



International Development and Global Studies Graduate Student Association

Tuesday, October 8th, 2019 at 5:30 PM

FSS 4013

Opening:

Shannon Fournier called the meeting to order at the University of Ottawa at 5:36 on Tuesday, October 8th.

Present:

Shannon Fournier

Kayla Richardson

Jennifer Bonti (by telephone)

Janet McParland

Gabrielle Marseille (late)

Andrea Khan

Adrian Murray (by telephone)

Bryn Copp

Eric Dupuis

Absent:

Étienne Côté Vaillant

Rebecca Dick

Lukas Van Aragorn

Approval of Agenda

Yes.

Approval of Minutes

Yes.

1. Business from the Previous Meeting

1.1. CAIDP Conference tickets update (Kayla)

- Jen had drafted the email and it went out to the department; Kayla's contact information was supposed to be shared in the email, but Shannon's was instead. Before we could get in contact with the undergrads, Professor Stephen Baranyi had emailed us himself about getting the Association more involved in the conference. The department took over getting passes to the conference for us, and Professor Baranyi secured a corporate pass and uOttawa was able to send a delegation.
 - Eight students expressed interest in getting a pass, but there were only five available. The three students who did not get passes were still involved in the conference in some capacity, although in what way was unclear.
 - The conference itself went well from what we heard.
- 1.2. Global Market, Inequality, and the Future of Democracy conference tickets update (Jen and Rebecca)
- The conference was a good opportunity for students.
 - Roy Culpeper created a student feedback report. Eric Dupuis and Chloe X both attended the conference and wrote a report on their experience. Chloe's reflection is formatted as a blog post, and she has given the Association permission to share it on the website. Eric's reflection is more like a report. In it, he described the conference as having been lacking young attendees. In his report, Eric quoted Armine Yalnizyan, saying "I look around this room, and I think who is it that brought us to where we are at? It is not us that is going to deliver us from where we are at. That doesn't mean we should step back and let the next generation take over, because we really screwed things up."
 - The Group of 78 has an interesting history: they are prominent figures who lead discussions on the need for social policies. Andrea explained that the room at a conference such as this is filled with elders and we should show respect, but they have not done a good job at planning for the future. Most of the board members are older, and there are not many people ready to take the torch. Eric's takeaway from this is that learners have to be more involved in these types of events. He explained that he did not feel comfortable asking questions because he felt out of place in a room filled with experienced professionals.
 - An email from Roy to the students who wrote reports says he appreciates the candid feedback and looks forward to working with the graduate association on further projects and initiatives.
 - The conference was advertised as a bilingual, but it was all done in English. This limited engagement by those who were depending on the bilingualism that was advertised.
 - Andrea thought the conference was very good, but should have included more PhD students in attendance as the topics covered related directly to what they learn for their comprehensive exams. The conference showed one perspective of the issue, which was very ideologically-driven. The discussions were helpful for the upcoming Canadian elections.
 - **Eric** will reach out to the other students who attended to ask for permission to share their reports on the website.

1.3. Partnerships/activities with Senior Fellows (Rebecca)

- We have been in communication with Roy Culpeper for a number of different projects.
- Hunter McGill has stopped most communication with the Association. He was very eager to meet up and to collaborate at first but has slowed down.

1.4. Sweater designs (Janet)

- We will ask Janet for sweater designs before the next meeting so we can vote on them in the Facebook group.

2. New Business

2.1. Meeting updates

2.1.1. GSAED meeting update (Bryn)

- The first GSAED meeting of the 2019-2020 academic year was held on September 29th, 2019. This meeting is normally the longest of the year because it is the first one.
- The psychology graduate students did a survey on the health care plan to see if students are pleased with it; they are not. The dental plan has been changed, and it is not as good. The broker measured the usage of the plan last year and saw that the dental portion was used the least. GSAED has decided to revisit the health insurance provider, Greenshield. They are going through an external consultant and firing the broker to look at different options. Additionally, the psychology services through the provider are not good. If they think your mental health is bad, they will refer you to a real person but there will be a long wait.
- Each faculty has a representative or two on GSAED nominated by the faculty. The Faculty of Social Sciences nominated Patrick Ladouceur and Lindsay Ostrich and they were supposed to be ratified at the meeting. However, GSAED was not consulted, no one knew the two people chosen, other faculties did not want this and they claimed it was unfair and unusual for other faculties to vote on this matter. GSAED was also wondering why they were included in FSS's bylaws without being consulted. Both Patrick and Lindsay would be able to sit in on meetings but would not be able to vote. They are both in feminist studies and their research focuses on Canadian issues and gender-based violence.
- GSAED is hiring a new Commissioner, the person who directs the meetings. There will be a call for applications. The candidate should be bilingual. The position will be about 7 hours a week and would follow TA/RA CUPE salary rates.
- A graduate student in the Faculty of Science got burned while doing an experiment on campus. Neither the university or CUPE took responsibility for the incident, and the student was not insured under either. Students are insured only when performing TA and/or RA duties (under CUPE). The University has not responded. It is unclear if the professors will be liable in cases like this and if they will have to check if their students have insurance when conducting research. In this case, the health coverage the student did have may not have covered his accident; all students must be covered in some capacity. GSAED hired a lawyer to help with this issue.

