



October Meeting Summary

The meeting commenced with the introduction of new councillors. Following the introductions, the meeting moved on to a presentation on the Graduate Studies Endowment Fund (GSEF). The GSEF Coordinator outlined various aspects of the fund, such as its processes, graduate student projects, funding mechanisms, involvement opportunities, and contact information. There was a query about the limits on the number of applications a single student or department could submit to GSEF. The GSEF Coordinator clarified that there was no specific limit but cautioned that the funding amount for recurring applications could be subject to reductions based on the Board's decisions.

Another question related to the timeline for GSEF applications. For small projects, students were recommended to apply at least three weeks in advance, with applications due on the first day of each month. The review process takes one week, followed by a week for voting, and a final week for the Board to make decisions. For larger projects due once per term, it was advisable to apply six weeks or a semester in advance, as a presentation was required, resulting in a longer turnaround time, ranging from three to five weeks based on board responses. The council was also notified of two open voluntary positions within GSEF, and details were provided on how to apply.

A query was raised about the need for collaboration with departments for GSEF applications. The GSEF Coordinator clarified that while collaboration wasn't necessary, department approval endorsement and reference letters were required. There had not been any disapproval of students' events and gatherings in the past.

The meeting shifted its focus to discuss slight modifications to by-laws 4, 5, and 6. Tia Driver, the director of the board, offered a detailed explanation of the purpose of these by-laws and the changes made. The second reading of the by-laws was scheduled for November, followed by a final review by JPRC. Additionally, term limits for board directors and restrictions on GSA Councillors simultaneously holding Board of Directors (BOD) positions were clarified.

The Vice President of Administration provided an update announcing the upcoming launch of the 3-year GSA Strategic Plan at the next AGM in April 2024. The GSA was actively seeking a council member to volunteer for the survey Plan review committee, responsible for overseeing the survey process launching at the end of October. The data collected would inform strategic

plan modifications and ways to support UW Grad students. The estimated commitment for this volunteer role was noted to be approximately 20 hours.

Following a break, the Board provided an update, which included a call for new directors and nominations. The application deadline was set for October 16, with up to five candidates invited to speak at the October meeting on the 27th. Councillors applying for Board positions would be temporarily on hold.

The Organize of the University of Waterloo (OUW) provided an update, focusing on a survey of TAs, RAs, and other Student academic-related jobs. The survey results were shared during the meeting, featuring questions about key priorities and issues. Councillors inquired about departmental breakdowns for safety concerns, to which the OUW Coordinator indicated this might be considered in the future. Additionally, the timeline for unionisation was discussed, with a target of reaching 40% support by the Fall semester. The OUW Coordinator assured that work conditions would remain unchanged until a collective agreement was reached. Opportunities for involvement and further questions were presented.

Lastly, one councillor sought guidance on how to file a formal complaint with a faculty and what support the GSA could offer in such instances. The GSA executive team advised contacting the VP Admin or VP Advocacy for assistance. Additionally, the council received feedback on council social events and expressed a preference for indoor meetings due to impending weather conditions. They also considered adding department introductions during monthly meetings. A consensus was reached in favour of using Microsoft Teams over Slack as the preferred communication platform due to its user-friendly nature.