Attendees:
Brit Paris, President
Negar Mohammadi, VP Academic
Willem Klumpenhouwer, VP External
Taha Afyouni, VP Student Life
Christiana Manzocco, VP Finance and Services
Haley Vecchiarelli, Clerk

Quorum

Biochemistry and Molecular Biology DGA
Rhiannon Campden
Lindsay Phillips

Biological Sciences Graduate Students' Association
Danielle Clark
Haley Glass
Jeremy Morris

Biomedical Engineering GSA
Alex Wyma

Biomedical Technology Graduate Students Association
Colin Chan

Chemical and Petroleum Engineering Graduate Students' Association
Dominic Omusi
Natasha Garner
Alejandra Enriquez Garcia
Thomas Welsh

Chemistry Graduate Student Association
Dinu Attalage
Hiva Jalilzadeh
Khokan Debnath
Muhammad Abbas
Lauretta Pearse
Chee Wong

Civil Engineering Graduate Society
Monica di Rosa
Gabriele Roccella
Mohammad Esfahlani
Monica Henderson

Classics and Religion DGA
Yangyang Fang
Rebecca Lang
Celina Boothby

Communication Media and Film
Computer Science Graduate Society
Masoumeh Shafieinejad
Khosro Salmani
Council of Foothills
Alya Heirali
Catherine Greene
Doctoral Association for Students of Haskayne (DASH)
Alyson House
Steven Granger
Economics Graduate Association
Abraham Saucedo Cepada
Ghazaleh Maleki Tabrizi
Electrical and Computer Engineering GSA
Patricia Groves
Mohammad Habibabadi
English Graduate Student Association
Edmond Chih
Paul Meunier
Environmental Design Student Association
Hong Nguyen-Seas
Graham Allison
Fiona Ramsay
Gastrointestinal Sciences Graduate Program
Megham Lamb
Fernando Vicentini
Geography Graduate Students' Association
Sarah St. Germain
Kyle Plotsky
Geomatics Graduate Group
Yuting Gao
Ilyar Hokmabadi
Graduate Anthropology & Archaeology Student Association
Kelsey Pennanen
Tatyanna Ewald
Graduate Engineering Students Consortium
Chee Wong
Graduate Programs in Education Students Association
Jennifer MacDonald
Madelyn Worth
Graduate University of Calgary Mathematics Society (GUMS)
Christopher Ostrowski
Nuiok Dicaire
History Graduate Students Union
Matthew Adams
Zach Bates
Immunology Graduate Association
Rory Woponick
Rachelle Davis
Kinesiology Graduate Students Association
Jodi Nettleton
Simon Barrick
Linguistics Graduate Students' Association
Kyle McCallum
Linguistics Graduate Students' Association
Lindsay Hracs
Masters of Public Policy Student Association
Will Kluska
MBA Society (Haskayne)
Jack Zayarny
Medical Science Graduate Student Association
Saeedeh Saghlatan
Mechanical Engineering Graduate Students' Association
Alexandra Bohm
GENERAL COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Meeting Began 5:32

Territorial Acknowledgement 5:32

Approval of Agenda 5:35
Amended to include Deputy Returning Officer to Election Discussion
Motioned/seconded
Opposed:0
Abstained:0
CARRIED
Speaker Election 5:35
Nominations: Kyle McCallum

Motioned/seconded
Opposed: 0
Abstained: 2
CARRIED

Temporary Speaker Election 5:36
Nomination: Elena Favaro

Motioned/seconded
Opposed: 0
Abstained: 2
CARRIED

Approval of Meeting November 2017 Minutes 5:37

Motioned/seconded
Opposed: 0
Abstained: 1
CARRIED

Bright Space and USpeak Discussion, Leslie Reid, Vice Provost (Teaching and Learning) 5:38

Dr. Leslie Reid was recently appointed as the new Vice Provost (Teaching and Learning), and her role involves overseeing the Taylor Centre, Curriculum Review, teaching metrics, etc.

