GSA Council Minutes – 22 August 2011

Speaker called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

1) Approval of the Agenda

Agenda unanimously approved.

2) Approval of the Minutes

a) July 25, 2011

Minutes unanimously approved.

3) Presentations and Announcements

a) Presentations by Guests

i) Undergraduate Research Initiative (Dr Connie Varnhagen - CV) (30 minutes)

CV noted that the URI is important for graduate students, despite its name. In 2003, the University began a working group to complete an environmental scan in order to evaluate how undergraduate students and graduate students are being incorporated into the research process. CV noted that research is the differentiating feature that sets University of Alberta apart from other universities and colleges. Students wanted internships, coop programs and other engagement opportunities, and these were written into the Academic Plan, though not funded; this initiative has since been funded by alumni donations.

There are four main functions of the URI: to raise students' awareness of and interest in undergraduate research; to support students in developing the knowledge and skills needed for participation in undergraduate research; to facilitate opportunities for students to engage in undergraduate research; and to assist students in disseminating and celebrating undergraduate research.

The initiative should launch on September 27, 2011.

CV posed a question to the Council: "How can the URI and graduate students work together?"

A-AM Pharmacy: Organize the students that are coming to your program by discipline; this will make it easier for graduate students who are looking for summer students. From my experience, summer students are the most important graduate student/undergraduate student link.

CV: Students can use an NSERC or Roger Smith research grant at any point in the year; this could prove helpful for some Faculties.

Fred Wu MMI (FW MMI): Since these grants are so rare, are there stable financial sources from the university to encourage undergraduate research?

CV: We have some sources; we are lobbying for more.

FW MMI: “URI” has a poor medical connotation.

CV: Duly noted.

A-AM Pharmacy: There are matching funds in our Faculty. Is this happening in other places?

CV: It depends on the Faculty; there is incredible disparity between programs for the same grant. There are disciplinary pressures forcing that extra payment.

President: In your recent consultations, what buy-in and interest have you had from faculty?

CV: There are pressures, and we understand this can be downloaded to graduate students. We hope that as we learn more, we can be involved in time management initiatives with professors. For example, it’s smart to think about classes as opportunities for engagement as opposed to “sage on the stage” forums. A lot of professors are supportive, and we are working to make this as smooth as possible. We hope the positives outweigh the drawbacks.

VK CAL: Are students looking for these opportunities, or are these databases simply matchmaking?

CV: This is not eHarmony, despite the *Gateway*’s reporting. There will be a large training piece to ensure undergraduates are building their own skills.

FW MMI: It doesn’t seem to me that the research itself is the issue; it’s the teaching as well. If students are engaged in the material, they will transition into research. Have you looked into other universities’ best practices? For this to be successful, I would suggest pursuing buy-in at the departmental level.

CV: Absolutely; our next plan is to go to Faculty Councils to talk to these people. We are working to see where our efforts will be best mobilized. Our work is totally evidence-based.

FW MMI: An idea for integration might be to attach these plans to Honours Programs.

CV: Some programs have this, but there’s a lot more we can do to make this a truly great university.

URI is beginning a database for undergraduate students to broker opportunities. URI hopes this will be a more efficient and effective way to connect. Working on funding for students; right now there is a small pot of money that is non-renewable. Students may also be able to apply for grants on behalf of their research commitments. There will be drop-in sessions and workshops that graduate students can use as professional development opportunities. The database is hosted as a set of opportunities, some of which might be paid, some of which will be volunteer or internship-based. Searches will be open to anyone. Should be operational by September 27th.

i) Physical Activity and Wellness (PAW) Centre (30 minutes)

President: There was a referendum on the PAW Centre in 2010, and a majority voted in favour of the project.

Ben Louie (Architect) (BL): What does this building mean to health and wellness, campus experience, and how these spaces influence and contribute to the university.

Doug Ramsey (DR) presented via Powerpoint: In January 2010, we did some visioning sessions for PAW. The cue cards on the wall have been used as guiding principles throughout the project. We have been looking at a variety of architectural designs, and our functional programming resulted in a decision to add the new building on the corner of 114th street and 87th avenue. The PAW will be a gateway to campus, particularly as the campus plan begins to connect the new Quad with the Jubilee. The key locator for the project is the intervening space between the Butterdome, University Hall and Van Vliet. The current design doesn't take into account barrier-free access. Key pieces will be the "social street" and the "concourse." The fourth-floor Quiet Lounge will be important for graduate students.

