

# Minutes of the SIGMAS General Meeting

January 16, 2014

Present: Kseniya Garaschuk, Amanda Malloch, Laura Teshima, Brittany Halverson-Duncan, Jane Wodlinger, Joseph Horan, Garrett Culos, Emily Malcolm, Christopher van Bommel, Paul Van Dam-Bates (in rough order of punctuality for a 4 pm start).

Location: Grad House

Ignoring the need to check quorum or wait for the person who called the meeting to arrive (Paul), or even calling the meeting to order at all, at roughly 4:10 pm Jane brings up the topic of private tutoring of students while working as a TA for that course. Discussion focuses on what the rule should be, what this topic is considered by the department (ie. a "guideline"), and that it should be communicated to new graduate students and/or posted somewhere officially. Whether one should be able to tutor a student who is \*not\* in one's tutorial section is a point that is debated, until it is agreed that Kseniya will ask the chair about it.

By this point, Paul has arrived, and calls the meeting officially to order, while food and libations arrives. It is finally noted that we achieved quorum (though we had to figure out what quorum was, first). Focus turns to 'executive' positions, in no particular order. Brittany wants to be Safety Captain; her qualifications are numerous, regardless of the difference between the perceived and actual usefulness of the (spontaneously created) position. Paul motions for this to be put to a vote, regardless of the fact that he is supposedly the chair and shouldn't be making motions. This fact is not observed; either this, or it is obfuscated whether a motion was even made in the first place, or if Paul simply just put the issue to a vote unilaterally. This comment holds throughout the meeting. Regardless, voting is to be done by show of hands.

**Vote:** Voting is unanimous, up to abstentions. Brittany is elected Safety Captain (as opposed to Captain of Safety).

An obnoxious discussion follows, the topic and details of which were too disgusting to be written down in the minutes (or else forgotten). Laura eventually ends said discussion by volunteering for Treasurer. Paul again motions for a vote, because there's no reason to wait for anyone else to put forth their desire for a position if someone volunteers.

**Vote:** Voting is again unanimous. Laura is elected Treasurer.

On the subject of where Laura will be keeping the (not very) copious amounts of money of which SIGMAS is in possession, it is suggested that she should keep it in [REDACTED] because there is lots of room. The perpetrators of this crime against sensibility included [REDACTED]

Amanda volunteers for the position of President. Discussion occurs; she brings up the fact that she wants to hold more events. Paul motions for a vote.

**Vote:** Voting is again unanimous. Amanda is elected President.

Jane volunteers for the position of Vice President. Discussion, followed by a vote.

**Vote:** Surprise, unanimous. Jane is elected Vice President.

The position of Secretary is brought up. Joseph mentions that he has been taking notes from the beginning of the meeting, and thus is probably the appropriate candidate. A vote occurs.

**Vote:** Unanimous. Joseph is elected Secretary.

Joseph also asks if he should be Webmaster, so that he can put the minutes up on the website. It is agreed that this is a good idea. In a possibly separate but still unanimous vote (which is not notated well enough in the minutes), Joseph becomes Webmaster.

Discussion occurs on titles and positions, and the SIGMAS constitution. Events are brought up briefly, in particular whether we should ask the GSS for money, and if we should do games at Tuesday Tea. Brittany remarks that if we play Twister, we need to stretch first!

It is cleared up slightly what roles each position fills, and it leads to discussion on who will be the new Poet Laureate. Paul suggests himself, and in addition recommends himself for the new position of Tea Chancellor. The only thing argued is what said position should be called.

**Vote:** Possibly unanimous, but at least in favour of Paul. Paul is elected Tea Chancellor and Poet Laureate.

Kseniya proposes that she remain as someone in charge of Faculty Relations, since she has been doing the job for what is effectively forever. Her position needs a name, however, so before she can be elected it is agreed that she should be Czar. No discussion is held regarding how that should be spelled, or if the title is solely because she is Belarusian.