Our current learning management system, D2L, is getting refreshed. The changes are largely cosmetic, essentially a “paint job;” lots of white space, large pictures for courses, will work on phones and tablets without needing an app. It also works better with accessibility devices. The change is called, “Bright Space.” There are very few functional changes. IT and the Taylor Institute are here to help.

Q: Where can we see the changes?
A (D’Arcy): D2L/test

Q: Are we supposed to be giving feedback?
A (D’Arcy): It is definitely rolling out.
A (Leslie Reid): There was a survey on D2L in January, and we collected data on what users need from D2L, as well as how they are using it. If you do have feedback, please do send it in, through the ELearn website (elearn.ucalgary.ca).

Q: Is everything going to be migrated over?
A (D’Arcy): There is nothing to migrate, it is merely a style change.
Q: Specific web browser?
A (D’Arcy): Not the old version of Internet Explorer (IE), but any browser should work. Should work on any device.

Q: How can we contact if we have questions or need help with changes?
A: Through the E-Learn Website, there is a comment form (elearn.ucalgary.ca).

(Lees Reid): I am happy to come to meetings any time, would love to discuss upcoming events and how we can collaborate. I have been working with Dr. Lisa Young over the past 6 months regarding more strategic planning around graduate student experiences and pedagogy.

Cannabis policy discussion (Brit Paris) (see PowerPoint presentation) 5:49

Cannabis will be legalized in Canada as of summer 2018 (July). Each provincial government will decide rules and regulations for itself, and the Alberta government has developed draft legislation. UCalgary is developing a policy around recreational use on campus. (There is also a tobacco smoking policy, but not discussing this now, if have any comments, please bring them to our attention). The UCalgary policy is currently in draft form, and they are soliciting feedback on the main tenets of the policy from graduate students. VPSL (Taha) currently sits on the committee.

- Purpose
  - Compliance
  - Harms reduction
    - UCalgary proactive about reducing alcohol harms (e.g. alcohol room) and now cannabis harms

- Tenets
  - Designated Cannabis smoking areas
    - Signage and directions
    - Only places you can smoke cannabis on campuses
  - Sale of cannabis or accessories not allowed on campus
  - No growing of plants
  - Not allowed at field sites
  - Awareness and harms reduction programs

Q: What is our policy for smoking [tobacco]?
A (Brit): Per city bylaws, 5 ft from any door.

Q: Separate pot and cigarette areas, why?
A (Brit): Understanding that there are potentially separate populations.

Q: Vape areas?
A (Brit): Not that I am aware of.

Q: All for smoking? What about edibles?
A (Brit): Edibles not covered under this policy.
Q: Are there special provisions for medical users?
A (Brit): Yes, covered under various accessibility policies. If you are smoking, you might have to go to areas.

Q: Designated areas in residence?
A (Brit): Designated areas not determined yet, but recommending one near residence.

Q: Why are there two separate areas for smoking tobacco and smoking marijuana?
A (Brit): Smokers might not overlap.

Q: What are repercussions?
A (Brit): Can be disciplined under collective agreement or policies. Treated like alcohol.

Pair Share:
This is your opportunity to give feedback and ask further questions.

Q: What constitutes a designated area? Why are there two separate areas (for tobacco)?
A (Brit): Designated area locations have not been chosen yet.

Q: Outdoors? No indoor ones?
A (Brit): Yes. Covered, cement floor. Hopefully it will be kept clean?

Q: Some people mix tobacco with marijuana?
A (Brit): This is an issue with separate areas.

Q: Stigma to different groups?
A (Brit): Especially for people who use for medical use. What does that look like if you have to go to a designated area.

Q: Policies for going into a class versus a lab or work space?
A (Brit): Up to lab to put in a policy.

Q: What about undergrads going into a lab?
A (Brit): Does not say explicitly.

Q: Do not know how easy these zones are going to be to enforce. Walking 20 min to vape a single puff in the winter?
A (Brit): Locations should be easily accessible and should not be too far of a walk from anywhere on campuses.
A (Taha): Multiple ones on campus.

Q: Professors that use? Same places as students?
A (Brit): Good point.

