

SIGMAS Meeting Minutes
Friday, September 21, 2018, 16:00
DTB A202 (Math and Stats Assistance Centre)

President: Mackenzie Wheeler
Vice President: Dan Hudson
Treasurer: Laura Teshima
Secretary: Joseph Horan

Directors of Communication: Laura Teshima
GSS Representative: Joseph Horan
CUPE 4163 Steward: Laura Teshima
Math and Stats Department Rep: Joanna Niezen
Tea Chancellor: Flora Bowditch
Poet Laureate: Dan Hudson
Exam Sales Coordinators: Flora Bowditch
Webmaster: Joseph Horan
Peacekeeper: Joanna Niezen
Safety Captain: Brittany Halverson-Duncan

Present (by counter-clockwise seating order, mostly): Mark Piraino, Mitchell Haslehurst, George Lee, Hyungeun Shin, Kevin Hsu, Felicia Halladay, Daisy (Qincheng) Lu, MacKenzie Carr, Hazel (Ling) Hua (visiting grad), Joseph Horan, Laura Teshima, Joanna Niezen, Frank Yang, Flora Bowditch, Dan Hudson, Dina Buric, Rongzheng Xie, Mackenzie Wheeler, Ben Liu, Brittany Halverson-Duncan.

Guests (afterwards): Michelle Edwards, Amanda Malloch.

Regrets: None received. Felicia stated that her cat Luna could not come due to Luna being on probation for attempting to murder a charger.

The meeting is called to order at about 16:20, once Joseph gets back from parking his vehicle after dropping food off late. For future reference, taking West Burnside Road from its intersection with Interurban to McKenzie on a weekday is the worst idea ever. Mark is chairing the meeting, as Vice President (since we had no President at the start of the meeting). We do a round of introductions, including fancy titles.

GSS Report: Joseph gives a report, as ‘outgoing’ GSS Rep (cf. elections). He probably could’ve prepared a better report, more like the text to follow, which includes the information given at the meeting. The GSS (Grad Students’ Society) owns and operates two food establishments in the Halpern Centre: the Grad House restaurant and Side Project Coffee café are both open and back to full hours (for the restaurant, 11:30-22:00 on weekdays, and for the café, 07:30 until close on weekdays; both are open 10:00-14:00 on Saturday and closed on Sunday). It is commented that the café has the best coffee on campus (thanks, Dan), and that it’s hardly ever busy or packed with undergrads.

The GSS provides a number of services for graduate students, like the Health and Dental Plan and the U-Pass (all of which have opt-in and opt-out procedures). Speaking of transit, the GSS has a representative who sits on a transit advisory board; this fall, BC Transit improved service to and from the airport, partially due to student pressure! The GSS also runs many events for graduate students across campus; see the Events Calendar at gss.uvic.ca/events/. We’ve got lots of events planned for the Fall! Finally, please feel free to come talk to Joseph, in case you have any questions/comments/concerns/etc.

CUPE Report: Mark mentions that he's Vice President for Component 1 of CUPE 4163; Laura's the Steward for the department, and Mitch is the CUPE Rep sitting on the GSS Grad Council (more on that later). We're coming up on bargaining soon; everyone should get involved in the union! In particular, there's a Component 1 meeting on October 18, at 17:30 (details to be confirmed, including room), where the union will be discussing what Comp 1 is looking to achieve in bargaining this time around. There was also a recap of the Junior vs. Senior pay rate issue, and what ad hoc invigilation is.

Department Report: Joanna gave a report about the goings-on of the department. First off, the update on the Academic Program Review (APR) is that there's no update; we seem to have misplaced one of the members of the committee... There are conversations going on about some of the things we brought up, though, which is good.

There have been, and will continue to be, some personnel changes. The department is looking to hire two faculty members soon: an Assistant Teaching Professor to teach a wide variety of courses, including a specialization in Differential Equations (to fill the shoes of Robert Steacy), and a tenure-track research Assistant Professor in Stochastic Differential Equations (which is at the top of the hiring priority list). The hiring notices have now been updated to encourage people from all walks of life to apply, including those people who may have historically been implicitly discriminated against. Our most recent hire, Stephen Scully, is now here! And after a long *dénouement*, Ahmed Sourour is now finally retired. Lastly, of the 26 [previously reported as 11; FGS reported 26 later] Saudi Arabian graduate students at UVic, Math and Stats had 5 of them. One of them was able to complete their degree, but the remaining four were forced to leave, and attempt to find some other place to go. We are all sad to see them go, and we will be worse off for it.

There are also some changes to our graduate-level courses. There are new Stats courses! Stat 565, Statistical Methods for Genomic Data, and Stat 566, Robust Statistics. Math 511 (Topics in Matrix Theory and Linear Algebra) will be dropped from the calendar (university requirement). Math 563 (Algebraic Number Theory) will hopefully run again soon, in order for it to stay on the calendar. It is hoped but unconfirmed that Scully would be the instructor.

Treasurer's Report: Mark's sketch of the agenda on the blackboard says "Money!!", simply because we have a decent amount of it, and that's something to be happy and cheerful about. Laura tells us a bit about our finances, including how much we have currently, and we're in good shape. We even spent the most we've spent in a four-month period probably ever this past summer, which is good; this means we've been trying to, and sometimes succeeding in, getting people together to attend events! Exam Sales held steady over last year, even with an increase in printing costs. As approved at the Summer 2018 SIGMAS meeting, we recently donated 5% of our Fall and Spring Exam Sales profits to the UVic Food Bank.

