



## Council

**Notice of Meeting**  
**Date: Wednesday, August 7th, 2019**  
**Time: 4:00 P.M. – 6:00 P.M.**  
**Place: NH 3407**

### AGENDA

Time	Item	Action
4:00 pm	<b>1. Speaker's Welcome and Opening Remarks</b>	-
	<b>2. Adoption of the Agenda</b> (Changes will be noted with **)	For Approval
	<b>3. Attendance</b>	-
	<b>4. Declarations of Interest</b>	For Info
4:10 pm	<b>5. Approval of the Minutes of the Previous Meeting</b> a. October 11, 2018 (tentative) b. July 3, 2019	For Approval
n/a	<b>6. Delegations</b>	For Approval
4:15 pm	<b>7. Reports</b> a. Council Membership Update	For Info
4:20 pm	<b>8. Motions</b> a. Motion to appoint Councillor to the Council Executive Committee b. Motion to appoint Councillor to the Strategic Planning Steering Committee	For Approval
4:30 pm	<b>9. Advising the President</b>	For Info
5:05 pm	<b>10. New Business &amp; Members' Discussion</b> a. Slack b. Strategic Planning Feedback	For Info
5:45 pm	<b>11. Update from the Board</b>	For Info
5:50 pm	<b>12. Outstanding Action Items</b>	For Info
5:55 pm	<b>13. Notices of Motion</b>	-
6:00 pm	<b>14. Adjournment</b>	-

Marsha Paley  
 Speaker of the Council  
 GSA-UW

August 7, 2019

## RESOLUTIONS

### 8a Motion to appoint Councillor to the Council Executive Committee

**BIRT** the GSA-UW Council appoint a Councillor from the following Faculty to the Council Executive Committee:

**Science:**

### 8b Motion to appoint Councillor to the Strategic Planning Steering Committee

**BIRT** the GSA-UW Council appoint the following Councillor to the SPSC for the 2019-2020 year:

**Samantha Lynne Sargent**

### 10 New Business & Members Discussion

- a. Slack
- b. Strategic Planning Feedback



## Council

### Meeting Minutes

**Date: Wednesday, August 7<sup>th</sup>, 2019**

**Time: 4:00 P.M. – 6:00 P.M.**

**Place: NH 3407**

Time	Item
4:00 pm	<b>1. Speaker's Welcome and Opening Remarks</b> The Speaker took the Chair. Quorum was present (/18).
4:02 pm	<b>2. Adoption of the Agenda</b> (Changes will be noted with **) The agenda was adopted. Moved Sargent/Smith. Approved. <b>Carried.</b>
	<b>3. Attendance</b> The speaker and note taker took attendance.
	<b>4. Declarations of Interest</b> No declarations of interest
4:06	<b>5. Approval of the Minutes of the Previous Meeting</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. October 11, 2018 (tentative) Deferred</li> <li>b. July 3, 2019 Moved Robbins/ Popović. Approved. <b>Carried.</b></li> </ul>
n/a 4:08	<b>6. Delegations</b> Motion to move into a closed meeting. Moved Sargent/Robbins. Closed: Brayden Wilson resigned from his position as deputy speaker. Motion to move out of closed meeting. Moved Smith/Popović.
4:17	<b>7. Reports</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Council Membership Update There is a need to fill open positions and update current membership list on slack and sharepoint.</li> </ul>
4:19	<b>8. Motions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Motion to appoint Councillor to the Council Executive Committee CEC meets once a month for one hour prior to the regular council meeting. Their duties involve reading through the council agenda and making any necessary revisions. Call for nominations was made for this position – none made at this time. Motion to defer this appointment to a future meeting. Moved Popović/Robbins. Approved unanimously. <b>Carried.</b></li> <li>b. Motion to appoint Councillor to the Strategic Planning Steering Committee Motion to approve Sargent into this position. Moved by Haque/Popović. Approved unanimously. <b>Carried.</b></li> </ul>
4:22	<b>9. Advising the President</b>

The President delivered a presentation on current updates:

