

# Society of Graduate Students September 24, 2009 Council Meeting

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**SOCIETY OF GRADUATE STUDENTS**  
**September 24, 2009 COUNCIL MEETING**  
**Middlesex College Room 105B**

**AGENDA**  
**6:00-9:00**

- 1) Ratification of Agenda 5 mins
- 2) Speaker's Ruling 15 mins
- 3) Reception and Ratification of SOGS Council Minutes for the August 27 Council Meeting 10 mins
- 4) Elections 15 mins
  - VP Academic
  - VP Finance
  - Committees
- 5) Orders of the Day 1 hour and 20 mins
  - a) Motions arising from the President
  - b) Motions arising from Other Committees
  - c) Other Motions
- 6) Executive/Committee/Councillor Reports 15 mins
  - a) President
    - Policy Committee
  - b) VP Academic
    - Academic Committee
    - GSTA Awards Committee
    - WGR Editorial Board
  - c) VP External & Communications
    - Equity Committee
    - Graduate Student Issues Committee
  - d) VP Finance
    - Bursary Committee
    - Finance Committee
    - Grad Club Committee
    - Sustainability Committee
  - e) VP Student Services
    - Health Plan Committee
    - International Graduate Student Issues Committee
    - Orientation Committee
  - f) SOGS Disabilities Commissioner Report
  - g) Senator and Board of Governor Reports
- 7) New Business/Open Forum

## SOGS Council Attendance Report

August 27, 2009

Represents (Dept)	Name	IN	OUT	Notes
Anatomy & Cell Biology	Daniela Quail	6:00	7:15	
Anatomy & Cell Biology	Meghan Taylor			
Anthropology	Alyson Jaagumagi			
Anthropology	Monica Maika	6:00		Jennifer Spinney
Applied Mathematics	Nabeel Butt			
Applied Mathematics	Joshua Grant			
Astronomy & Physics	Teznie Pugh			
Astronomy & Physics	Elizabeth Silber			
Astronomy & Physics	vacant			
Biochemistry	Melanie Bailey			
Biochemistry	Steven Beasley	6:00		
Biochemistry	Michael Beyea			
Biology	Tanya Berkers	6:00		
Biology	Preetam Janakirama			
Biology	Andrea Pitts	6:00	7:15	
Biology	Edwin Price	6:00		
Biology	Sonja Teichert	6:00		
Biomedical Engineering	Majid Yousif			
Biomedical Engineering	Vacant			
Board of Governors	Jonathan Berge	7:00		
Chemistry	Diane Kanas			
Chemistry	Jessica McLachlan	6:00		
Chemistry	Duncan Sutherland	6:00		
Chemistry	Katayoun Yazdanfar			
Classical Studies	Tim Wright			
Comp. Lit / Hisp Studies	Felipe Quintanilla			
Comp. Lit / Hisp Studies	vacant			
Computer Science	Andrew DeLong	6:00	7:10	
Computer Science	Gaston Keller	6:00	7:50	
Computer Science	Omid Mola	6:00	7:30	
Computer Science	Delei Weng	6:00		
CSD	Jean Boyle			
CSD	Liza Frieri			
CSD	Teresa Mayne			
CSD	Nadia Torrieri			
Disabilities Commissioner	vacant			
Earth Sciences	Nathan Bridge			
Earth Sciences	Reba Macdonald			
Economics	vacant			

Represents (Dept)	Name	IN	OUT	Notes
Economics	vacant			
Education	Lisa Boyko			
Education	Jordana Garbati			
Education	Delores Kahkonen	6:00		
Education	Ricardo Scucuglia	7:15		Jensen Caughlin
Education	Vacant			
Education	vacant			
Engineering Science	Majid Ahmadloo			
Engineering Science	Jeremy Cepek			
Engineering Science	Dan Dechene	6:00		
Engineering Science	Chris Degroot			
Engineering Science	Mehdi Farrokhnejad	6:00	7:55	
Engineering Science	Martin Huard	6:00	7:52	
Engineering Science	Duane Jacques	6:00		
Engineering Science	Taravat Khadivi			
Engineering Science	Bhavik Manocha	6:00	7:20	
Engineering Science	Alireza Mohammadi			
Engineering Science	Alpeshkumar Patel			
Engineering Science	Kalin Penev	6:05		
Engineering Science	Mohammad Quddus			
Engineering Science	Ehsan Rasekh			
Engineering Science	Sepideh Rezvani	6:00	7:50	
Engineering Science	Ryan vanderZanden	6:00		
English	Rebecca Campbell			
English	Amanda George			
English	Stephanie Rade			
Environment & Sustainability	Meghan Brien			
Epidemiology & Biostats	Arunmozhi Dominic			
Epidemiology & Biostats	Julia Taleban	6:00		
Executive - Grad Club	Marc Lalonde			
Executive - President	Rick Telfer	6:05		
Executive - VP Academic	Margie Davenport			
Executive - VP External	Saidur Chowdhury			
Executive - VP Finance	Jonathan Meyer	6:00		
Executive - VP St. Services	Jenny Jiang	6:00		
Family Medicine	vacant			
Food & Nutrition	vacant			
French & Linguistics	Michelle Andrighetti	6:00		
French & Linguistics	Volha Kharytonava	6:00	7:25	
Geography	Amy Ratcliffe	6:00		
Geography	Wyatt Smith	6:00		Richard Sadler
Global Film Culture	vacant			