Q: How are these stations going to be accessible for people with disabilities?
A (Brit): They should be accessible.
Events:
Clearing the Smoke (https://www.ucalgary.ca/mentalhealth/clearing-smoke)

Fees Update (Christiana Manzocco, VPFS) (see PowerPoint presentation) 6:11

Updates on potential upcoming changes to GSA Fees and Health and Dental Fees. This GRC we will take a look at the options and vote at the next GRC.

- GSA Fees
  - Proposed 0% increase to GSA Fees
    - ED and GSA Accountant, Board and Finance Standing Committee all have looked at this and recommend for approval

- Health and Dental Plan Fees
  - Cost of plan is $628, but members pay $566
    - If keep services the same, will have to drastically increase the fees
  - Formed *ad hoc* Health and Dental Taskforce
    - 14 members
    - 2 meetings
  - Committee recommends compromise
    - Moderate fee increases and moderate reduction of some services
      - Account for inflation
      - Keeps costs reasonable for students
  - Comparison across Canada
    - Most comprehensive and services, but also most expensive
      - With plan changes, this is still true

- Proposed Option
  - Increase cost by 6-6.5%
  - Dental
    - Reduce annual maximum from $900 to $800
      - Still most comprehensive in country
    - Reduce basic services (e.g. fillings, but not preventative care) from 70% to 60% coverage
      - Still in middle of country
  - Outcome
    - No longer would need to draw from the Health and Dental reserve, would instead break even.
    - Students will not feel the cost increase too much, but also not huge reductions in services, means a good compromise
    - Inspire students to use the networks more
• Studentcare (Sofia) has gone throughout province to recruit members to the networks, which offer a base discount to users of the plan
  o Using the networks keeps the plan costs low
• Marketing for networks needs to be better, will be working on this going forward

Q: What will be the Health and Dental fees overall?
A (Christiana): Approximately $600.

Q: What if you do not modify the health and dental plan? Are saving $28, but we are losing $100 from the dental plan and 10% for the filling. Doesn’t make sense. Rather pay more to have more coverage.
A (Christiana): Important to strike compromise. Our committee was 14 members from all faculties. 2 members of the committee wanted the complete suite of services but most of the committee thinks we are paying too much, and do not use these services, and are concerned about plan costs going up. Will be voting next month.

Q: People feel obligated to purchase, but they can opt out?
A (Christiana): Can only opt out with proof of other insurance, but usually a lot more expensive. This is expensive, but this is very reasonable when you look at other plans and across the country.

Q: Basic services don’t include preventative services?
A (Christiana): We have preventative services and we will still cover 70%.

Q: Changes in services provided?
A (Christiana): Instead of making little changes throughout the list, we made broad changes. When it comes to major restorative surgery, we cover 50%.

Q: Opting family members in? Does this increase also apply to dependents?
A (Christiana): The committee will meet to discuss changes to dependents and prices, as well as family plan. As single rate goes up, dependent rates should also go up. Rate goes up because of inflation but also because of usage of the plan.

Q: Health and Dental? Is vision affected?
A (Christiana): We call it Health and Dental, but also includes, vision, prescription drugs, other practitioners. We have not touched the vision coverage. We have $150 for glasses every two years and $75 for eye exam. This is a very impressive set of benefits to have a student plan.

Q: How did you choose to reduce services on filling but not preventative services?
A (Christiana): We voted on every part of this plan. Committee felt that this was one of the best options.
A (Brit): We reduced preventative care last year, so did not want to reduce again.

Q: We should improve more instead of cutting?
A (Christiana): When barriers in the plan get removed, usage goes up. Our usage is at 120%. This is great, but as students use the plan more and more, cost goes up. Our committee represents a cross section of students, and we need a reasonable fee that offers the best coverage.

Q: Can there be tiered system?
A (Christiana): This is an option. This was brought to the committee, thought it was interesting, but required more time for discussion. We are trying to make it simple, easy and best for everyone. We are likely going to have a Health and Dental working group for the whole year going forward.

Q: Are there any other schools offering a basic plan and health care spending account? Would get a choice about what to spend it on?
A (Sofia): Common in employment plan, but employer pays a lot more of the premiums. Tiered plans exist in other schools across the country.
A (Christiana): People have a certain maximum across a different suite of services (paramedical services we have this, can choose physio versus massage).