- Student Experience Review Report. The results of the external reviews for the student experience report were consistent with expected findings regarding funding, housing, social activities, etc. These issues will be presented to faculty and deans and a subsequent report will be presented in September.
- Information on offer letters. Offer letters worked on by GSPA, progress has been made; expecting January 2020 will be updated.
- Funding (IDSA). The GSPA has offered their assistance in uncovering issues related to graduate student funding. The problem in the Physics department for an international student receiving IDSA funding was resolved. Communication about IDSA was sorted out by GSPA, and they have informed staff in Physics on how to disperse funding to students. The GSPA will work with other departments who experience similar issues, and a report on progress will be made.
- SLC/PAC schedule. Not enough progress has been made to open facilities in September. Workers strike in July and technical issues have hindered progress; the new expected deadline is Spring 2020. A further report will be presented in September.
- Vital Signs survey. A data analyst was hired to clean and examine data. First draft on results is expected in September – next steps will also be addressed.
- Policy 30. After the committee finalized the policy, a long consultation process was required. Discussions with deans were held in July; the committee will reconvene to address the feedback received during this process.
- Council Participation needed for orientation, alumni engagement, and committee vacancies. Councilors should attend their departmental orientation sessions to talk about GSA to incoming students; a slide deck will be provided for a brief presentation. If councilors cannot attend, please let GSA administration know so that another representative can attend. Faculty-specific events for graduate students will also be held.
- The alumni office was consulted about the student choice initiative and how alumni can engage with current graduate students. Input from graduate students is desired.
- Two new vacancies for committee positions: graduate supervision taskforce and the wellness collaborative.
- Reviewed sharepoint and how to access it.
- Student Choice Initiative. GSA fee breakdowns were outlined. Quest roll out has been implemented, as well as the optional fees page; by default, students are opted in to fees and have to go to separate page to manually opt out of specific services. The tuition bill will show what fees are paid for. Data reporting from the Finance department (e.g. how many opted out) will be done by the end of August. Various communication efforts were described for incoming and returning students. The proposed plan for handling the SCI was presented.
- The Political Director provided an update on student engagement. No further updates on federal election debates yet. Fall 2019 #WeDoThis Campaign: a means of communicating what the GSA is and what activities they carry out. Involves posters and social media posts on Facebook and Instagram. Campus-wide graduate associations: why aren't graduate students engaged? Focus on ground-up approach, networking with departmental/faculty GSAs on a regular basis, create GSAs where gaps exist, and build a community of graduate students.

Questions:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leaders debate scheduled for early October in the Ottawa area; is UW involved in this? UW is not part of the Ottawa area and there is a need to position ourselves as a specific demographic block that need to be communicated with.</li> <li>• Offer letters: are they legally binding documents? The department and student supervisor are obliged to comply with any information sent to the student in the offer letter. It should be a legal document that can be brought forth into a court of law. Further research can be conducted.</li> <li>• SCI: cannot opt-out of fees after the tuition cut-off period, with rare exceptions. How about opting in to fees after the tuition deadline? This possibility is still under consideration. Will services receive a list of students who have opted in? Finance will provide the list for students who paid for services. When submitting a promissory note, opting out of fees is still a separate process. Even after it is submitted, the final tuition bill can be altered until the deadline. Will the SCI affect quality of services? If a lot of students opt out, then services will be affected. A plan will be put into place if the end-of-August report demonstrates that there has been a high number of student opt-outs. The top three services that are expected to be affected are: advising services (legal aid, tax, student support), social events and initiatives funding, and the grad house. Strategies are in place to look at other sources of revenue to support these structures if required. What is the GSA's capacity for opt-outs before funding becomes affected? It is still being considered, current plans are based on prior estimates.</li> <li>• Grad house: are there any estimates on how many students have opted out of the grad house, and is there infrastructure in place to check if the fee has been paid? No data on opt-outs yet. The grad house has not operated in a fee-checking capacity yet, but infrastructure will be implemented to account for this; possible scenarios that would be feasible are being devised. The alumni relations office will be approached for support in financing the grad house.</li> <li>• Appendix A: there are guidelines for representation on committees that councilors were not previously aware of, but these will be sent out to councilors soon.</li> </ul> <p>Break called at 5:01. Reconvened at 5:10.</p>
5:10	<p><b>10. New Business &amp; Members' Discussion</b></p> <p>a. Slack</p> <p>Speaker asked for input on the use of slack. It was noted that the distinction between council and board slack channels is slightly confusing; are they intended to be separate? Channels can be opened to everyone, except for closed meeting channels or those containing confidential information. A review of how channels are structured can be performed. Permissions for new members will be updated. Slack is helpful for sending direct messages to the correct people. It has also historically been useful for reviewing agendas and policies prior to meetings. There may be a need for training for new councillors. For people who are apart of a lot of slack channels, it can be difficult to navigate. At this time, no alternatives to Slack were suggested, though feedback is welcome.</p>