Represents (Dept)	Name	IN	OUT	Notes
GTA Union Representative	Reza Azarderakhsh			
Health & Rehab Sciences	Melody Chow			
Health & Rehab Sciences	Lizabeth Cox	6:00		
Health & Rehab Sciences	Christine Cullion	6:00		
Health & Rehab Sciences	Kelsey Klages			
Health & Rehab Sciences	Deeqa Mohamud			
History	Jessica Hanbidge			
History	Tim Krizner			
History	Trevor Tovell			
Journalism	Julianne Hazlewood			
Journalism	Lauren O'Neil			
Kinesiology	Casey Gray	6:00		
Kinesiology	Carly McKay	6:00	7:50	
Kinesiology	Jacqueline Simatovic	6:00	7:45	
Kinesiology	Justine Wilson	6:00	7:50	
L&IS-M	Shannon Armstrong			
L&IS-M	Sarah Focht			
L&IS-M	Vacant			
L&IS-M	vacant			
L&IS-M	vacant			
L&IS-M	vacant			
L&IS-PhD	Meighan Wark			
Law	Amy Conroy			
Mathematics	vacant			
Media Studies	Kyle Asquith	6:00		
Media Studies	Meg Pirie			
Medical Biophysics	Kim Blackwood			
Medical Biophysics	Jodi Miller			
Medical Biophysics	Laura Wilson	6:05	7:15	
Microbiology & Immunology	Catherine Chung			
Microbiology & Immunology	David Yue	6:00	7:15	
Music	Peter Lea			
Music	Daisy Tam	6:00	7:50	
Music	Vacant			
Music	vacant			
Neuroscience	Gesine Alders	6:00	7:45	
Neuroscience	Soaleha Shams			
Non-Executive - Speaker	Alyson Braley	6:00		
Nursing	vacant			
Nursing	vacant			
Occupational Therapy	J. Patricia Cameron	6:00	7:15	
Occupational Therapy	Nicole Fischer	6:00	7:17	

Represents (Dept)	Name	IN	OUT	Notes
Occupational Therapy	Val Macintyre	6:00	7:17	
Occupational Therapy	Kate Reddon	6:00	7:25	
Orthodontics	vacant			
Pathology	vacant			
Philosophy	Michael Hickson			
Philosophy	Molly Kao	6:00	7:58	
Philosophy	Philip Kuchar			
Physical Therapy	Kelsey Maxymyshyn			
Physical Therapy	Stephanie Mills	6:00		
Physical Therapy	Jamie Trusler			
Physiology and Pharm.	Steven Celetti			
Physiology and Pharm.	Danielle Lapierre			
Physiology and Pharm.	Jessica Osumek	6:00	7:50	
Physiology and Pharm.	Kristen Pitzul			
Political Science	Laszlo Sarkany			
Political Science	Stephanie Vieille	6:00		
Psychology	Caroline Bennett- AbuAyyash			
Psychology	Rachel Lehcier-Kimel			
Psychology	Erin Marcotte			
Psychology	Ruby Nadler			
Public Administration	vacant			
Senate	Jonathan Berge	7:00		
Senate	Brent Sherar	6:00		
Senate	Rick Telfer			
Senate	Rolina VanGalen			
Social Work	Amy Robinson			
Sociology	Kate Dunn			
Sociology	Julie Peters	6:05		
Stats & Actuarial Sciences	Paul Nguyen	6:00	7:15	
Theology	vacant			
Theory & Criticism	Brendon Langer			
Theory & Criticism	Jessica Lauren Sherman			
Visual Arts	Rosanna Mortillaro			
Visual Arts	Erin Rothstein			
Women's Studies	Samantha Feder			

# SOGS COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

DRAFT

August 27, 2009

6:10 –

North Campus Bldg., Room 114

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Speaker: Alison Braley

Interim Recording Secretary: S. Vieille

## 1. Ratification of Agenda

Agenda changes

- There is no guest speaker.
- Election of SOGS Disabilities Commissioner – Disabilities Commissioner is not elected but appointed by Executive. Executive met earlier today and have appointed Chelsea Mohler. She will introduce herself during that time.

**Moved:**

**Seconded:**

Ratified

## 2. Guest Speaker

None

## 3. Announcements

**D. Jacques (Engineering):** suggestion to appoint an interim secretary and give them a \$10 gift certificate to the Grad Club. – Stephanie Vieille (Political Science) volunteered.

Speaker clarified rules of interaction during meeting.

- cross talk – will not be allowed – must talk through speaker
- comments to neighbours are sometimes inappropriate – refrain from making sarcastic, snarky comments to neighbours
- meeting was not be recorded privately, unless consent is received from assembly. Only official recording may be made for minute taking purposes.

## 4. Reception and Ratification of the SOGS Council Minutes of July 23, 2009

D. Dechene: Change to Attendance requested – D. Jacques' proxy was not noted on attendance sheet.

Moved: D. Dechene (Engineering)

Seconded: A. Ratcliffe (Geography)

Accepted

## 5. Orders of the Day

### a) Motions arising from the President

### b) Motions arising from Other Committees

#### BCC

WHEREAS the BCC was directed to look at restricting mass emails during a campaigning period; and

WHEREAS the work has not yet been finished; and

WHEREAS good progress has been made:

BIRT the BCC provide a recommendation to Council to restrict the usage of mass emails during campaigning at or before October Council.

Moved: J. Meyer (VP Finance)

Seconded: D. Jacques (Engineering)

**B. Sherar (Senator):** will there be an election between now and October? (A) – don't think so

**J. Meyer:** elections next month for VP Academic and VP Finance.

**D. Jacques:** came to the deadline and have to report to Council – not finished reviewing.

**A. Ratcliffe (Geography):** what is the definition of a mass email? Does it mean that anyone campaigning can't send out any emails?

**D. Jacques:** this is one of the questions that the BCC is trying to answer. If it does happen, how will it be treated, what are the repercussions, etc.?

Motion passes.

**c) Other Motions**

**d) Tabled Motions**

**6. SOGS Disabilities Commissioner**

- Chelsea Mohler introduced herself to Council. Starting her masters in Health and Rehabilitation Sciences and is interested in this position for personal reasons. She sat on Laurier's Accessibility Committee during her undergrad. Hopes to work on removing barriers for students with visual challenges.

**7. Executive/Committee/Councillor Reports**

**a) President**

- attended CFS meeting with Rebecca Williams (report attached for the Ontario Graduate Caucus meeting)

**J. McLachlan (Chemistry):** When will Dayplanners arrive?

**President:** full shipment expected next Monday. – many last minute changes had to be made – health plan – poor graphics from last year – sent to printer 2-3 weeks ago.

**D. Jacques (Engineering):** website not updated in months – Facebook group limited membership – campaigned on "SOGS having a club house" – now communicates with 200 people – why and what will you do to fix it. A lot of time was used to develop a solid communication infrastructure to keep all students informed using different methods. Nothing new on website since May.