The locker room area and west pool will be renewed through the project. These areas are being negotiated as program spaces. Along the concourse, there will be areas for games and student services.

In future, there will be an underground connection with the Health Precinct across 87th avenue.

There will be several outdoor spaces that will be accessible from the fitness centre. Active outdoor space will be available. The project's aspirations are to integrate activities and studying space with social opportunities.

The fitness centre will have a great deal of glass in order to actively engage the street; people will be able to quickly identify the PAW Centre as such. Quiet spaces will also be included.

Much of the project will be westward-facing to ensure maximal exposure to public areas. The point of context for the project will be "light."

There will be a graduate lounge with views out toward east campus and the social street.

The current LEED project is at 61 points; 50 points are needed for LEED silver, and 60 points are needed for LEED gold.

FW MMI: The fee is $29 per term -- could you describe the value added for graduate students in terms of money spent? It isn't clear how that fits in based on the current project.

DR: Fitness centre is three times the current size; climbing wall will be amongst best in Canada. Rooms will be bookable spaces.

FW MMI: Personally, given graduate student life style, I'm not sure I see how this is sufficiently usable for graduate students to justify the cost.

VJ CAL: How accessible will the buildings be at all hours? Who will have access and when?

BL: Operations has been working to answer those questions. We don't have final agreement yet.

Kyle Braithwaite (KB): Design committee will work to set hours in consultation with students. There should be opportunities for extra hours for graduate students.

VN CAL: When will the tunnel between the PAW and Medicine be available?

BL: We don't know when the funds are available; there are mechanisms to work through this process.

CRO: Will operations be charging a user fee for groups using these various amenities (i.e. costs for the climbing wall)?

BL: These are mostly operational questions.

VK CAL: In terms of the fitness centre, is the "useable" space three times the size of the current system (i.e. will there be additional machines)?

BL: There will definitely be greater numbers of machines. There is additional space in creative areas for cardio equipment. As we work with Facilities & Operations, we will report back quantitatively and qualitatively about the machines.

Lacey Fleming, Anthropology (LF Anthro): Are there plans to allow alumni to use the facilities?

DR: It is possible to pay a fee and use the facilities.

HS Computing Science: How does the 50 foot climbing wall compare to other spaces?

DR: This wall will be bigger than most other areas in North America. In most places, people "boulder" around the wall. In the case of the PAW's wall, users will be able to "boulder" all the way up the wall. It will be a dynamic and challenging climbing centre.

Tamara Korassa Vice-President Labour (VPL): What are you doing to ensure the "wellness" component of the student space access?

DR: Within the design, the goal was always to enliven the space students will inhabit. There will be a "green wall" in the social street with living plant materials. Social spaces will be incorporated into natural spaces.

BL: The "light" aspect will be an important design element. Trying to introduce a mental health stimulant to campus, as per our entire campus plan.

VK CAL: What are the "multi-purpose" rooms to be used for?

DR: Will include a floor that will mitigate injuries and an activity room.

VK CAL: Would appreciate the incorporation of meeting space.

CRO: What is the square footage of the graduate student lounge, and how will it be influenced by graduate student input?

BL: GSA has been involved for more than a year in this process. We have been working with the functional program in governance. Trying to find the right qualitative space in the building was

important; this location is quiet and located at a removed setting. The Quiet Lounge is not just for graduate students, but should run on a differentiated, multi-purpose usage schedule.

KB: 60 people accommodated; 2000 square feet.

[After the meeting, Kyle Braithwaite from Facilities and Operations said he would submit written responses to some of the unanswered questions at a later date – see appendix 1]

b) Councillor Announcements - *none*

4) Reports

a) Executive Reports

i) President **(written report distributed in advance)**

President: Just came back from vacation; thank you to team for filling in while I was gone. Office is developing a GSA Wiki, which will be primarily for office use, though with limited public and Council access. The financial aspect of 2010-2011 is complete in draft and will come to Council next month after BFC has been briefed. Fees are allocated to GSA twice per year; our cash flow during the summer can sometimes be stressful. Governance Committee is seeking members. BFC has a business item on the agenda for new Terms of Reference. Student Affairs Advisory Committee is also seeking members. Nominating Committee will continue to meet; please volunteer for various committees.

