

SIGMAS Meeting Minutes
Friday, May 5, 2017, 15:30
GSC 108, Moving to Grad House

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 Reps: Mark Piraino
Tea Chancellor/Poet Laureate: Dan Hudson
Webmaster: Joseph Horan
Peacekeeper: Joanna Niezen
Safety Captain: Vacant

Present (by clockwise seating order): Yin Song, Laura Teshima, Jane Wodlinger, Mark Piraino, Dan Hudson, Chi Kou, Joanna Niezen, Joseph Horan.

Regrets: None received.

Joseph shows up late, thanks to his tutorials, and the meeting gets started at about 15:38, with Joseph informally chairing the meeting [sorry]. Jane comments that we might be expecting people later, because her reminder e-mail got held up by the mailing list. (No one else ends up coming.) The topic of discussion is sending people to Mexico, or failing that, Saskatchewan. We have good backup plans.

Quorum: The first real item on the agenda is to change the quorum for SIGMAS meetings. Currently, the constitution says that it is 8 in the Fall/Spring terms, and 6 in the Summer term, but we always struggle to get people out to meetings. After some discussion about possible ways to handle this (including whether or not it actually matters), a quorum of 6 year-round is proposed and seconded. Joseph comments that technically, for constitutional amendments (which this is), we were supposed to make sure this motion was in the agenda sent out, blah blah, and also comments that it's better just to get it done now, and ignore the technicalities for the sake of the organization. The subsequent vote is unanimous! **Quorum for all SIGMAS meetings is now 6.**

Constitutional Amendments: Joseph describes how the constitution needs some work, regarding executive structure, gendered pronouns, duties, etc. He's already had a shot at rewording a bunch of it, but obviously he should ask if there are other things people want to see. Jane notes that the main issue is that the constitution states that the current exec is made up of positions that have multiple roles which are 1. currently split, and 2. unrelated. Laura comments that the executive should have a minimum number of distinct individuals (in the roles of President, Treasurer, Secretary, for example), and Mark adds that the structure specified should be vague enough that future meetings can decide how big the executive is (some number of Vice-Presidents, say). Joseph will take this into account, and send out a draft version of the constitution to the current executive and any other member who is interested in contributing to the edits. The edited version will be presented for approval at the next meeting, hopefully.

Exec Members: Speaking of the executive, Jane asks who *is* on the executive currently. Specifically, we haven't had any response from Charlie with regards to his ability to act in the capacity of President. In light of this, we motion to appoint Jane as President (Jane agreed to this course of

action), and the motion goes through unanimously. [I ran into Charlie later that day and presented him with the news; it was met with positive acknowledgement.]

SIGMAS Tutor List: Moving on, the next item of discussion is the SIGMAS Tutor List. Jane says she'll get it organized again, outlining the process, and brings up the more pressing question: who should be allowed to be on the Tutor List? We received contact from a future SIGMAS member (starting in September) who wanted to be on the list this term, and it is unclear how we should go about restricting who should be allowed to be on the list. Laura remarks that she wants things to be as simple as possible, and doesn't want to be in the business of choosing who gets to be on the list. Chi asks why people who can't be on the SIGMAS list can't just be on the department-run list. We're all pretty much in agreement about future SIGMAS members; Joanna mentions that we're talking about future SIGMAS members, but what about past SIGMAS members? There are concerns about long-gone alumni using the list, and really how much control can we exert on people who aren't SIGMAS members anymore?

Mark asks if we can just restrict it to the recipients of the grad mailing list, especially because keeping a separate list of people to send the Tutor List e-mail to would be a pain to handle. There is general agreement on this idea, but given that the list is sometimes slow to update, and given that many grads still around for a term or two, it is proposed that: **access to the SIGMAS Tutor List be restricted to msgrad-l recipients, with a maximum of 3 possible extension terms for SIGMAS alumni, each term to be upon separate request, handled by the President.** This motion passes unanimously.

SIGMAS Connect Site: Joseph explains how the Math department is migrating its SharePoint site to Connect, UVic's new internal non-academic file-space. SIGMAS had a section of the Math SharePoint, but as far as we could tell, it was essentially unused, and it wasn't private (i.e. all Math users could see it, not just SIGMAS members). Joseph has already talked to Kelly about just getting rid of it. In place of the SIGMAS SharePoint, we could get a Connect site, which would be much more useful, as long as it were private. Joseph asks if it seems like this would be a good idea, and the room is generally unopposed to it. Laura remarks that it would be preferable to go through Kelly, and avoid dealing with the university directly. It's also remarked that SUMS has their own @uvic.ca e-mail; why can't SIGMAS have their own e-mail? We just have to be careful to avoid being forced to use Outlook...

Reports: We move on to the n reports from our various reps. Laura begins with the **Treasurer's** report, wherein we learn that we're not doing too badly for funds. Exam Sales went decently this past term. We've unfortunately not spent a lot of money on events recently; the three non-Tea events we held last term were sparsely attended (skating, games night, Joanna's synchro team's water show), and we spent a reasonable amount on Chinese New Year and Valentine's Day chocolates/candies, as well as gifts for our office staff. The main reason we've been spending less has been our lack of parties, and the main reason for that has been a lack of location. We've looked into renting a hall, but those cost a lot if you need a liquor license. If anyone has a space we can use... Also, we're fine spending some money on SIGMAS Teas this summer again.