**President:** all these issues were discussed at the Executive meeting today. No one brought up Facebook – will look into this in the future. The website is the responsibility of the VP External and Communication. As President responsible to ensure VPs execute their duties. VP External couldn't be here because he is involved in professional development and his wife just had a baby. We have discussed the website and have agreed to meet with Saidur. One of the issues is that it's not user friendly, must have technical expertise. He is looking at improving his skills.

**D. Jacques:** why weren't people who set up the website asked for help? The website is set up in standard format. There are books available and both Olga and Marc have attended classes. Why are you spending time on things like the health plan that was negotiated by the HPC months ago?

**President:** on the question of the President's portfolio – it's actually quite general and undefined. The President chooses priorities in accordance with the mandate that the President was elected on, in conjunction and consultation with the VPs. I chose my priorities in accordance to my mandate, bylaws and according to consultation with Executive members. Priorities with those Executive members have been the Handbook, which has not been a small matter, Health Plan, which is probably the largest program that the Society operates and making sure that we have a proper contract is quite a high priority. Website is priority number three, attention will be turned to it next week.

**J. Meyer (VP Finance):** Chair of Orientation Committee doesn't know about the dayplanner or how the handbook was finished. When did you submit the handbook to print? How come the Committee, or Chair, don't know about it?

**President:** worked in conjunction with VP Student Services who is responsible for overseeing the handbook project. Didn't get much in communication from Committee Chair, but the work was virtually done in terms of content back in May, but a matter of making sure health information was correct and graphics and typesetting were appropriate for press. That took some technical expertise which I contributed. My last communication with the Chair was that the handbook content was completed.

**J. Meyer:** You still haven't answered my question – when was it sent to the printers. Can't tell you

the exact date.

**President:** can't tell you the exact date, it would have been the week leading up to the Ontario CFS meeting. Couldn't go to press until all the health plan information was correct.

**B. Sherar (Senator):** \$5000 was budgeted for technical training last year – where did that money go?

**President:** Will look into that. Training is helpful, but time is of the essence. Will meet with the VP External to make sure that we have a plan going forward into September.

**S. Beasley (Biochemistry):** report is lacking information on meetings with university administration – why aren't you meeting.

**President:** over the summer there haven't been a lot of routine meetings. Meetings with SGPS are scheduled for September. During the summer, the priorities were Health Plan, Handbook and Graduate Student Issues Committee – these are now wrapping up and attention can be turned to the meeting that have been set up for September.

**S. Beasley:** What are your new priorities?

**President:** Priorities are well laid out in my campaign materials, I will bring it forward so it's on record for the next council report.

**D. Dechene (Engineering):** what have you been doing with regard to the SSHRC issue?

**President:** haven't worked on SSHRC issue specifically; other summer priorities, this will be turned to in the coming months. Participated in the National Graduate Caucus of the Canadian Federation of Students and it is a very high priority for them. I have participated in the Ontario Graduate Caucus which has representation both provincially and federally on that very issue. This would fall under the VP External, although it is a personal priority. Will work with VP after website and the other raised matters.

**R. vanderZanden (Engineering):** how can we get better food options on campus?

**President:** Food issue will be worked on immediately. There is a grassroots Social Science graduate group working on this. Will meet with them to see how to re-invigorate their campaign. This is a good example of how no single executive member should be responsible for implementing every campaign, but rather to should work with those who are concerned with the issue at the grassroots level.

**R. vanderZanden:** Will you bring your findings to SOGS?

**President:** Excellent suggestion.

**B. Sherar:** What was the response of the Executive regarding the unionization of RAs?

**President:** this was not discussed by the Executive.

**A. Ratcliffe (Geography):** At the General Meeting it was discussed and a motion was passed that a letter was to be sent to the GTA and PSAC with regard to the lack of campaigning.

**D. Jacques:** one of the things you mentioned that you are working on is the Health Plan. The Health Plan was passed in May. Who is involved in these subsequent negotiations? In May, you were the only one on record as being against it. Now three months later we are still in negotiations, who is involved? If no one is involved, or some people are involved, I would like to see some detailed information.

**President:** there seems to be a misunderstanding between approval of the basic contract and negotiating the finer details with the Broker. VP Student Services, Raquel and Committee member met with Broker, to discuss contract in detail. Concerns were raised and the Broker accepted all Rick's recommendations and sent a copy of the revised contract. Key points that had been raised in the meeting were not included in the new contract. Now the contract is being cross-checked carefully to ensure that all recommendations are included. Hope to have it wrapped up tomorrow. Was discussed at Executive Meeting today.

**D. Jacques:** would like to see details of these new negotiations. Are these changes consistent with what Council agreed to. Concerned that the only one who was against the plan is the one who is making changes.

**President:** Wasn't so much against the plan, as was for another plan. This was the second choice. If Council wishes to see the final contract, that will be done. All involved parties are kept in the loop, this is not a small matter. If council wishes to see the final document, I have no problem including it in the council package.

**J. Meyer:** why are you involved in the accessibility request for assistance? Why are you presenting, when I am actually the one dealing with this situation? To my knowledge, you have not talked or met with the individual in person, but you put it in your report. You told me in an email "You take care of this" and I replied to you "I already have", as you had not taken care of it. However, now you are saying that you are taking care of it. I'm just curious why you are presenting irrelevant and incorrect information to Council.

**President:** I suggest your opinion is due to lack of information. The member in question has been in routine contact with me via email directly, personally and visually. I have provided him with as much information as possible. I am very sensitive to his particular situation and I did obtain from him his personal telephone number. As you are aware, I am certainly aware that you are working with him, but I would point out, that it's not you alone. Also, the two staff people, the former disabilities commissioner, and various other people have helped with this individual, including myself via email. Also, I have played a coordinating role to make sure that this issue is moving along, because at one point it had quite frankly stagnated and I was quite sensitive to this member's needs and dignity, so I had been in touch with the member. If people want to see the email exchange, I would be quite happy to share that with anybody. I regard the report as a work summary. I think for the official record, it is important to document the work of the executive members. Certainly not all executive members attend Council, as we know from tonight and previous Council meetings. I think it is important for the record that people are aware of what Executive members have been doing during the period in question.