ii) VP Academic **(written report distributed in advance)**

VPA: Three additions: Special Advisor search is ongoing and will give updates. We will be discussing the Graduate Attributes committee findings in the near future. Regarding PAW, tonight's presentation was a good chance to talk; however, we should have had someone from Operations to talk to Council. Since we are contributing so much money to the PAW budget, the GSA has a lot of leverage. If the two student groups are unsatisfied, the project will not be built. We will be directed by the will of Council.

iii) VP Labour **(written report distributed in advance)**

VPA: *The Gateway* did a story on the GSA U-Pass; GSA noted that we would like to hear from graduate students about how successful the program has been and whether they want it extended or administrative changes made. With the new school year, please be aware of first year students' challenges; let them know they can come and discuss labour disputes or other issues. Important that graduate students are paid appropriately. Labour Relations Committee hasn't had a chance to meet, and we will be re-thinking the implementation of the Labour program. Please contact me if you are interested in volunteering.

iv) VP Student Life **(written report distributed in advance)**

VPSL: Orientation is rolling along smoothly. Thank you to those who have volunteered to be GSA representatives; we appreciate your help. One typo: the Take Back the Term event date should be September 27th.

v) VP Student Services **(written report distributed in advance)**

VPSS: There are some issues regarding *The Gateway*'s depiction of U-Pass; make sure you talk to me if you have questions. Regarding PAW, I am open to questions and suggestions.

President: If anyone is looking for the new GSA handbook, they are being printed this week. They will be available by the 31st of August; watch for a newsletter indicating the arrival of the handbooks.

b) Officer Reports

i) Speaker

Speaker: If your name does not appear by your department, we need you to fill out your Councillor information form.

ii) Chief Returning Officer

CRO: Thank you for the year; I will be retiring after this evening.

iii) Senator

President: Senate has not met over summer.

c) Standing Committee Reports

i) GSA Board **(written report distributed in advance)**

ii) Governance Committee – seeking members

iii) Budget and Finance Committee – new TOR on Council agenda

iv) Student Affairs Advisory Committee – seeking members

v) Awards Selection Committee – will be considering Graduate Citizenship Award soon

vi) Negotiation Committee

VPL: Negotiating Committee will be forming; 1.9% is the inflation rate applied to tuition for next year.

vii) Labour Relations Committee – seeking members

viii) Elections and Referenda Committee – seeking members

ix) Nominating Committee **(written report distributed in advance)**

d) ***Ad Hoc* Committee Reports** - *none*

e) Recommendations from GSA Management

i) Executive Director **(written report distributed in advance)**

Ellen Schoeck (ED): Committee representation has been expanded to approximately 70 committees. Please talk to others about the GSA's ongoing renewal process. The Triffo Lease will be re-signed; there are several "building" pieces ongoing. The scope of PAW is massive -- there will be a meeting on August 23rd to go over details of the proposal, and we are trying to widen the scope of graduate student consultation. Audit has gone well for the GSA.

ii) Director of Operations (as above)

iii) Financial Manager (as above)

5) Question Period

a) Written Questions - *none*

b) Oral Questions

AAW Pharmacy: If the graduate students go through with the PAW proposal, the GSA should put its name on this building.

FW MMI: There are problems with the two missing weeks within the handbook. I scowl at the President with my eyes.

Medicine: Does the GSA send each department monies that go toward funding students? How do operating funds function?

TK VPL: The departments have to meet the minimum grant requirements each year.

President: There are funding package requirements that need to be met, and they are closely linked to the supervisors' funding requirements.

TK VPL: TriCouncil has recently removed any grant regulations on amounts that must be paid for student stipends. This means that supervisors must follow the GSA's collective agreement regarding minimum student stipends.

6) Elections and Appointments – *none*

a) GSA Standing Committees (additional materials distributed in advance)

i) Speaker

Fred Wu spoke for 2 minutes.

ii) Chief Returning Officer

Rahul Agrawal spoke for 2 minutes.

iii) Senator

Tamara Korassa and Anwar Anwar-Mohammed spoke for 2 minutes each.

b) Other Committees

7) Special Orders - *none*

8) Unfinished Business and General Orders

a) Unfinished Business – *none*

b) General Orders

i) R20110822.1 *BIRT* Council, upon the recommendation of the GSA Board, approve the GSA Budget Principles, Practices and Procedures proposal as attached.
Moved by Tamara Korassa, Vice-President Labour, on behalf of Roy Coulthard, President. **Motivation** was as presented in the previously distributed document.

