



The September Council meeting was held on the 14th of September 2023. The meeting started at 5:30 pm and ended at 8:11 p.m. The meeting was attended by 25 Councillors and was held in a hybrid model. The meeting began with the land acknowledgement, declaration of interest, adoption of August meeting minutes, and September agenda before delving into Council discussions.

During the July meeting, Director Glen Wepler, Campus Housing, introduced the Campus Housing Facility Renewal Strategy. The presentation primarily focused on the factors influencing students' housing choices, including privacy, price, proximity, and cleanliness. To gather valuable insights from student representatives on the Council, the Campus Housing team, led by the manager, provided a comprehensive overview of the impacts of campus housing. They also presented five key questions to the council members, addressing various critical aspects.

These questions spanned a wide spectrum, touching on concerns related to housing fees, affordability, support mechanisms for low-income students, amenities, and the sharing of data for project knowledge. The housing fee discussion included safety, parking availability, pet-friendly accommodations, mentorship programs, funding considerations for future projects, issues surrounding late notices for housing offers, and ensuring accessibility for international students.

Following that, the GSA-UW Wellness Advising Coordinator, Kaylia Little, presented and discussed Policy 42, which addresses the prevention of and response to sexual violence. Council members provided input on principles they wanted to see in Policy 42, such as being survivor-centered, rehabilitative, providing full choice for survivors in selecting responses, considering intersectionality, offering to counsel, and ensuring confidentiality.

Subsequently, the discussion covered the differences between Policy 33 and Policy 42, with an emphasis on the need to rebuild and clarify Policy 42 to align with Ontario government requirements.

The GSA President made a presentation on the Smoke-Free Policy, which is set to take effect on July 1st, 2024. The rationale for this transition included health concerns and a desire for the university to lead by example in curbing tobacco use. Council members suggested designated smoking areas to prevent rule violations and addressed concerns about penalties, particularly for on-campus residents.

Furthermore, concerns were raised about the increase in smoking around off-campus areas and among international students who may not be aware of local laws. Council members recommended clearer wording and consequences for violations, including warnings on student records for repeat offenders.

A discussion ensued about the spiritual use of tobacco and cannabis, with questions regarding verification for spiritual cannabis use. The GSA President agreed to seek clarification from the university on penalties and sought input on support measures to be provided to students before the policy implementation.

In an update by the new VP Admin Esteban Salazar highlighted information about ongoing elections. The council was informed about GSA's rebranding, including a logo change, with a detailed presentation expected in November.

The Board Chair gave an update highlighting the approval of the GSA budget and VP nomination, along with plans to recruit more directors in the future.

The OUW provided information on recent and upcoming campaigns and events for graduate students, including details about an upcoming town hall event.

The next meeting was adjourned to 19th October 2023 due to reading week.