**J. Meyer:** you say that you were coordinating, from everything I have seen, the commissioner and Olga have been doing the legwork of this. Your coordinating efforts are gathering updates from everyone, it seems, and being apprised of the situation. There is some information that this individual had obtained and had sent to me in an email which I did not release to him about his submission for a bursary. There is no way he could have known this, except for improper disclosure from Raquel, Olga or yourself. I'm just curious if that information came from you?

**President:** I quite frankly don't know what you are talking about. I was not at all involved in the bursary process, as you know, so I would have to see the email. I'm surprised you didn't raise this earlier in the context of the Executive meeting that we had today. I would think that a disclosure that would breach some policy or rule would be a problem. So if you would like to raise this with me at the end of the meeting, I'd be more than happy to deal with this with you, Jonathan. In any case, the role of the President is to supervise the two staff members, all staff members of the Society and the Grad Club at least at the managerial level staff and to play a coordinating role. That is the role of any CEO of a corporation to set and to give guidance in terms of direction of the organization with respect to mandate. I feel that is perfectly within my purview. It is well documented that is why it's included in my report.

**S. Beasley:** to continue along that line, as a member of the bursary committee, I was infuriated by the email, that was advocating for a specific individual were as the bursary committee guidelines are based completely on anonymity and assistance is given to students with the greatest need with no favouritism shown. I wanted to voice my displeasure for the record that the process was not respected.

**Speaker:** if you are going to stand on a point of privilege, please let me know.

**A. Ratcliffe:** I was just going to mention that we are addressing the President's report, which is about questioning the President's report.

**S. Beasley** it was on page 16 of his report – bursary application assistance.

**S. Beasley:** Is he aware that the bursary committee has absolute anonymity to ensure that no favouritism or bias is shown to any candidate in the process.

**President:** Yes I am aware of that.

**b) VP Academic**

VP not present. Any questions about her report, will be directed to her.

**c) VP External & Communications**

VP not present. Any questions about his report, will be directed to him.

**d) VP Finance**

Second year that SOGS has had to have a complete, not partial, audit. All reports are included that were received from the Accountant. Had an excellent year. No substantial problems found. A few recommendations and a few praises. For example, SOGS has a double signature on every cheque, and the Accountant said that was very good. Have to work on how Raquel is the only one with access to the Bursary program, this is not problematic, but he sees this as not as accountable as it could be, but it could improve. At the end of the year there is a surplus of

\$500,000 in the bank. List of improvements will be included next month. Any questions regarding audit can be addressed after the meeting.

**R. vanderZanden (Engineering):** there is a lot of money in the bank account. What will be done with it?

**J. Meyer:** When I started as the VP Finance, that was before the market crashed, I said we should start looking into investing. Then everything went sour, so we held on to what we had until a more appropriate time. It's something that the next VP Finance should start looking at. We have done some research. With the new budgeting policies we are going to implement, we will start eating away at the ballooning amount. We always want a cushion. Half a million is a lot by our standards, but by corporate standards, it just gives us enough cushion to fall back on.

**S. Beasley (Biochemistry):** is there a breakdown of the Society and Grad Club surplus/deficit for the last fiscal year.

**J. Meyer:** Net income for the Society is \$45,000 (includes amortized equipment value) and Grad Club net income is just above \$30,000; however the amortization of our equipment brought it down to -\$37,000, that is the net loss for the Grad Club. The amortized value is about \$64,000. It's not a monetary loss. Both the Society and the Grad Club made money last year.

**E. Price (Biology):** There was a loss last year, and a loss this year, what's driving that?

**J. Meyer:** The Grad Club has paid off a large portion of its loan to the Society. Payments were accelerated to pay off the Grad Club expansion loan faster.

**B. Sherar (Senator):** how much does the Grad Club owe the Society now?

**J. Meyer:** currently about \$38,000, at the current rate the loan will be paid off in one year and two months.

#### e) **VP Student Services**

Committee members were thanked for their hard work over the summer.

Orientation Committee is planning a New student orientation party to be held in September.

IGSIC is planning a Charity event for September. Information session for new incoming international students will be held tomorrow. Please let new and returning students know.

Health Plan Committee has worked out an on-line opt out. Students must opt out by September 30. Detailed instructions will be sent out in a newsletter and will be available on the website. This will be an annual opt out and students will not be able to opt back in until next year.

**D. Jacques (Engineering):** there has been no information about new student orientation sessions to departments.

**J. Jiang:** Olga sent out an email that Executives would be doing these sessions.

**D. Jacques:** can't be done by Executives. I set up that Councillors do presentation – that way constituents get to know their representatives.

**J. Jiang:** I will speak to Olga about that.

**E. Price (Biology):** Can students who finish early opt out of the remaining coverage?

**J. Jiang:** you can't opt out but you will be covered by the plan even though you are not a student until the end of August 2010. Students who start in January and May will pay a portion of the total fee.

**J. Meyer (VP Finance):** met with SGPS and Broker, the idea here is that we are trying to streamline the plan to be like most universities across Canada. We were the only ones doing it by term.

#### f) **Councillor Reports**

**S. Beasley:** All committees can use more members, especially the Bursary Committee.

**Equity committee report - R. vanderZanden (Engineering)**– goal of the committee – want to network more, they want council to pick a day to expand involvement in committees and council throughout the university.

**A. Ratcliffe (Geography):** when you have your own orientations, then spread the word about committees – it should be part of a councillor's commitment. Previously concern was expressed about too many new members joining a committee is a negative thing because you need people on committees who know how things are done. If this is the case, that should be kept in mind.

**D. Jacques (Engineering):** BCC – work load and Pride Commissioner – created position of commissioner. – disabilities commissioner is now appointed, compensation and work load is being looked at and will report back to Council.

**BCC Report** – K. Lee put forth a proposal for the creation of a Pride Commissioner. Commissioner positions have been redefined. They are now hired positions not elected ones. Compensation and duties are being looked at.

