those interested) the strategic plan was also discussed and is set to be launched in the second week of September.

Board Chair Kaylee provided an update on progress of approving the budget for the upcoming year and approval of the Grad House finances.

Council member from the science department also raised a concern about different services provided on campus and whether the GSA and or WUSA had any say in when and how these services operated. Specifically, the member raised the issue about the Science Coffee and Doughnuts (CnD) which was always closed and wanted to ask whether the GSA or WUSA was the appropriate place to get this service running again. The VP Admin clarified that the Science Society represented specifically for the undergraduate students in the Faculty of Science. The voluntary basis it suggested it was a DGSA issue, which the WUSA would not have a role to play in this situation (nor would GSA).

The last topic was raised by a council member who urged council to support the CARE coalition’s demands of the university to take greater measures to protect the health and safety of all faculty, staff, and students.

Link to the letter:[*https://docs.google.com/document/u/0/d/e/2PACX-1vSECFXEjjO5gc2dUSN\_BdteRy1p9VskssARI5-eQbR1RUbFnJD1l9uYSeaX8-hz1f\_12xgz7dZP8lxQ/pub?pli=1*](https://docs.google.com/document/u/0/d/e/2PACX-1vSECFXEjjO5gc2dUSN_BdteRy1p9VskssARI5-eQbR1RUbFnJD1l9uYSeaX8-hz1f_12xgz7dZP8lxQ/pub?pli=1)

This was the second time such an issue had come to council, and in the past council refrained from providing explicit support due to a small percentage of graduate students who signed on in this letter. The council member brought up the point that communication barriers existed in the past that served to cause this low percentage of grad student support and circulating this letter though council and it’s members would lead to more students potentially signing the petition. The Speaker agreed and was tasked to share the open letter to all council members, asking all members to also share this with all their constituents. Council also passed a motion that urged the exec team to reconsider their previous decision regarding the distribution of the CARE coalition’s demands regarding the COVID19 safety on UW Campus, motion passed.

Adjournment.