

PGSC Meeting

November 3, 2020

3:00 pm PST

Zoom Meeting

Attendees

Liz Williams (Co-Pres.; TAC)
Chrissy Robillard (Co-Pres.)
Helia Sehatpour (Sec./Treas.)
Lauren Matheson (Social)
Breanna McCreary (Social;UnionRep)
Cindy Quan (Clinical)
Eric Mah (CaBS, SP, INDV)
Sybil Goulet-Stock (Lifespan)
Julie Prud'homme (GEC)
Debra Torok (Ombuds)
Yaewon Kim (CPA)

Absent

Tom Ferguson (GSS)

Erin Light
Andrew Switzer
Erin Lowey

Call to Order:

Called by Chrissy at 3:00 pm

Approval of Minutes October 6, 2020:

Minutes approved as read

Minutes

Member Updates

Treasurer

- The department has offered to provide funding for the check-in activity. The treasurer will let the department Chair know about the costs of the activity and update the council.

Social Events and Student Engagement Coordinators

- PGSC organized a successful game of werewolf. There may be a Trivia game hosted in November. Monday and Friday Zoom work groups are ongoing.

Clinical Representative

- None

CaBS, SP, INDV Representative

- None

Lifespan Representative

- None

GEC Representative

- The GEC rep sent an email to the Grad Advisor to follow-up the orientation meeting and the presentation on the updated handbook. The Grad Advisor has not had a chance to address the students but hopes to do so before the end of the term. The handbook is not finalized and distributed yet. We speculate that it may not have been passed in departmental meeting as of yet. The GEC rep has not been invited to any meetings.
- There are concerns about the delay in finalizing the handbook. The handbook is the contract between students and the program. We need to make sure this has been passed before the application and admission of new students, especially given the changes in the funding portion of the handbook.

Ombudsperson/Liaison

- There were no responses from the department to the Ombuddy’s inquiries.

GSS Representative

- None

CUPE 4163 Representative

- None

TAC

- The TA workshops held this term were successful. There are no formal events organized for the rest of the term. TA’s and students can reach out to the TAC if they require support or to organise a workshop.

CPA Representative

- The CPA rep has met with the department rep and the undergrad rep. They are planning to hold sessions on CPA for undergraduate and graduate students.

Co-Presidents

- None

Agenda Item	1. Departmental meeting updates	Raised by: Eric Mah
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Discussion

- Faculty passed a motion to open a permanent lab instructor position (instead of hiring grad students) to run all the labs and provide support for statistics classes. The opening of the position was deferred to 2022. Those who voted against this position believed that there are enough graduate students to cover the position. They also believed that there will be a lot of turn-over for the position, which negates the need for this role. There are concerns that this role takes away opportunities from graduate students. There are concerns that issues with hiring TA’s for these courses be discussed with graduate students and the position become open to students in the psychology department. The discussion on TA hiring has been one-sided and would benefit from graduate student feedback.
- There is an ongoing search for the Dean of Social Sciences.

- The university is devising a new 10-year plan on broad research goals for UVIC. Research priorities may be changing in the next 10 years. The university is soliciting feedback from the department. They intend to: (1) re-evaluate how to measure research impacts by focusing on knowledge mobilization and community involvement, (2) provide funding for post-doctoral programs, (3) reallocate funds for teaching, (4) facilitate international lab-mobility, and (5) consider the post COVID-19 research landscape e.g. online conferences, etc.

Action Item(s)	Member Responsible	Deadline
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Find information on the candidates for the position of Dean of Social Sciences and email a reminder with links 	Lauren	Next meeting
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Send the documents on the UVIC 10-year plan 	Eric	Next meeting

Agenda Item		Raised by:
2. Creating a PGSC student survey and Community check-in		Eric Mah

Discussion

We want to know how graduate students in the department are doing. We want an idea how many students are affected/delayed by COVID-19, what support has been offered, and what support students would find useful. The survey will collect information on:

1. **Experiences as TAs this term in light of covid-19.** How satisfied are students with TA hiring and work this year? We have some previous opinions from TA's on the hiring process for TA positions. For example, what are the exact tasks and responsibilities required of the TA's? Professors should be clearer about their expectations. A potential cause of this is that the course lists are sent out without asking the instructors about the details of the TA positions.
 - There are concerns about student engagement with the survey. Many students are feeling overwhelmed and unsupported. They do not want to create a bad reputation in the department by coming out with that information, though they have things to say.
 - To alleviate this, when we ask graduate students about their TA experiences in this survey, we will be focusing on this semester as a general check-in. We will not ask for details of personal experiences. This survey will not be available to faculty members, and the results will be reported as generalizations drawn from what people have said. Results will not include not specific responses. We will be transparent on why we are collecting this information. This survey is intended to inform the student reps on what we can do to help and support the graduate student body.
2. **General wellbeing in the department.** We will include standard university and student well-being measures to get an idea on grad student well-being.
3. **Types of social programming** students are looking for.
4. **Learning experiences and outcomes.** FGS has a list of learning outcomes for programs to fulfill, along with other university strategies. These can be incorporated in the survey.

We will try the survey first. If this approach is not successful, since our last survey was not very successful, we can use other options e.g. Organize a forum for TA's to voice their grievances together and share their experiences and then take general notes from that conversation.

Survey Platform: We are not going to use Qualtrics because faculty have access to that. We can use Survey Monkey or MS forms.

Compensation: Funding is available from the department. We will include raffle prizes to include engagement. We are asking for \$200.

Action Item(s)	Member Responsible	Deadline
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eric to share survey document with PGSC members 	Eric	ASAP
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Add suggestions and comment on wording of survey 	Everyone	Fri. Nov. 13 th .
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Next agenda item: Discuss event costs for specific activities vs. operational costs of PGSC. 	Helia, Bre & others	Next meeting

Agenda Item	3. Group Activity	Raised by: Breanna McCreary
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Discussion

We split into groups and discussed barriers to working towards our mandate as PGSC.

Notes and Recognitions

As the council gets more established, we can have less items on agenda and more in-depth discussions of our concerns.

Adjournment:

Meeting adjourned by Chrissy at 4:05 pm PST

Helia Sehatpour

Secretary & Treasurer *(or proxy note-taker)*