**E. Price:** this we are not officially approving this? (A-DJ) no this is for information only.

#### **g) BoG and Senator Reports**

#### **h) Speaker's Note - None**

### **8. Elections – Committees (Internal & External)**

**Speaker:** how are members put on committees?

**J. Meyer:** anybody can join a committee at any time, and their names are accepted at Council.

**Speaker:** so a councillor can nominate themselves, or someone else?

**J. Meyer:** yes, anyone who gives consent.

Academic Committee – Carly McKay

WGR Editorial Board – Carly McKay

ratified

**J. Spinney (Anthropology):** where can we learn about possibilities.

**Speaker:** new councillor packages have all the information about Committees. They are being updated and will be available in October.

**J. Meyer (VP Finance):** you don't have to be elected to come to committees. Talk to the VP and chair for that committee, and at the earliest convenience be ratified by Council – it's an ongoing process.

**R. Telfer (President):** standing committees are all defined in the Bylaws and accessible on the website.

**S. Beasley (Biochemistry):** website needs to be made more user friendly.

### **9. New Business/Open Forum**

**E. Price (Biology):** GSIC – page 63 – under “Canadian Alliance of Student Associations” it says Members – 1 member graduate students' union and then under graduate students it says voting representation from 5 universities could someone explain.

**R. Williams:** Chair of GSIC - they have one official member of the organization and then a number of student organization that are associate or part members and others that are considering affiliation and others partly affiliated.

**D. Jacques (Engineering):** XXXXX

**R. Williams:** The aim of the committee is to report back to council next month.

**D. Dechene (Engineering):** presenting a new motion – 2/3 needed to accept as new business - carried

Whereas The University of Western Ontario has recently released a list of Official University Web 2.0 items (Twitter, Facebook, etc) for the University and various Faculty/Organizational units, and Whereas SOGS would benefit from social media exposure, and Whereas SOGS has currently no official Facebook group, and Whereas use of the official SOGS logo suggests official SOGS usage BIRT SOGS create an official Facebook group where all SOGS Executives, who are users become administrators.

BIRT that SOGS members and SOGS Executive strongly oppose the use of the SOGS logo for unofficial purposes and the SOGS Executive do what is in their power to eliminate any current or future unofficial uses of the SOGS logo.

BIRT current and future SOGS policies surrounding communications such as mass emails apply to this official group.

Moved; D. Dechene

Seconded: D. Jacques

**D. Dechene (Engineering):** UWO released an official list and SOGS can benefit from this social media exposure. There is no current official SOGS Facebook group, although one has a logo. Create an official group that all executives will have access to and falls under our current policies regarding communications. Strongly oppose unofficial use of logo because it is something we are trying to protect.

**R. Telfer (President):** Support this motion. We need clarity around use of Facebook and logo. Mr. Dechene took down his unofficial Facebook group for SOGS. This will help to provide clarity for the future.

**J. Meyer (VP Finance):** comment on the last speaker's comment. There were several occasions when I have asked to become an administrator on the current Facebook site.

**Speaker:** I'm sorry...

**J. Meyer:** ...germane, not German

**R. Telfer:** Point of information – I believe that the purpose of debate on motions is to speak either in favour of or opposition to the motion, rather than to comment on a previous speaker's intervention.

**J. Meyer:** I'm just saying

**Speaker:** Your (Mr. Telfer) point is well taken. Speak to whether or not you are in favour of the motion and why or against the motion and why.

**J. Meyer:** the last Executive had a Facebook group that was administrated through the Executive and it was unilaterally removed. I'm actually curious why this is an issue now when it has already been done?

**D. Dechene:** My understanding is that there is nothing in terms of policies of this group would fall under. We are putting this on the board to get it going again.

**G. Keller (Computer Science):** who will???

**D. Dechene:** The Executive currently ???

**D. Jacques (Engineering):** In favour of the motion for now. It's not meant to remove the existing methods of communication over to Facebook. That will force our students to join Facebook and search for the SOGS group. We have a system in place and should disseminate our information to all students via email, website. In the four years that I have been involved in SOGS no one on the Executive has ever made unilateral decisions – changing packages, everyone worked together nicely.

**D. Dechene:** suggest a friendly amendment – change double “that” to single - grammar.

**J. Caughlin:** what is in the Executive's power to do?

**R. Telfer:** give directive to the Executive – essentially a policy statement.

**J. Meyer:** does Council want to include the Speaker in this group?

Amendment

motion to include “and Speaker” (Seconded - K. Penev)

**B. Sherar:** Olga and Raquel should be included in the amendment.

**J. Meyer** – they have institutional memory and should be included:

**Amendment:**

“the Speaker and SOGS' office staff, who are users, become administrators”

Moved: B. Sherar

Seconded: K. Penev

**A. Ratcliffe (Geography):** don't know Olga and Raquel personally and if they aren't Facebook users – what if only a few are users, do they have to change? If you are an Executive, then do you have to have a Facebook profile? “who are users” is kind of vague

**J. Spinney:** what's the benefit of having these people, or can it be expanded to councillors too. – how much do we extend this?

**Speaker:** Is this a question, or are you speaking against the motion?

**J. Spinney:** what's the benefit of having so many people as administrators?

**J. McLachlan (Chemistry):** Councillors aren't here for long, the Executive is responsible and the office staff are permanent.

**E. Price (Biology):** reason for motion is to get a presence on Facebook - it's an external communication – it seems like it should be under the portfolio of the VP External & Communications

**J. McLachlan:** call the question

Seconded – A. Ratcliffe

Question called

Amendment to Motion - carried

**Further Amendment:**

BIRT that VP-External will be the primary administrator of any such sites.

Moved: E. Price

Seconded – D. Kahkonen

**R. Caughlin:** Is this adding to the VP portfolio and make them a member of Facebook?

**J. McLachlan:** all external communications are under the primary responsibility of the VP External portfolio, so nothing new is being added.

**J. Meyer –** I do see this as a problem I do agree that the VP External should explore avenues that would lead to an efficient manner of producing such information outward, but can we force someone to join Facebook? Do we know, does Saidur have Facebook? If we create a VP External account, that they could log into that would solve that problem. It wouldn't be a personal account, but that of the position. That would give a solution to that issue.

