

SIGMAS Meeting Minutes
Friday, September 15, 2017, 16:00
DTB A202 (Math and Stats Assistance Centre)

President: Jane Wodlinger
Vice President: Mark Piraino
Treasurer: Laura Teshima
Secretary: Joseph Horan

Directors of Communication: Jane Wodlinger, Laura Teshima
GSS Representative: Joseph Horan
CUPE 4163 Stewards: Mark Piraino, Laura Teshima [??]
Math and Stats Department Rep: Joanna Niezen
Tea Chancellor: Flora Bowditch
Poet Laureate: Dan Hudson
Exam Sales Coordinators: Flora Bowditch, Mackenzie Wheeler
Webmaster: Joseph Horan
Peacekeeper: Joanna Niezen
Safety Captain: Vacant

Present (by clockwise seating order, mostly): Laura Teshima, Jane Wodlinger, Graham Quee, Mackenzie Wheeler, Mark Piraino, Dina Buric, Flora Bowditch, Chi Kou, Marcus (Rongzheng) Xie, Mitch Haslehurst, Anna Duwenig, Joanna Niezen, Frank (Feiran) Yang, Joseph Horan, Dan Hudson.

Late Arrivals: Frank, Joseph, Chi, and Dan. :(

Regrets: Who knows?

[Thanks to Jane Wodlinger for taking notes, on which these minutes are based.]

The meeting is called to order at 16:04, with a ton of food and drinks available (notably an amazing bread bowl and dip platter, veggies, some Indian food, and both soft and hard drinks). Mark takes on the role of acting chair for the meeting; Jane takes notes for the currently-running-tutorials-downstairs Joseph. As an opening remark, there is a reminder of the SIGMAS *research group discretionary fund*, where grads can, in their research group, receive some money from SIGMAS to hold (grad student) social/etc events. [As per the 2015 SIGMAS Meeting minutes, this fund is \$150 per Sept-Aug year per research group. This has rarely been utilized.]

The discussion begins to turn to SIGMAS Events, but is interrupted to do introductions of the present members. There is a good mix of long-time grads and new grads, and three of the four current Executive introduce themselves and their roles/past roles. Frank shows up, and apparently the “important” thing about him is that his research is ██████████ ██████████ ██████████.

The meeting turns its attention back to events. Some suggestions include the following:

- Bouldering! [The department has an avid climbing group.] “Someone” will organize this.
- High Tea, at any of a number of places (the Empress, Butchart Gardens, “Fat Cats/Highrollers” [?]).
- House Parties: these are usually well-attended, but we need a venue. Could we rent a house for this purpose?
- Movie Nights.

- Peacocks (bar and billiards).
- Games Night, in say, the AC on Fridays. SIGMAS could provide popcorn and candy, etc.

[Don't forget that the Summer 2017 meeting minutes include a number of suggestions also.] Hopefully something happens.

Moving on, there are SIGMAS positions to be filled. Laura is done being Exam Sales Coordinator, so we need that role filled, potentially by multiple people. Flora and Mackenzie agreed to run Exam Sales this term, and afterwards it will be Flora and Anna (as long as people agree to handle it for each term, we should be fine). There is a motion to pay an honorarium for the Exam Sales Coordinator(s): \$100 for each Fall term or Spring term, to be shared by the coordinating team. Laura points out that we voted on this in the past, but she never took the money because it felt weird to pay herself. [In Fall 2016, we approved a \$75 per term honorarium (any term).] It is unclear if the \$100 amount was approved.

There is also a motion to give Laura a hefty honorarium/thank-you gift as outgoing Exam Sales Coordinator, proportional to the number of (Fall/Spring) terms she's been coordinator, which is 9. We'll multiply 9 by "a number" and give her that amount of money. The motion passes, but it is unclear what "a number" is.

At some point, Mark announces his intention to step down as Department Rep. Joanna volunteers to take his place, and this is appreciated. Mark gives one last update, as outgoing Dept. Rep. First off, the department has changed how they allocate funding to graduate students. Specifically, the money is no longer divided up by research groups. Instead, after all money promised to students in offers of admission and entrance scholarships has been awarded, the remaining amount is divided evenly among grads who are "eligible", in the sense that they are within their program's time limit, in good standing, and have no external funding (such as NSERC). This amount totals approximately \$150,000.