Introduced by VPL: update to policy manual on principles, practices and procedures to keep the GSA accountable.
VOTE: passed unanimously.

ii) **R20110822.2** *BIRT* Council, upon the recommendation of the GSA Board, approve the BFC Terms of Reference Proposal as was attached in first reading.
Moved by Tamara Korassa, Vice-President Labour, on behalf of Roy Coulthard, President. **Motivation** was as presented in the attached document.

Introduced by President: The GSAB struck an *ad hoc* committee; the committee should no longer be operational, but based on high-level budgeting principles. This motion will change the mandate of the BFC and will require a second reading next month.
VOTE: passed unanimously.

9) New Business

a) Scheduled Business – *none*

b) Unscheduled Business

i) President's speech to outgoing Speaker and CRO: Both of these two individuals were highly influential above and beyond their positions. Particularly through the challenging meetings and several by-elections, they have been extraordinary.

MOTION: President moves that the GSA confer both Steve Melenchuk and Sarah Barnes Lifelong Membership to the Graduate Students' Association.

VPA: Strongly in favour of this motion. Was very impressed with the amount of work Steve put into the position.

VOTE: unanimously passed.

10) Committee of the Whole – *none*

11) Adjournment

Adjourned at 8:43 pm.

Appendix 1 –

Written Responses to unanswered questions about PAW from Facilities and Operations

PAW

GSA Council Presentation - Questions

August 22, 2011

Q. Value added for what Graduate Student's specifically are going to receive for what their money will be paying for (comment was made that Grad Students are in labs 24 hours a day)
A. A new wellness and recreation facility with several amenities under one roof including a new 30,578 sf Fitness Facility (that is approximately 3x the size of the current facility which is 8,913 sf), a world class 5,308 sf climbing centre, a social street/gathering place with a commercial food service outlet and community kitchen, multipurpose space, and lounge space. The facility will also include 2 pools, squash courts, renovated locker rooms, games area, and an outdoor patio sitting area.

Q. 4th Level Lounge access for Graduate Students. Is it open all hours? Who else will have access?
A. The access to the 4th Level Lounge/Quiet study area will be determined by the operations committee. The current hours of operation for the Van Vliet facility are as follows:

Spring and Summer hours:
Monday to Friday: 07h00 to 21h00
Saturday: 09h00 to 16h00
Sunday: 10h00 to 16h00
Autumn/Winter hours:
Monday to Friday: 07h00 to 22h00
Saturday: 08h00 to 16h00
Sunday: 10h00 to 16h00

Q. When will the underground pedway be constructed from ECHA to PAW
A. The BLIM request has been submitted as per the UofA Capital Plan. No date has been confirmed as to when the funding will be available for the underground pedway to the ECHA.

Q. Who will fund the facilities in the PAW. Will there be an access fee charged for use of climbing wall?
A. The operating agreement will address who is responsible for ongoing operating expenses for the new facility as well as access fees for the use of the climbing centre. The GSA has representation that is currently involved in finalizing the agreement.

Q. Will there be an increase in the # of machines and usable space in the fitness space?
A. Yes, the floor area is approximately 3x greater when compared to the existing facility.

Q. Are there plans to open Paw up to alumni? Grad students who are leaving and may pay for if they want access?
A. Yes, use of the facility would be available to Alumni much like the current facility (through the appropriate membership fees)

Q. How does the height of the climbing wall compare to other institutions?
A. The climbing centre is currently designed to be approximately 65ft high which is higher than other comparable facilities in Alberta. The bouldering is unique in that it is accommodated throughout the entire height of the climbing centre.

Q. What is being done to make the wellness space more relaxing and accessible to green space?
A. There is a significant amount of glazing in the design which will result in natural light being able to penetrate the interior of the facility. A living wall is being included in the design to add some greenery.

Q. Multi-purpose rooms - what will they be used for? Are they true multi-purpose rooms? Spaces
that can be used for activity but also meetings along with storage space for equipment...
A. The multi-purpose rooms can be used for meetings, yoga, dance, classes, etc... The current dimensions of the rooms are as follows:
Room1: 1,058 sf Room2: 943 sf Room3: 919 sf

Q. Grad student Lounge – square footage? Will other student groups have access? How much input
will GSA have into the room?
A. The lounge is currently 2,077 sf and will accommodate approximately 60 people (capacity). Throughout the design process, the GSA has been included as a user group providing input to shape the design of the space.