**E. Price:** I think this is a reasonable solution. I think the VP External could work with some of the other people, including the staff, to make this happen if this is passed.

Further amendment to Motion - carried

Main amended motion

Whereas The University of Western Ontario has recently released a list of Official Web 2.0 items (Twitter, Facebook, etc) for the University and various Faculty/Organizational units, and

Whereas SOGS would benefit from social media exposure, and

Whereas SOGS has currently no official Facebook group, and

Whereas use of the official SOGS logo suggests official SOGS usage

BIRT SOGS create an official Facebook group where all SOGS Executives, the Speaker and SOGS' office staff, who are users, become administrators

BIRT that VP-External will be the primary administrator of any such sites.

BIRT that SOGS members and SOGS Executive strongly oppose the use of the SOGS logo for unofficial purposes and the SOGS Executive do what is in their power to eliminate any current or future unofficial uses of the SOGS logo.

BIRT current and future SOGS policies surrounding communication such as mass emails apply to this official group.

Question called

Moved: D. Sutherland

Seconded: R. vanderZanden

Motion Carried

D. Dechene – motion to adjourn

Carried

## Orders of the Day

### a) Motions Arising from the President

#### **No. 1 — Decorum Memorandum:**

Be it resolved that the Speaker be directed to produce a memorandum, for permanent inclusion in the monthly Council package, summarizing the decorum requirements/guidelines (in accordance with the Society's parliamentary authority, Robert's Rules of Order) for meeting conduct.

#### **No. 2 — Executive Reports:**

Be it resolved that executive members be directed to format their regular written reports to Council in two sections, as follows:

1. Mandatory work summary of activities since the previous meeting of Council (to be entitled "Work Summary")
2. Optional supplemental information about matters of importance and interest (to be entitled "Supplemental Information")

#### **No. 3 — Priorities Forum:**

Be it resolved that the "Executive Council" be eliminated and that the bylaws be amended accordingly.

Be it further resolved that the SOGS Executive be mandated to hold an Organizational Planning and Priorities Forum twice annually, first during June and then again during October.

Be it further resolved that the following parties be invited to attend each Organizational Planning and Priorities Forum: all executive members, the Speaker, SOGS office staff, the Grad Club Manager, committee chairpersons, graduate student Senators, the graduate student representative to Western's Board of Governors, and all graduate student representatives to Western's Graduate Education Council and the Council's subcommittees.

Be it further resolved that the purpose of the Organizational Planning and Priorities Forum be to review and discuss the Society's two primary domains of activity: (1) member services, benefits and programs; and, (2) collective advocacy efforts.

Be it further resolved that the Executive be assigned responsibility for drafting and revising an annual strategic plan, for Council's consideration and approval (first in July, then in November), based in part upon the discussions of the Organizational Planning and Priorities Forum.

#### **No. 4 — 2009-2010 Advocacy Efforts:**

Be it resolved that Council endorse, in principle, the following advocacy efforts as organizational priorities during the 2009-2010 academic year:

##### **For referral to the Graduate Student Issues Committee:**

1. Awareness-raising initiatives regarding the following post-secondary education issues:
  - a. tuition fee increases and their consequent diminishing of accessibility (and the related issues of student debt and government funding);
  - b. equitable funding for Category II and second-year Master's students at Western;
  - c. intellectual property rights;
  - d. copyright reform; and,
  - e. the dangers of research commercialization.
2. A campaign that encourages all Western students to advocate for improved (i.e., healthier, more diverse, and less costly) food options on campus.

##### **For referral to the Sustainability Committee:**

3. An up-to-date sustainability audit of both the SOGS office and the Grad Club for the purpose of ensuring that our internal organizational practices are environmentally friendly in accordance with commonly utilized industry standards.

##### **For referral to the Equity Committee:**

4. An awareness-raising initiative about racism on campus.

***For referral to the International Graduate Students Issues Committee:***

5. A campaign that encourages all Western students to advocate for public health insurance for international students (to replace the University Health Insurance Plan).

**b) Motions Arising from Other Committees**

**BCC - Mass Email Motion**

WHEREAS the BCC was directed to propose bylaw changes regarding usage of mass emails; and WHEREAS it is the opinion of the BCC that these matters are best dealt with at an All Candidates Meeting and not in the Bylaws:

BIRT Council accept the recommendations of the BCC report regarding this matter.

BIFRT Council recommend to all future CROs that they develop rules regarding the usage of mass emails in future All Candidates Meetings.

Please refer to Appendix A for detailed rationale.

**BCC - Motion to deal with leaves of absence**

Constitutional changes

WHEREAS Council does not have the authority to amend the Constitution; and  
WHEREAS Article V of the Constitution pertains to membership in the Society; and  
WHEREAS graduate students on leave of absence cannot be given the full rights and privileges of Full Membership for safety or administrative reasons; and  
WHEREAS graduate students on leave of absence should maintain their health plan coverage and it would be beneficial for them to not be specifically excluded from other SOGS services; and  
WHEREAS these services are exclusively referred to as "external services" under Article V of the Constitution and the Constitution should remain consistent; and  
WHEREAS the phrase "external services" is currently not defined in the Constitution; and  
WHEREAS every other class of membership under Article V explicitly requires the payment of membership fees and graduate students on leave of absence should not pay membership fees since they cannot be given full rights of membership; and  
WHEREAS each external service is separately negotiated and carries its own fee requirements and requirements for inclusion; and  
WHEREAS the status of "On Leave of Absence" is required in the Society:  
BIRT Council recommend to the General Membership that Article V of the Constitution be amended to include:

**Section 5.5: Members On Leave of Absence**

1. The requirements for Members On Leave of Absence in the Society are:
  1. in a period of "Leave of Absence" as granted by the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies of the University of Western Ontario.
2. Members on leave of absence have the following rights and privileges:
  1. the ability to maintain their external services, subject to the policies of each service, under their previous status through their absence period.

BIFRT Council recommend that Article V of the Constitution be amended to include the following preamble:

1. Under Article V of this Constitution, the phrase "external services" refers to any services or benefits provided by an external organization to the Society's members.