President’s Report (Brit Paris) (see PowerPoint presentation) 6:33

- President Cannon
  - Issue resignation
  - Presidential search committee was struck immediately and we are represented on committee
- First collective agreement workshop
  - Great event, but not a lot of people showed up
    - We will be delivering same thing in GRC later (possible April)
  - We are your labour union (TA and RA)
- GRCI Committee
  - Update on last year’s (2016-2017) forum
    - Problem with forum (little usage and lots of spam), so have moved to a Facebook group
      - Space is your online community to use as you wish, but will be somewhat moderated
  - Update on this year’s (Leanne Dawson, chair-GRCI)
    - Workshops (all run by Student Leadership and Engagement Office; free events, free food)
      - Developing Your Facilitation: Experiential Learning and Classroom Management
        - Tuesday February 13, 2018 10-1 BI542
      - Developing Your Conflict Style: Exploring Creative Strategies
        - Tuesday March 13, 2018 10-1 BI542
- Elections – Run for an Executive Position!

Vice-President (Academic) Report (Negar Mohammadi) (see PowerPoint presentation) 6:39
• Awards
  o All updated deadlines, ToRs and application forms
  o IDEA (formerly IDAG)
    ▪ $10k top award + partnership with Innovate Calgary
  o Leadership Award
    ▪ $5k for leadership in the University and Calgary community
  o Emerging Leader Award
    ▪ $2k for 1st year graduate students with leadership in University and Calgary community
  o Sustainability
    ▪ $1500
  o GRCI Initiative Award
    ▪ Up to $1000 for running initiatives benefiting graduate students
  o Excellence Awards
    ▪ Nominate others who are graduate students excelling at teaching and research or those who excel at teaching or supervising graduate students
• Be a GSA Executive! – Great learning and leadership opportunity!
• Teaching Culture Perception Survey Study
  o Improve teaching culture
  o Closes Feb 28
• Peer Beyond Graduate Research Symposium
  o Feb 21

Vice-President (External) Report (Willem Klumpenhouwer) (see PowerPoint presentation) 6:45

• ab-GPAC
  o Provincial government will freeze tuition for upcoming year, will announce tuition framework hopefully soon
  o New content on website
  o February GRC will have presentation about abGPAC
• Labour Relations
  o Bylaw changes have been overseen and recommended by pilot committee
  o Working on committee structure going forward
• Strategic Planning
  o Strategic plan reports forthcoming in future
  o New software, expanding on goals, incorporating staff into goals
• Political Leadership Award
  o 2017 Award
• Given to Ward Sutherland, but took away this year due to unbecoming conduct
  • Generated buzz around Award
    o Moved to a more casual approach, Board will make decision as group
  • More details: https://gsa.ucalgary.ca/financial-support/awards/
• Elections – Interesting portfolio, you get to advocate for graduate students!

Vice-President (Student Life) Report (Taha Afyouni) (see PowerPoint presentation) 6:51

• Holiday Food Drive
  o Congrats to the winners:
    ▪ 3rd place: Anthropology
    ▪ 2nd place: Philosophy
    ▪ 1st place: Linguistics
• Winter Grad Orientation
  o High turn out (85 came out of 92 signing up)
• FGS/GSA Photo Competition
  o 33 submissions
  o Now with committee
• Events!
  o Focus on 1 big event each month
• Elections – Run for VPSL, it is the most fun portfolio!

Vice-President (Finance & Services) Report (Christiana Manzocco) (see Power Point presentation) 6:54

• Sustainability Committee
  o Working with facilities, increasing composting
  o Sustainability Award
    ▪ 2nd year, now under Sustainability Office
      • More money, stability
      • Recognized at both Awards Ceremonies
  o LDL sustainability
    ▪ Sourcing (especially protein supplies)
    ▪ Sustainability statement now on menus
• Health and Dental Plan Committee
  o 14 students from all around campus
  o Made compromise recommendation (slight increase in fees and slight reduction in service)
• Campus as Learning Lab (SUST 401)
  o Will have 20+ students working on sustainability at the LDL
• Budget Planning
• Elections – Finance is Fun!