	<p>b. Strategic Planning Feedback  A fifth-year student recently posted a video describing a negative experience she had with a course. Can a position paper be written reflecting how feedback received from students, such as from courses, should be handled? For instance, how can feedback be communicated to the university, and how should subsequent changes be made transparent?  One struggle that can be addressed through the strategic plan is that annual goals for representatives on some committees may not be clear. A strategic plan can lay out what the plans for positions are and outline a financial basis and expectations. Feedback on strategic plan is welcome, such as: what do you want council to look like, how should meetings be run, how should we engage membership, how should roles be defined, etc. Feedback on the strategic plan and how to enact it can either be provided through slack or through the Speaker, who will compile the input and present it back to the Council for the September meeting.</p> <p>c. PhD sessional instructor role  Students were hired for this position in addition to their regular duties as a TA or RA, but their funding was reduced. This resulted in a small gain for a large increase in responsibilities. The department was not sympathetic to financial concerns and advised them to ask their supervisor for more money.  This has been a problem in multiple departments. The GSA has a position stating that that sessional instructors should be paid more than TAs and should not have their funding altered; however, enforceability of this position is unclear. Reporting on this position can be conducted and presented to council.  In Physics, due to changes in UWaterloo's budget, students who had external scholarships are now required to work as TAs for at least 1 term a year. They receive no extra funding for the position, the reasoning being that they will suspend their research and work as a TA instead. Are they being compensated for an extra year of work if their research is delayed? Conversely, those who receive NSERC (or other external funding) are not allowed to work as TAs in some departments due to excess number of graduate students. This affects those who want the academic experience.  There is a lack of clearly written contracts for sessional and TA positions in some departments; a repository of documented complaints could be helpful. Across departments, the offer letter is considered the contract; there are disadvantages to this system (e.g. new responsibilities added, work fluctuations, etc.) Should clearly outline what net income will be. Policy 30 might address some of these issues. In general, Waterloo budget not amenable to paying living wage after tuition is deducted. The President offered to host a series of workshops about funding on campus; how it is structured and functions by faculty and university-level. Offer letter from Arts can be circulated as an example for how these can be organized across the board.  Prior to the next meeting, a link directing to the table of political positions will be sent out for councillors to review.</p>
5:52	<p><b>11. Update from the Board</b>  The Board has been establishing committees and their terms of reference, such as the Governance Oversight Committee. As part of this committee, onboarding training for incoming members will be offered to help ease transitions. The Board Executive Committee is also looking at recruitment, which councillors and non-members can participate in. A work plan is being developed for priority items to allow for strategic</p>

	planning. A colloquium will be offered for policy workshops.
5:57	<b>12. Outstanding Action Items</b> Gathering information on dates of political positions and creating a table that outlines their intent, proposal date, and status.
	<b>13. Notices of Motion</b> There is a gap between the GSA's political position and the funding position for TAs. Notice to bring this up for the next meeting and create a motion.
5:59 pm	<b>14. Adjournment</b> Motion to adjourn. Kim/Haque. <b>Carried.</b>