BIFRT Council recommend that the Constitution be renumbered as required

## **Finance Committee**

WHEREAS the OSSA will provide required services for SOGS and the Grad Club to meet health and safety ministry requirements, and

WHEREAS these requirements are required by the Ministry,

BIRT Council approve the over expenditure of an additional \$8000 from the staff training and benefits line item specifically for this service.

WHEREAS the cost of the printing for the 2009-2010 SOGS Handbook was budgeted at \$17,000, already inclusive of a \$500 buffer for unforeseen expenses;

WHEREAS the cost of printing for the 2009-2010 SOGS Handbook has now been invoiced at \$18,034.80

BIRT that Council authorize the over budget payment to the Capital Colour Graphics Inc. for the amount invoiced.

## **Health Plan Committee**

WHEREAS the current SOGS Health & Dental Plan now operates on an annual basis where all full-time students have coverage for a full 12 months (Sept 1-Aug 31) regardless of graduation date or academic status, and

WHEREAS Exchange and Visiting students who are at Western for no longer than 6 months in duration are considered full-time Western students while they are here, even though they pay tuition to their home university,

BIRT Council approve a reduction in SOGS membership fees and subsequent services for Exchange students and Visiting students of less than 6 months duration that would consist of the SOGS membership fee and bus pass fee only.

BIFRT such Exchange and Visiting students shall not be charged plan premiums nor granted access to the Health & Dental plan benefits for the duration of their stay at Western, regardless of alternate coverage. Such a change in membership status would alter the status of visiting/exchange students within the Society (i.e. membership services they have access to), and can therefore justify their exclusion from the health and dental plan, but still offer them the service they need.

## **c) Other Motions**

### **VP Finance**

Whereas the 2009-2010 handbook contains at least 18 full colour pages exclusively featuring CFS programs, materials, and ads.

Whereas the 2009-2010 handbook contains an additional 6 half-page and 6-quarter-page photographs of CFS protest events.

Whereas the 18 full colour pages, and 4.5 black and white pages of CFS material were not approved in content or form by the Orientation Committee.

Whereas the inclusion of the 18 full colour pages, and 4.5 black and white pages of CFS material were approved solely by the SOGS President.

BIRT council mandate the Finance Committee to negotiate for payment from the Canadian Federation of Students (CFS) its subsidiaries or agents, based on the advertising fee for 18 full colour pages and 4 black and white pages in the handbook.

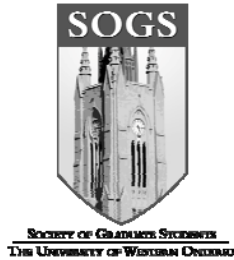
Whereas the Finance committee has to consider these charges for next year's budget,

BIRT council charges the Orientation Committee to do a full report on the 2009-2010 handbook.

Including, but not limited to: the reasons why it was over budget, why the CFS exercise book was included, timeline of creation and printing, expected costs of next years project.

BIFRT the President of the Society, Rick Telfer, respond within 48 hours to all inquiries made by the Finance and Orientation committees, the Finance and Orientation committee chairs, and the VP's of the Society.

BIFRT that when possible the reply will contain all requested evidence and explanations.  
BIFRT when evidence cannot be immediately enclosed, the reply will contain a full explanation for the lack, and a strict timeline detailing the release of the information.  
Whereas the VP Finance feels there was a lack of transparency in the process of this year's handbook printing and wishes to increase transparency in future years,  
BIRT in the future a purchase order (PO) be issued to the printer of the handbook for the maximum amount budgeted so that the final cost of printing must go through the Accounts Manager and the VP Finance.



**President**  
**September 24, 2009 Report to Council**  
**Rick Telfer (sogs.president@uwo.ca)**  
**<<http://www.uwo.ca/sogs/>>**

**DEAR MEMBERS AND COUNCILLORS,**

For the official record, and in chronological order, please find below my work summary (no. 5) for the period of August 19 to September 14, 2009.

- **Health and Dental Plan.** Continued to liaise and negotiate with the broker's representative in order to finalize the terms and conditions of the 2009-2010 broker service agreement.
- **Executive Meeting.** Chaired Executive meeting on August 27.
- **Council Meeting.** Participated in Council meeting on August 27.
- **Orientation Sessions.** Spoke to incoming graduate students of:
  - Economics (Sep. 3)
  - Visual Arts (Sep. 4)
  - History & Education (Sep. 9)
  - Microbiology and Immunology (Sep. 10)
  - Geography (Sep. 11).

Also addressed:

- new Teaching Assistants (Sep. 9)
- incoming graduate students who participated in the orientation day provided by the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (Sep. 12)
- **Graduate Student Issues Committee Meeting.** Attended GSIC meeting on September 8. GSIC continues to focus all of its attention upon evaluating national affiliation.
- **School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies Meeting.** Participated in monthly SOGS-SGPS meeting with SOGS representatives and SGPS administrators to discuss past and emerging issues.
- **Miscellaneous:**
  - Met with SOGS Vice-President External, Saidur Chowdhury, to discuss communications systems (i.e., website updates, and a regular column in the *Western News*).
  - Provided information/ideas to the Sustainability Committee (via e-mail).
  - Continued to monitor the outstanding accessibility support request from a SOGS member.
  - Responded to various queries from SOGS members.
  - Liaised with *Western News*.
  - Established new Council-mandated Facebook group for SOGS.
  - Reviewed draft minutes of the August 12 special general meeting.
  - Compiled lists of certain outstanding payables and receivables.

**RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED BY RICK TELFER, SOGS PRESIDENT**



SOCIETY OF GRADUATE STUDENTS  
THE UNIVERSITY OF WATLOO, ONTARIO

**VP Academic**  
**September 24, 2009 Final Report to Council**  
**Margie Davenport (sogs.academic@uwo.ca)**  
<<http://www.uwo.ca/sogs/>>

Dear Councillors,

It has been a privilege and pleasure to serve you as Vice President Academic for the past two and a half years. It is hard to believe how fast this time has flown by! I have had the great opportunity to work with a number of outstanding committees and executives. Thank you for your hard work, energy and dedication.