Elections Discussions CRO (Somshukla (Rai) Chaudhuri) 6:59

• Elections happening soon! Timeline and details: https://gsa.ucalgary.ca/elections/
  o Nominations open Feb 5-20.
  ▪ Feb 21 will let you know if your nomination has been approved
  o Feb 21-Mar 11: Campaigning!
  o Feb 22: Meeting for all candidates running for contested positions. Going over rules and will have a workshop on public speaking and branding. Mandatory.
  o Feb 26: Platforms due
  o Elections Forum-Mandatory for all contested positions.

• All campaign materials, questions, etc, need to go to cro@gsa.ucalgary.ca

• Appointment of Deputy Returning Officer

Motion to approve Leanne Dawson as DRO.
Motioned/seconded

Discussion: Bylaws allow us to appoint at DRO, so you are just voting to approve this. Rai is gone during the election days, so it is helpful that Leanne previously served as CRO.

Opposed:0
Abstained:4
CARRIED

Q: Mandatory meeting for contested positions is during reading week? If people are out of town, they cannot run?
A (Rai): You can send a designate, if that is an issue. We wanted it to be as soon as possible, so students can plan campaign strategy. We might think about it and update it.

Q: Will there be an email sent with details?
A (Rai): Feb 5.

Question Period 7:12

Q: Tangible benefits, how much do you get paid?
A (Brit): Approximately $2500/month, more for President. Expectations are 20-30 h/week for VPs, 30-40 h/week for President.

Q: Expected amount of hours? Do you put in more?
A (Brit): It can vary. Some weeks are 20 hours in meetings, some weeks 5. It averages out. We track all our hours. We keep an eye on that for adequate compensation.
A (Katherine): Varies per person and time of year. Hard to put a definitive time on it.
A (Willem): ebbs and flows based on other things committed to.
A (Katherine): There is a lot support. 8 staff members who are there to help and make sure year is a success.
A (Brit): Tons of resources, not doing it all alone. For example, Events Coordinator and volunteers.
A (Christiana): Depends on role. For example, VPFS, does not have a lot of committee meetings, but have different commitments. Maybe most flexible.

Q: Protocol if planning on defending during terms?
A (Brit): If you have student status. Lose status at the end of your last term.

Q: Next GRC meeting having votes for Health and Dental plan. What happens if this does not get approved?
A (Christiana): We are going to vote on the recommended option.
A (ED, Jason Unsworth): Vote on proposed change or to keep plan as is but price will increase (from StudentCare). We are facing a big increase in cost of plan because the usage is going through the roof.

Q: What happens to funds in reserve?
A (Christiana): If we break even on reserve, or put away a slight amount of money, we should have 20% of operating expenses of health and dental. We have been using some of this reserve, so not at 20%, not a sustainable practice. With the proposed changes, we will be breaking even.
A (ED): Natural inflation for these plans is 5-7%. We are at 6ish% with proposed changes. If we kept same plan but up-ed cost to usage would be a 10% increase.

**Question Period 7:20**

- Biology Graduate Students Association
  - Prairie University Biology Symposium (PUBS), during reading week

**Other Business 7:20**

- (Brit) All but 2 DGAs showed up to the GRC! Good job!
- (CHS) There was a fee change for software called redcap, trying to get an idea if any other DGAs or faculties use it so can advocate broadly
  - Nursing also uses it
- DGAs used to get discount for events at LDL, but not anymore
  - DGA discount not an DGA Event Discount
    - LDL Focus Group indicated that we do not want the LDL to lose money. Previously were allowing 60 people group to go in, kick everyone out, get a discount and we were losing a lot of money this way.
      - LDL can work with groups to create a menu in budget
      - No fee to rent rooms with minimum spend
      - We need to make sure the LDL is breaking even, otherwise more money comes out of GSA operating budget to break even

**Adjournment of Open Session**
Moved/seconded
Opposed: 0
Abstained: 0
CARRIED

Meeting adjourned at 6:48