- At the meeting, the Equity commissioner mentioned Bring Back the Night, an event that was coming up at the time of the meeting. There is also a peer help support group on sexual violence and harassment. They also host weekly yoga classes.
- The legal status with Women's Resource Centre and Pride Centre was being questioned. It was unclear if both Centres would stay open because students had the option to opt out of paying their fees to both Centres. If they closed, where would the fees go that they had already received? Both Centres joined together to create the Sexual Health and Wellness Centre (as reported in the September 12th edition of the Fulcrum), and it is now considered an essential service and students can no longer opt out of paying their fees.

2.1.2. SIDGS meeting update (Kayla)

- Andrea and Kayla attended the SIDGS department meeting on September 17th.
- They discussed different performance metrics that the government of Ontario are going to be collecting. These metrics will be basic; for example, they will look at the number of students who are graduating in each program/department. Collecting these numbers will not affect the faculty.
- There was also a closed-door vote on a new faculty member.
- There was a discussion on proposed MA and BA program changes. Possible changes to the MA program included the addition of a French-immersion program; this will not be available for current students. Francophone enrolment has been slipping in the past few years, and the department wants to increase enrolment in the French classes it offers. The details of operation are unclear, but may include increased guidance for Anglophone students taking classes in French. This option will allow students to graduate with increased skills in French, and will show in their records that they have been tested in French.
 - A question that came up in this discussion is why there wouldn't be an English immersion for Francophone students. The answer was that the department does not have a problem with enrolment in classes offered in English.
 - We already have the choice to take classes in French or English, but these options are not catered to people who have minimal skills in French or English to help them with future employment opportunities.
 - There was also a question about whether this option will negatively impact the French students in the French classes.
- In a previous meeting, the department passed a course-based MA option starting next year.
- BA reforms discussed at the meeting were extensive. They discussed whether or not the undergraduate students in the department are prepared to enter into MA programs elsewhere. Some programs are especially focused on economics; the department is trying to get theoretical knowledge up. They think the uOttawa undergraduates should be prepared for uOttawa MA program. Kayla thinks any changes in this regard will probably be beneficial.

- The graduate-level intro to development class should be very general and should give students a good basis for all of the concepts and theories that some students learned in their undergrad. The graduate website says we need economics classes and a language test to be admitted to the graduate program, which a lot of people get in without.

2.1.3. CUPE update (Adrian)

- There was a CUPE meeting on October 7th. At this meeting, the President of the Assembly got overruled, and they resigned. The Assembly elected a new President.
- The bargaining with the school is going well; they are still in monetary negotiations.
- There are also ongoing workshops and events for CUPE members; Adrian will try to post them to the Facebook page as information becomes available.
- The fall General Assembly will be held on November 6th at 5:30.

2.2. Pub night follow-up (Rebecca)

- The Pub night held on October 3rd was a fun night and enough people showed up and mingled.
- Two strong candidates presented themselves for first year representative position. Eric Dupuis won the vote, and Shannon welcomed Eric to the Association.
- At the pub, there were not enough first years in attendance; the first year representative will help with that engagement for future events. It was suggested that we should try to work around when people have assignments due to maximize attendance. We discussed how one on one interactions with people and word of mouth might get people out to events on top of social media posts.
- There were about 20 people at the beginning of the event, and there were more as the night went on. However, there are 70 people on the Facebook group, so that attendance rate might be considered low.
- There were not enough first years at the event to vote for the first year rep; 51% of first years had to be present for the vote. Because of this low attendance, other graduate students in attendance were permitted to vote.

2.3. FSS 4013 for October (Shannon)

- We accidentally have FSS 4013 booked for each Tuesday of the month of October from 5:30-7:30. We discussed using the space for a game night or for one of Furqan's suggestions, such as a writing workshop. This is a good opportunity to host social activities that do not include alcohol.

2.4. Event attendance (Shannon)

- We were planning on hosting a capture the flag game on October 24th in the forest by Lees. We were wondering if its properly accessible; if not, there is another park at the end of Laurier, and there might be more trees there. We discussed going to a bar afterwards together.