Mark's up next, with a report from the **Handbook Committee**. The handbook exists! It says some things. Some things Mark and others wanted it to say, it doesn't say, and sometimes it's not very specific. Theoretically we'll get a chance to see it before it gets sent to incoming students in the Fall? We'll also have a new Grad Advisor soon; Mark forgot who it was, but the joke is that the position might end up being filled via Discrete Faculty Member Musical Chairs...

Mark also informs us of some stuff that's happened in the last couple of **department meetings**. Our Biostats hire is here, our Probabilist arrives at the beginning of July, and they're working on a hiring plan for the next five years. There was also a discussion and vote on whether or not the graduate student rep to the department meetings should have voice *and* vote; there was both support and opposition, and in the end, the meeting voted **in favour** of the grad rep having a vote

at department meetings. Cue “Yorktown (The World Turned Upside Down)”: we won! Joseph was mildly excited about this turn of events: the FGS has a recommendation that all departments have grad student representation in this manner.

There’s also much talk about how this department suffers from “resourcing issues”. That is, we’re not being given enough money to sufficiently cover all of the teaching that they expect us to do. The Faculty Association might get involved... The VPAC’s office has told us that we’re not allowed to run a deficit anymore, and they’ve promised us some money, but it might not be nearly enough. We may be looking at a reduction of TA hours. Coincidentally, they’ve also renewed the Senior Lab Instructor position for another three years, with presumably no changes to the duties, though we’re not sure. The union is apparently okay with this position, though we’re still somewhat dissatisfied with that.

Mark and Laura tag-team to inform us about how the **Chair Search** went: poorly. They’ve received permission from the Dean of Science to hire an external chair, who might take a future faculty position(?). In the meantime, we’re hopefully going to find a temporary one-year chair, preferably from the department, but even that’s somewhat dicey. As an aside, there *is*, apparently, a mechanism for Assistant Teaching Professors to become chair [a glance at policy GV0710_1020 seems that this is an obscure or unwritten mechanism, probably].

Jane leads a brief discussion of CUPE-related topics. Interestingly, two of the three Component 1 officers are Math grads (Jane is Comp 1 VP, and Mark is Comp 1 Member at Large), Laura and Mark are department stewards, and Joseph is a Comp 1 Trustee. We’re engaged! But even still, sometimes it’s hard to get people to care about certain things, both at the union level and in the department. As a note, the union is hoping to figure out how the Workplace Bullying/Harassment thing is going to go. The department does know about it, but hasn’t done anything yet.

At this point, it’s 17:00, and Michelle Edwards has been holding a table for us for over half an hour. We pack up and move over to the Grad House. After we order food and drinks, Joseph makes some small statements about how the Grad House will be closing on Friday, May 12, and how hopefully (cross fingers) we’ll be getting it renovated and back in business, with a brand new sustainable business plan. Joseph also mentions that the FGS has posted the new version of the Graduate Supervision Policy; we should read it!

Events: Over the course of the next hour or so, there is scattered discussion about events that SIGMAS could hold. One event in particular is something that Joseph’s looking at from a GSS perspective: a listening session where we ask graduates to tell us what they’d like to see from their student societies (GSS, but also SIGMAS), potentially focusing on international students. We could potentially supply food for such an event? We could also maybe do gift baskets for new students, equipped with information, etc.

In terms of Summer 2017 events, we have some ideas! SIGMAS Teas, as mentioned before, but also a bunch of other things. In no particular order:

- various hikes/walks (Joseph volunteers to organize some of these),
- beach days/nights,
- barbecue (location is necessary),
- going to the Beacon Hill Park Petting Zoo and afterwards getting ice cream (!),
- SIGMAS Goes Climbing (either at a local climbing gym, or maybe at CARSA?),
- cider tasting,
- canoeing and/or kayaking (Joanna has strong opinions about kayaking, sooo),

- bonfires/camping (again, location)
- other small trips, concerts?,
- a tie-dye event,
- waffle brunch (!) (hosting is necessary, here),
- Beacon Hill B-Movie Film Festival.

Chi suggested that maybe we can send out an e-mail to the grad list to see if there are events people want to see put on.

Joseph quit writing things at 18:30.

Summary of Tasks:

- Jane to organize the Tutor List for the Summer 2017 term.
- Joseph to finish drafting a rewrite of the constitution, and send it out for edits.
- Joseph to ask Kelly about a Connect site and a SIGMAS e-mail.
- Joseph to send out dates for hikes/walks.
- Someone to organize a trip to the Petting Zoo?
- Everyone to think of hosting places, to help plan other events, to read the new FGS Graduate Supervision Policy, to read over the draft handbook and constitution when they are sent around and provide feedback, and to be awesome.
- Other things that haven't been summarized.