

SIGMAS Meeting Minutes

Friday, January 6, 2017, 15:30
GSC 108, Moving to Grad House

President: Charlie Watson
Vice Presidents: Jane Wodlinger, 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:	Charlie Watson, Mark Piraino
Tea Chancellor/Poet Laureate:	Dan Hudson, Chloe Lampman
Webmaster:	Joseph Horan
Peacekeeper:	Joanna Niezen
Safety Captain:	Vacant

Present (by rough order of arrival): Jane Wodlinger, Laura Teshima, Joseph Horan, Mark Piraino, Graham Quee, Joanna Niezen.

Regrets: None received.

The meeting is called to order at 15:35, after waiting in vain for more people to show up. Joseph had some people look at the agenda just before the meeting and they said it seemed okay; it is immediately brought up that we should change quorum to make it so that we can actually vote on things if necessary (it is currently 8 in Fall/Spring terms, and 6 in Summer terms). Of course, since we don't have quorum, this becomes an item for the next meeting at which we have quorum.

The 'real' first order of business is to elect a grad student representative to the Chair Search Committee. Mark, our Elections Officer for this event, told us that there was one nominee: Laura. No other nominations are brought forth. There is a quick approval poll by hands, and unanimously Laura's election to this position is approved. (We probably could've specified that in the case of only one nominee, they'd be automatically approved, but whatever.) Thanks, Laura! There is a brief discussion about what her role on this committee would be, and how in previous years, usually it was just the SIGMAS President who did it. Mark had also offered an advance polling option; no one contacted him about that, so while it was a good effort... [It turns out that the policy on Appointment of Chairs of Departments or Divisions (reference number GV0700), a UVic document, states that the committee (in our case) shall include a graduate student elected from and by the grads in the department (and has a minimum composition, for reference). So hooray for us doing it right this time!]

Speaking of positions, Joseph only figures out now that our CUPE stewards (plural) are Mark and Laura. The positions list has been updated accordingly. Jane volunteers to make sure the SIGMAS Tutor List got updated this term (after it not being updated last term).

Graham mentions that he has to leave to go to a meeting, so Joseph picks the seemingly most interesting item on the agenda to discuss next: the Graduate Student Handbook committee! Mark makes a brief report on the subject: the committee met, people agreed to write parts of it, there is a cover page? Joseph chimes in that Peter Dukes apparently has his section in draft form, so that indeed, this project is going somewhere. Mark mentions that he's happy that the proposed Graduate Supervision Policy stipulates that departments have one of these. Graham heads off to his meeting, but not before making a jab at Joseph for picking what ended up being the most boring

thing on the agenda. Justified, really.

Mark also gives a department meeting report. There are a bunch of hiring notes (hiring a numerical methods/scientific computing researcher to fill Martial's spot; no approval on filling Mak's spot now that he's on permanent disability leave; we've hired a Probability theorist who will arrive sometime later this year; we've also got a Canada Research Chair in Bio-stats coming within the year?), including revisiting the faculty hiring priority list that's a few years old now. There will be some partially-funded post-doc positions, too. The biggest thing is that the department will be revising the system for how money from FGS is handed out to graduate students; currently, students who don't have an external scholarship get some funding from the university, and apparently FGS just hands the department the lump sum and expects it to get to who needs it. Currently Peter just does it, and rightfully so, he thinks it should be changed.

We also ask if Mark should send the department meeting minutes to more than just the SIGMAS Executive; he hasn't, because it's yet another thing that people get bombarded with. [After the fact, can't we just get people's e-mails for those who want the department meeting minutes? Surely this shouldn't be that hard...]

Laura's up next, giving the finances report. Exam Sales held steady from last Fall, which we think can be attributed to selling new exams (e.g. Jane Butterfield's Math 100/109 from Fall 2015). We also spent a bit less on social events this past term (due to having fewer social events, mostly). Overall, our finances seem pretty good.

Speaking of Exam Sales, Seth gave us, as a lasting legacy, his Math 204 exam (!), so we can finally offer something for those students now. We also might ask about Tom's Math 208 exam. There is a brief discussion about the opportunity for grads who teach courses to help SIGMAS out in a big way by unblocking their exams, if possible; some of us think it's a responsibility, others think that it'd be nice but not necessary.