**Vote:** Unanimous vote again. Kseniya is elected Czar of Faculty Relations.

Amanda brings up CUPE outreach, and various related issues, like the upcoming bargaining. UVic TAs are notoriously poorly paid in comparison to other Canadian institutions; it is remarked that strike pay is comparable to our wages, but it is also noted that these numbers need to be adjusted for hours on the job, and that we don't have concrete and fully correct calculations. Regarding the bargaining, CUPE does not want to strike, but it's hard for them to know what their constituents want if there is little participation, so it is desired that CUPE members participate more in the union. It is commented that CUPE e-mails are not very good. The rebuttal involves noting that there will be a survey out sometime soon to help alleviate this deficiency.

Joseph and Garrett switch spots, so that Joseph can hear Amanda. There is also a comment about the [REDACTED] GSS president.

Paul introduces the next item of the meeting (theoretically following an agenda): Events! Amanda, all of a sudden, notices that Joseph and Garrett switched spots. Paul says that he'd like to see more events, because he has been feeling lonely. It is commented that this is the case because he is now single. Paul agrees, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The meeting collectively sheds a tear for Paul. Kseniya then regales us with a tale of Jason talking about knobs at a meeting in the past, and that the current discussion is about as awkward; said tale is documented in previous minutes.

Paul attempts to draw our attention back to the topic at hand, which is event brainstorming for this term. Suggestions involve bocce, croquet, big drinking parties, going to the beach, skating, and bowling. Joseph expresses great desire for bowling, while going to the beach is ruled out for reasons of warmth. Relative dates are also discussed; preferably not during Reading Week, and perhaps on St. Patrick's Day.

A brunch party is proposed, and furthermore it is suggested that it should be a pyjama party. Paul offers to volunteer his house for Saturday, January 25th, tentative on if his housemates mind. Another proposal put forth is a fancy dress party. It is inquired of the non-drinking members if they mind if SIGMAS buys alcohol for events; Joseph responds and others agree that as long as there is food and drink for us in reasonable proportions, they don't mind.

Discussion occurs regarding the logistics of brunch, ie. cost and space, and whether it'll be a potluck. Paul assures us that it'll be fine. There is a troll regarding the SIGMAS Facebook group, which apparently exists.

A related point is brought up, namely that of exam sales and the e-mail from last term about how people aren't helping with it. Perhaps we should levy a fee for attendance at parties if someone doesn't volunteer during the term. It is also noted that our digital copies of exams aren't very good and need to be redone, and that Josh and Jane did a great job with exam sales last term.

Other event ideas are floated, such as a movie night, of which people are in favour. Garrett observes that he doesn't really know what topics people research, and that it'd be nice to find out. Jane quips that such things are supposed to happen at the parties, before drinking. Christopher very astutely remarks that the time period allotted for that activity is all of five minutes in duration.

Revival of the SIGMAS Seminar is discussed, and Paul asks if we should invite people from other departments to attend. This is practically shouted down, particularly by Joseph (as he is liable to shout). Paul revises his suggestion by asking if we could invite people from other departments to bring their research that involves some sort of math or stats problem, and present it to a mixed group. This way, constructive discussion could be had, and math and stats students would learn about other areas, while hopefully not being too snarky. The meeting comes to the consensus that this is actually not a terrible idea. Paul volunteers to organize this. 4:30 pm on Thursdays is touted as a reasonable time for people at the table.

Paul, at one point, says [REDACTED] Kseniya comments that "Brittany agrees". Paul reminds us of something Jason once told him: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Laughs are had.

The meeting appears to come to a close, when Paul adjourns it, saying "The meeting is now mapped." No one understands how he came up with that, but the point is made. Laura mentions that she will obtain a cash box for SIGMAS, and it is generally guessed that theoretically, she'll keep it somewhere safe.

The meeting breaks up somewhere around 6 pm.