- We are also organizing an outing to go to Fall Rhapsody. It will be on October 27th and we will do the red route in Gatineau Park. It will be an informal outing with a group of people going at once and taking the bus together. It will be a good mental health break for all participants.

2.5. Constitutions questions and others (Eric)

- Being a new member of the Executive, Eric had a few questions regarding the constitution and how things work on the Executive.
- Eric's first question was about membership. He wanted to know how many people were members of the Association. We did not know, but we did know that anyone who is enrolled in the program is a member. We do have an email list with all the MA students but it may have been a mistake. **Andrea** will ask the office for the numbers of everyone in the MA program and PhD program.
- How does the budget work? We get our funding from GSAED. We got \$584 for this semester but we had about \$500 leftover from last year in our bank account. We have two different spreadsheets (one is a breakdown of how the budget was used last year, and the other is tracking this year's expenditures). We have \$1116 to use for this year.
 - Shannon explained that the GSAED has a lot of wealth in the UCU, and when SFU was abolished a legal battle started about something. If the GSAED wins they will get a lot of money and it will be split amongst Associations.
 - Eric suggested using some of that money for a paint night as a fun activity. We discussed perhaps hosting it in December.
- WUSC reached out through our website and wants to get more grad student involvement.
- Eric brought up how on the website, there are discrepancies between the French and English versions. For example, the First Year Representative and International Affairs Representative positions are mentioned in the French version but not in English.
 - Andrea reminded us that last year, the Association revamped the entire website and Facebook page. They cleaned out member of the page who had no ties to the program. They wanted to clean everything up for incoming students.
 - Andrea expressed concern that decisions are being made too quickly on the communications side of the Association, and suggested that we need to be voting on issues more. She explained that there had been no handover meeting for the website and no conversation about why the website was changed once it was handed over to Janet. Andrea is upset that the committee wasn't consulted in the change for the website, and believes there should have been a conversation about the branding and what it should look like. Andrea was shocked that as a committee we didn't ask about it and that Janet went ahead and did it anyways.
 - Gabrielle says that last year the committee was more collaborative and that everything was ran past the committee. She thinks we should be more inclusive and consultative for all decisions being made.
 - Andrea reminded the committee that the logo was changed without any real discussion.

- Andrea explained that how things are working this year is not helping her put energy into the committee. According to her, the committee doesn't have a longterm vision of how things are working and is not serving longterm interests.
- Shannon explained that the previous version of the website wasn't user-friendly and things were missing, so Janet changed it. Andrea explained that she had created the previous version as it was based on proof that that type of navigation works. Shannon explained that there had been a rush to add things to the website to be ready before the school year began.
- The main point of this discussion was that everything should be discussed more as a big group, and decisions shouldn't be made by individuals without running them past the entire committee first, including social media posts.
- Major turnover on the committee is a given and is normal. Andrea believes we have to make sure there is a repository of information for the next year's committee. Shannon argued that Andrea could have gone to talk to Janet about this if she felt this way about the website. Gabrielle said that they aren't the president and that they should not have to deal with that kind of thing. Shannon believes it shouldn't all fall on her to be responsible for this turnover. A more formal turnover meeting that is more facilitated could be an option for future years.
- To get back to the original question of the constitution, Andrea said they wanted to clean it up last year, but they didn't get to it completely. It was suggested that we should get to it now.
- We have to post on social media and write in emails in English and in French, and the meeting minutes can be made available in French if requested.

2.6. First year master's struggles (Eric)

- Eric explained that there is a recurring feeling of the imposter syndrome amongst first years. He says they don't feel like they belong in the program and they have a fear that they are imposing and only a stroke of luck allowed them to get into the MA program. MA professors in our program assume that everyone has the same knowledge, but in reality, we all come from different academic backgrounds and have different knowledge.
- Eric recommends reading "Enjeu du développement international" as a basis for the program. He says its a good book for the basic concepts of international development. He also suggests working with the administrative to have a suggested reading list before the beginning of the first semester so that everyone starting the program has the same understanding of the concepts. The workshops that Furqan suggested could help with this.
- Eric also mentioned a disconnect with international students. He explained that they are not integrated with non-international students, and suggests creating an international students representative on the committee to bridge that gap.
- **Kayla** will talk to Paul about these ideas.

2.7. Workshops Furqan

2.8. Francophones are feeling left out (Gabrielle)

- Gabrielle expressed dissatisfaction in the quality of the translation for communications published by the committee. She argued that as an association, as a committee, everyone should be asked more about things before decisions are made. We have to figure out how to better incorporate the francophone students in the program.

3. Next meeting

- Clean up constitution
- First year engagement