Also at last meeting, we approved an Emergency Travel Bursary for Math and Stats graduate students who have emergency needs to travel. It was utilized almost immediately, and while that worked out reasonably well, there was concern that the approval process was not quite as organized as desired. It is proposed that the bursary language be amended to include "*approval of three executive members in conference before notification*", potentially rephrased to be grammatical in context. In this way, the SIGMAS executive is forced to talk to each other about it before approving the award. The motion is seconded, and *approved*.

There is a brief discussion of Exam Sales, for those who don't already know, and a note about SIGMAS sponsoring its members to attend activities put on by other SIGMAS members, such as concerts (Dan, Joseph), synchro water shows (Joanna), and whatever else our members do. Lastly, two of the four research groups (Discrete, Pure) applied for the SIGMAS Research Group Discretionary Fund this year! These are the first times it has been used since it came into existence. There is a motion to increase the fund from \$150 per year per group to \$200; *this motion is quickly approved*.

Elections: Every Fall, we elect graduate students to serve roles on the Executive committee, as well as a GSS Rep, and find volunteers for other roles. Often we just fill gaps, but Joseph mentions that the Constitution says we elect every position each Fall, so we figure why not, let's do it.

- **President:** The President's role is described: send out the Tutor List e-mail, chair meetings, sometimes hang out or speak at events, and help with general organization of SIGMAS. Mark is nominated. Mackenzie is also nominated, and accepts that nomination; Mark declines the nomination, and then declares nominations closed (after a few seconds). *Mackenzie Wheeler is acclaimed President!*
- **Vice President:** The Vice President helps with general organization, including doing the President's job if they can't. Dan is nominated, and accepts. Nominations close, and *Dan Hudson is acclaimed Vice President!*
- **Treasurer:** The Treasurer, of course, handles the finances. Laura is nominated, and accepts. Nominations close, and *Laura Teshima is acclaimed Treasurer!*
- **Secretary:** The Secretary takes notes during meetings, types up minutes, and wordsmiths the various policies that SIGMAS has. In other words, the head words bureaucrat. Joseph self-nominates, and has the nomination seconded. Nominations close, and *Joseph is acclaimed Secretary!*
- **GSS Representative:** It's not in our Constitution, but the GSS Rep should be elected, as most are. The GSS Rep sits on Grad Council, and goes to monthly meetings. They also sit on a subcommittee of Grad Council. Joseph again self-nominates, and has the nomination seconded. Nominations close, and *Joseph is elected GSS Representative!*

The other positions we have are volunteer, and we do not elect them. Brief descriptions of some positions are given, and the resulting list of volunteers is given above. (We now have a Safety Captain again! Brittany even has a vest and a whistle.) For some reason, there is a comment about putting tin foil in the microwave; there seems to be a sign about that somewhere on campus. Turns out Mackenzie once learned that the hard way once upon a time.

Constitution: Joseph asks that we include approval of the amendments to the Constitution that he has been trying to get considered at a meeting for something like a year. New versions (with edits included) were passed around, for people to look at. The main edits were using gender neutral pronouns, specifying the current format of the Executive, and making the quorum count explicit. No comments were made during the summer when Joseph sent them around. Mark makes sure that nowhere in the edits does it mention him. No further comments are made in the meeting. There is a motion to approve the amendments (the... first amendments to the SIGMAS constitution, yes, Mackenzie), and it is approved; *the Constitution is amended as in the documents sent around in the summer.*

SIGMAS Online Stuff: Joseph makes a plug for the SIGMAS website, found at www.math.uvic.ca/~sigmas. There is an Exam Sales page (for the information of students), a Bureaucracy page (for minutes/Constitution), and a Resources page, where you can find links to all sorts of useful webpages and documents. Laura mentions that SIGMAS finally has access to its e-mail account, sigmas@uvic.ca. There's a bit of a discussion about maybe making a Facebook page; SIGMAS has one, but it hasn't been used/viewed in years. Mackenzie might figure out what we have.

Events: Please propose events! We're always interested in running events for our graduate students. That said, with the exception of events being funded out of the Discretionary Fund, all SIGMAS-sponsored events must be open to all members of SIGMAS; they can't be restrictive.

Flora suggests a "SIGMAS Goes To: Vikes Basketball!" event, where we visit the Grad House and go to a game in some order on particular Friday nights. After Joseph mentions that since the

women's team tends to play first in the evening, maybe we'd want to watch the game and then go to the Grad House (taking advantage of the later hours); ■■■■ laughs, leading to the comment, "Why you laughing, ■■■■?"

Mark, as his last act as Vice President, adjourns the meeting, at 17:25. Members are invited to hang around and be social, and eat the copious amounts of food we purchased (which people loved!).

Summary of Tasks:

- Joseph to type up a summary document of policies;
- Joseph to type up minutes and post them, along with the new Constitution and Bylaws;
- Joseph/someone to rework the old L^AT_EX template to come up with an FGS compliant version;
- Brittany to create Safety Posters;
- People to perform the duties of the roles they volunteered for;
- Everyone to be awesome!