

SIGMAS Meeting Minutes
Friday, June 1, 2018, 15:00
GSC 112 (Halpern Centre Meeting Room, Small Side)

President: Vacant
Vice President: Mark Piraino
Treasurer: Laura Teshima
Secretary: Joseph Horan

Directors of Communication: 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): Felicia Halliday, Flora Bowditch, Laura Teshima, Mark Piraino, Joseph Horan, Dan Hudson (arrived at 15:30).

Guest: Jane Wodlinger.

Regrets: Joanna Niezen, Mackenzie Wheeler, Dina Buric.

The meeting is called to order at 15:10, after Felicia arrives (thanks, Luna). Jane chairs the meeting as ex-President and has full speaking rights, with which we're all okay. Jane has an agenda on Laura's tablet; when the screen goes black, you can see a number of little ' σ 's, which is completely appropriate.

Constitution: The first order of business, which is actually the second item on the agenda, is Joseph's updates to the Constitution. Joseph explains that we can't even vote on it if we wanted to deal with them, but he's got a document with updates ready and he will send them out to the `msggrad` list at the beginning of next week. He'll take suggestions over the summer, and then we will vote on the revisions at the Fall 2018 meeting.

President: Next, we discuss the fact that Jane is no longer actually President, since she is no longer a member of SIGMAS. We would have made a motion to appoint Mark as President, but 1. we can't vote on anything, and 2. the Constitution has a provision that the Vice President will perform the duties of the President if the President is unable to perform them. With this in mind, we remind Mark that he can continue to do as much or as little work as he desires, in the office of SIGMAS President.

Department Rep. Report: Joanna submitted notes for Jane to read at the meeting. We've had one big hire since our last meeting: Stephen Scully, in algebra. He will start in July, but teaching in January. The Hiring Plan has changed, but will likely change again as the department is trying to obtain more research faculty members [to presumably fulfil research and teaching requirements without hiring a large number of sessionals and limited-term teaching faculty, and to handle the recent deaths in the department]. There will certainly be drama. There may also be upcoming changes to the way graduate student admissions work in the department.

Dan arrives, after running tutorials. The meeting now has quorum!

CUPE 4163 Report: There are two items of note. First, Laura gives an update on the now-settled grievance about invigilation pay. People still haven't been paid; the hope is that this will be remedied by the end of the month. Second, Mark reminds us that the collective agreement expires next August. CUPE will be looking to find Component 1 members to serve on the bargaining committee in February.

GSS Report: Joseph gives a brief update on GSS stuff; nothing terribly new that hasn't been in any e-mails, but notes that international undergraduate student tuition fees went up by 20% at the beginning of May, which will hit the incoming students this Fall; the GSS is against this. [I totally forgot that GRC passed a motion requiring grad reps to ask our department societies to formally oppose the tuition increases. Um... We'll talk about this later?] Joseph also mentions that the Grad House is open again, and it's open quite late (until 10 pm (20:00)), and even on Saturdays! Dan and Laura note that Side Project Coffee is quite good, and pretty empty this term, so go visit! Aside from that, Joseph just asks members to please come out to GSS events! (See recent e-mails from Joseph or the GSS Events Calendar.)

Events: Speaking of events, we discuss SIGMAS events (which are more often planned than executed). The pottery event was very good, and Flora recently collected the bowls that everyone made. It is suggested that we should have a candy party, where we serve candy from the bowls! No concrete plan on how this'll work, though.

Laura and Jane have been thinking that we should revive the casual "go to the Grad House as a group" events. Everyone agrees that this is a good idea; for now, we will do **Fridays at 3:30 pm (15:30)**. SIGMAS may or may not provide refreshments.

Other event ideas include:

- a trip to the Royal BC Museum in June (the two main exhibits right now are Egypt and Astronomy!); possibly to be done in the evening, accompanied with refreshments ("think and drink", in some order);
- a cidery tour (similar to the one that the GSS does);
- another entry in the "SIGMAS Goes To..." series: Dan's metal band is playing on June 29th! It's going to be *brutal*. In a good way.

Treasurer's Report: Laura gave us a report on the SIGMAS financials; we're in very good fiscal shape. Mark described it as [REDACTED]. There is a comment about having a spending breakdown; we have a general overview, but not necessarily a line-by-line dissection. The discussion turned to what we could do with some of our money.

Mark suggests a "dissertation-completion fellowship", that would assist grads nearing completion of their written document in their last term, so that they wouldn't have to do TA work while they're trying to finish their degree. Potentially, this could be jointly funded with the department, and maybe the grad committee would save us the trouble of administering it. There seem to be a number of reasons why this wouldn't work in practice, including the fact that we wouldn't want the department spending our money.