Next, the department is currently performing an academic program review, which is expected to take at least two terms; it started in September. The understanding is that we're in a "strong position" to negotiate for more research positions (at the faculty level), but we're not sure why. Joseph (who just showed up after tutorials, putting this time-stamp at about 16:30) has a bit more information: Chris Bose is the faculty member "in charge" of the internal reporting process, and has teaching leave for this reason. He has said that there will be "some" graduate student input. Rod Edwards will also participate, once he is back from post-Chair leave.

Chi arrives just in time for Mark's last item, which is a description of the department's newly approved hiring plan. In order, our priorities are: algebra, stochastic DEs, stats, algebra/combinatorics, topology/geometry, math bio, operator algebras (about which Dan knows not that much, even though Joseph asks him about it as he walks in), and control theory/inverse problems. We've already been approved to hire an algebraist (given that after Ahmed Sourour retires, there will be no one who does any actual algebra in the department anymore...). We believe that we could hire the math bio and operator algebras position as a Canada Research Chair, if that opportunity presented itself.

The next item of business is to discuss what sort of gift we should get for Peter Dukes, the outgoing graduate advisor. Peter was advisor for a while, and stepped down in July. After some clandestine investigation in the summer, it seems that the best option is to get him a large gift card to a food place, specifically something that he likes. After some discussion about how we got to that point, it was generally agreed that a gift certificate to Café Mexico (located in Market Square) was a good choice (with the knowledge that Peter really likes that place).

Next, in solidarity with our union (of which almost all of us are also members), we figured it would be a good idea to provide an incentive to track the hours spent working (i.e. doing TA duties).

There are time-tracking apps (for computers and mobile devices) that can make doing this much easier, and we should encourage their usage (over not tracking hours at all). A couple of the ones that some grads have already tested are Toggl (better on..) and... something that wasn't written down [can someone remind me what the other option was?]. The proposal is to make monetary prizes available in a raffle, where entry to the raffle is proof that you've downloaded one of these apps. It is discussed how we can't, or shouldn't, ask people to show us their time-tracking data to enter a raffle, so we settled on proof of downloading. After some discussion on the total amount of money to put forward, instead of say, \$200 broken into two \$100 prizes, Mark makes a motion to just let the executive decide how much, and this motion passes (not unanimously: three opposed).

A motion, partially in jest, is proposed to spend hundreds to thousands of dollars on lounge furniture for the 5th floor lounge. It is widely regarded and factually correct that the furniture up there currently is very old and falling apart (take a pillow or two off the couch to see how the back is broken). The motion does not amount to anything, except that we should potentially think about getting something new (and see if the department is willing and/or able to help with this).

A concern about the CUPE TA orientations that occur in the department each Fall and Spring terms is raised: some of our members are involved in the leadership of the union, and hence give the department TA orientation. However, all TAs in the department are supposed to attend this meeting/training, and attendees are paid for their half an hour's time. The leader of the orientation typically does not "sign in", and so does not get paid, even though they would get paid if there was an external union person giving the orientation. It's wondered if SIGMAS should cover this cost (roughly \$12.57 right now). The membership sees both sides of the discussion; on one hand, this is an easily covered cost and it seems fair. On the other hand, the union should be arranging for the leaders to be paid for their time, and so this is a union issue, not one for SIGMAS (recalling that not all math and stats grads are TAs, and there are many non-grad-student TAs in math). No motion is specifically put forward.

Laura gives the Treasurer's report! We are in healthy financial shape. Exam Sales held steady from last year, and are up or stable from years before that. However, since the Engineering Students' Society runs an exam bank for its students, and they are a large portion of our clientéle, we are still concerned that enough students will be informed of the existence of the exam bank and will obtain our resources for free (which, given that we've placed copyright notices and explicit instructions that our materials not be digitized without consent, and that we've never given permission to digitize our materials...).

We also haven't really been spending money in any significant way; our main large expenditures are house parties, and since we haven't had many of those in the last while, we've instead spent money on smaller things, like mailbox candy for grads around Halloween, etc, subsidized event attendance (like the department's Christmas party), and the still-ongoing Tea honorarium (\$50 per term).

Before the meeting wraps up, Joseph asks that there be some semblance of "election" for the position of GSS rep, since these members are intended to be elected. A motion is put forward re-electing Joseph as GSS rep, seconded, and passed unanimously, all within literally four seconds. Good enough. Joseph also gives notice that we'll try to do Constitution (and Bylaws) amending next meeting.

The meeting adjourns, probably around 18:00 but no record of this is available.

Summary of Tasks:

- The executive should get the time-tracking app raffle going.

- Joseph will actually send out the new draft Constitution out for next meeting.
- People to perform the duties of the roles they volunteered for.
- Everyone to be awesome!