Joseph gives a report, as a Grad Rep to the GSS; nothing too major, except that the Halpern Centre is *actually* being renovated... hopefully. The plan is that we'll be starting in the summer, finishing sometime in the Fall, and we'll be trying to get as much of it done within our budget as possible. He also mentions FGS Council business, which mainly is that the Graduate Supervision Policy which will likely be approved in February, after faculty give feedback on the document and GEC (Graduate Executive Committee, an FGS body) works it in, where appropriate.

Mark asks, on a related note, why funding at this university is so low? It is theorized that the university has a small endowment; this is promptly disproven, as the endowment is about \$374 million Canadian. We resign ourselves to the fact that it's probably because the university "has no money", which may or may not actually be true, but it is effectively true. It is asked if there is someone who is a good 'angry letter recipient'; Joseph might find this out.

Laura gives a brief steward's report; there was a meeting in December that wasn't very good, apparently. Jane mentions some other CUPE business, in her role as Component 1 Vice-President. Joseph complains about the audit that he and Laura helped run; we're not sure about if the trustees' report is being distributed, so Joseph will investigate.

At this point, it is about 16:35, and Graham comes back, remarking that we were still going. We promptly move the meeting to the Grad House restaurant, and order some drinks and food. There is one remaining item on the agenda: events! So we talk about events over food.

It is remarked that if grads have events, SIGMAS thinks it's pretty cool to go to them! For instance, Joanna's synchronized swimming team has a water show every year; last year, SIGMAS subsidized the cost of the \$5 ticket for math and stats grads to go see the show together. (This year, it's Saturday, January 28th, at 19:00; doors open at 18:45.) Similarly, last year Meghan Hall helped organize the figure skating club's ice show, and SIGMAS subsidized the cheap ticket for math and stats grads to go see the show together. It is suggested that somewhere on the website, it is

indicated that SIGMAS is willing to do this. Joseph will see what he can do.

It is asked whether or not we have a place to host house parties, if Charlie's house is no longer an option in the future. Graham mentions that he wouldn't be opposed to it, but some things need to be sorted out first, and he can't speed those up. We'll continue to look.

Graham suggests that maybe we have a games night of some kind: if we don't host it at someone's house, we could possibly hold one at Interactivity, the board games café downtown. It's hard to reserve tables there, but we could see what they have for us. We might also head to a full-service restaurant afterwards. It falls to Joseph to contact Interactivity about reserving tables for roughly 16 people.

Someone brings up the candy that SIGMAS handed out to grads for Halloween; it turns out that most people picked theirs up, and anecdotally it was very much appreciated. Moreover, it was not terribly expensive, so it is decided that we'll do this again for Valentine's Day; there is a short discussion about the particular day, since the 14th is during Reading Week this year, but many grads are still around and even if they aren't, it's not like candy goes back after a few days.

It is also noted that SIGMAS could also piggyback on GSS Events, like going to Trivia as a group, or attending a brewery tour, as long as we thought about it in advance. "SIGMAS Goes To _____" is a pretty reasonable sounding name for an event series. Of course, as above, SIGMAS might cover some of the cost, if there is any.

Laura brings up the pipe dream saga of planning a skating night, that has apparently been in the works for over five years. Maybe this will be the year that we actually do it? We also have a discussion about holding events that could attract people who don't normally come to events; the Careers event we had last term was well-attended by people who don't normally come, and we had a decent turnout at the Christmas party, but we'd still like to do better. It's hard to run events that appeal to everyone, however. People are asked to brainstorm a bit.

Eventually, Joseph decides that there hasn't been any on-topic discussion for a while and there probably won't be any going forward, and puts his clipboard away. It's about 17:30 at this point. Michelle Edwards and Michael Francis both showed up at some point, and many unfortunate arguments had been had about the definition of science fiction, amongst other things (like the 'UVic Edge' branding; no argument here, just ranting).

Summary of Tasks:

- Jane to organize the Tutor List.
- Joseph to contact Interactivity about reserving tables for roughly 16 people.
- Joseph to update the website to reflect willingness to help event attendance.
- Mark to ask Tom about his Math 208 exam.
- Everyone to think of hosting places, to help plan events, and to be awesome.
- Other things that haven't been summarized.