Laura proposes an "emergency travel bursary", intended for SIGMAS members who have emergencies come up and who have to drop everything and make exceptional and expedient travel plans (for example, family emergency/illness in another country). This is widely considered to be a very good idea, and after some reworking of the terms, *we unanimously pass a motion to approve the emergency travel bursary and the expenditure required to support it, as outlined below:*

SIGMAS Emergency Travel Bursary:

The SIGMAS Emergency Travel Bursary (ETB) is a per-need travel bursary intended to partially

offset the personal cost of emergency travel. SIGMAS members may apply for the ETB by submitting to SIGMAS a written request for monetary aid; the request shall specify the location of travel and a very brief justification. The request will be accepted or denied by the SIGMAS Executive as soon as possible. The amount of the ETB will be determined using the same criteria as for the FGS/GSS Travel Grant program:

- up to \$600 for those travelling outside of BC, Alberta, or Washington State;
- up to \$400 for those travelling inside BC, Alberta, or Washington State but outside of Vancouver, Vancouver Island, or Seattle;
- up to \$150 for those travelling to Vancouver, Seattle, or on Vancouver Island.

The amount will be paid upon submission of receipts and proof of travel.

SIGMAS will initially place \$1200 in the bursary pool, and every September will top up the bursary pool by the amount of 5% of that year's Exam Sales profit (sales from the previous year's December, and the current year's April and August sale periods). SIGMAS may, upon approval at a general meeting (called for any purpose), top up the bursary pool as necessary. The regulations surrounding the ETB will be reviewed within 2 years of the date of this meeting.

(As a side-note, UVic has some emergency bursaries, but they're university-wide and I don't think any of them are for travel, but I could be wrong.)

Laura also proposes a yearly donation to the UVic Food Bank, in the amount of 5% of Fall and Spring Exam Sales profit. It is known that graduate students are a proportional user of the Food Bank, and of course, at any given point this could include SIGMAS members. *This proposal is approved, unanimously.*

Finally, Laura proposes to increase the Tea Honorarium from \$50 per term to \$70 per term. Joseph requests that Dan and Flora politely ask more people to volunteer to bring goodies to Tea; Laura reminds them that they can skip bringing goodies to incentivize volunteers. *The increase is unanimously approved.*

Exam Sales: Flora gives a report on the last two periods of Exam Sales. We did very well, given that in both terms, there were large first-year classes writing their exams on or near the first day of exams. We sold exams for three days instead of two in the last of classes in the Spring, which Flora credits as helping sales improve from the Fall to the Spring. The undergrads had a higher-than-average cut of the profit in the Spring, due to a higher-than-average presence selling exams (one reason is that Joseph was teaching a class and therefore could not volunteer his usual number of hours); they were reported as being thrilled. It is noted that Monk Office recently increased their printing rate for large orders from 2.5 cents a page to 4 cents a page, which could affect us in the future.

FGS Report: Joseph mentions that the new Graduate Supervision Policy has been in effect for about a year now, and FGS is always looking for feedback. There has already been some from the faculty, but if graduate students have feedback, both positive and negative, FGS is more than happy to hear it. There are rumblings that some stuff will be moved to online databases, but there isn't much information about that.

Math Camps: Dina couldn't be here, so Joseph passes along a note from Dina about the CMS Math Camp being run at Camosun College, July 3 to July 6. (Amanda Malloch is in charge of the event, with help from Dina.) Talk to Dina for more details about how to get involved!

Gift: For the last item of the meeting, Laura presents Jane with a gift, seeing as Jane served admirably as SIGMAS President. Included is a card with a Canadian Tire gift certificate, and a

(drumroll) cat harness, which Jane will put to good use. It is agreed that the wrapping paper for the cat harness, discarded printing with Japanese text, was very good.

The meeting adjourned at 4:20 pm (16:20), with all attendees migrating to the Grad House to have food and drinks. It should be noted, as a post-script (it came up during the refreshments portion of the meeting), that the SIGMAS Research Group Discretionary Fund was used this year, for the first times! The Pure group used it in March for a potluck event, and the Discrete group used it over the course of a few dinners at conferences. It should also be noted that Joseph was wrong; Felicia says that Luna would've loved being at the meeting. Next time we will invite her.

Summary of Tasks:

- Joseph will actually, ACTUALLY, send out the new draft Constitution out, soon;
- Laura/delegate to send out Grad House Friday event information;
- Someone to organize the Royal BC Museum trip;
- Joseph to investigate the cost and logistics behind the recent GSS Cidery/Distillery trips;
- Laura/delegate to send out info about Dan's band's concert;
- Laura to set aside money for the Emergency Travel Bursary (in some way);
- Someone to figure out a way to notify grads about the ETB (and some of the other policies, like the Research Discretionary Fund; Joseph can type up a summary document?);
- Felicia to bring Luna to the meeting next time (barring cat allergies of members);
- People to perform the duties of the roles they volunteered for;
- Everyone to be awesome!