When I started my tenure at SOGS, we were undergoing a period of significant growth. During that time we were able to make great strides in improving our services to the graduate community. However, over the past eight to ten months this momentum has slowed and reversed. The infighting and divisiveness of the past year has been, quite frankly, childish. Progress can only happen when all parties listen and work together - even when coming from completely different sides. Attempting to work in isolation is detrimental to the society as a whole. It is my hope that the infusion of new blood - both at the councillor and executive level as well as at the Presidential level over the next six months will help to heal these problems.

I would like to summarize the work that has been achieved over the past few years and give recommendations to my successor. I wish them the best of luck.

**The Western Research Forum:**

I am extremely proud of the incredible changes that we have been able to implement to the WRF in the last two years. When I started as VP Academic, the viability of the WRF was under question. It was, in fact, very close to demise. However, the WRF has been a cornerstone of SOGS events for over 20 years and deserved the chance to thrive once more. Through much hard work we were able to turn this conference around. The WRF moved from a three-day conference at the Grad Club to a Saturday Conference at the Wave. In our first year we were able to snag Dr. Tim Wilson as our keynote speaker and increased participation from only 30 in the previous year to over 100. Much of this increase was due to aggressive advertising to increase graduate student awareness of this important event.

Improving on the success of the 2008 WRF was a daunting task. In September, an opportunity arose to bring in Dr. Jorge Cham of PhD comics to be the keynote speaker. This sparked incredible interest in the WRF! In order to cover the costs of bringing in such a well-known speaker, we charged a modest fee of \$10 to present at the WRF. This did not deter graduate students from participating! Our conference reached capacity at 150 and we stayed under budget. It was a resounding success by all accounts.

**Recommendations:** I have received a number of requests from the Postdoctoral Association and various special interest groups who would like to link up with the WRF. This presents an interesting conundrum. The Western Research Forum started as a venue for graduate students to have the opportunity to present their research in a friendly venue - many for the first time. The inclusion of postdocs would detract from the current unintimidating feel to the WRF and as such I would strongly suggest that the next VP and Academic committees not include this group as presenters. Postdocs, however, would continue to serve an important role in the WRF as Judges giving them experience that would appropriate to their stage of career. In each of the past two years, the Academic committee has attempted to find ways to include disciplines such as music and visual arts which may not fit the traditional conference mould of the WRF. To this end, we have invited musicians to play during the cocktail hour. Perhaps an art exhibit of graduate students in visual arts would add to the WRF.

### **Graduate Student Teaching Awards:**

The GSTA awards continues to be an important event in the SOGS calendar. This was also one of the most delicate parts of my portfolio. In 2008, we decided to increase the number of awards from 16 to 20 to better reflect the increased number of graduate students. At the same time, we decreased the award amount from \$600 to \$500 in large part because awards of \$500 or less are not taxable. One of the major issues with the GSTA awards has always been in the selection of the winners. In previous years, winners were selected by number of nominations or percent of the class who nominated with consideration given to the comments given by the students. Obviously neither way was perfect and had bias towards either large or small classes. During my tenure as VP Academic, we have worked closely with a statistician to change the process such that the selection process is as unbiased as possible. The process now balances both number of nominations, class size and comments. I would like to congratulate the GSTA Committee for their hard work. I would also like to thank Alcina Stoetzer who takes care of the invitations and awards ceremony!! THANK YOU!

**Recommendations:** Over the past two years we have tried to come up with better ways to get undergraduate students to nominate outstanding TA's. With the current process there is always going to be one or two winners who told their students to nominate them for an award. We have tried to link the GSTA nomination process through WebCT etc however we have run into barriers at that stage. Short of attending every class to get reviews of all TA's (an impossibly large task for such a small committee) I would suggest that the new VP re-look at this process to determine if the nomination process can be improved.

### **Joint Fund for Graduate Research and Scholarship:**

The Joint Fund is a collaboration between SGPS, Research Western and SOGS to help fund graduate student conferences held at Western. It was a huge accomplishment that we were able to increase the funding for this fund from \$6,000/year to \$12,000/year in 2008! The major reason for the increase was that the fund was being depleted well before the end of the school year. This collaboration continues to an outstanding model for how these three bodies can work together to promote success at the graduate level.

**Recommendation:** The new VP should take time to explain to council what the Joint Fund can be used for (perhaps during the Oct/Nov council meeting). There are a lot of misunderstandings that occur. Besides that...promote, promote, promote!!!

### **Western Graduate Review:**

When I started as VP Academic, the former *Western Journal of Graduate Research* was a dismal failure. In the year before I started, there were only 4 submissions to the Journal. There was an obvious need for change. The original idea came from the former VP Academic, Duane Jacques and came to fruition during my tenure. The Western Graduate Review was intended to promote the outstanding graduate student research at Western. It was released for the first time in the summer of 2007 and has been well received by students, faculty and administration alike. I am very proud of this publication and hope that it continues to grow and change in the years to come.

**Recommendations:** The WRG is a unique publication which could be used to promote graduate student research at Western. It would be worth considering developing a promotional leaflet to include in the Western News and other methods that could promote the publication to wider readership.

### **The 125th Anniversary Scholarship:**

I am pleased to report that this has been removed from my portfolio to the more appropriate portfolio of VP Finance!

**Parental Leave Policy:**

I was very fortunate to work closely with Christine Guptill on the Parental Leave Policy paper. Together we were able to garner the support of council and SGPS to bring the policy paper to the Tri-Council funding bodies (NSERC, CIHR and SSHRC). I am hopeful that this paper will result in policy changes at the National level.

Over the last few years, I have had the opportunity to work and learn from the hardworking administration at FGS and SGPS. Thank you for your guidance and support.

I would also like to thank the office staff Olga and Raquel for their dedication, hard work and collective "SOGS memory"; Executives, both past and present, and most of all the dedicated committee chairs and committee members. Without their passion and enthusiasm, none of this would have been possible. It has been a pleasure to serve as your VP Academic.

Best regards,

Margie Davenport



**VP External & Communications**  
**September 24, 2009 Report to Council**  
**Saidur Chowdhury (sogs.external@uwo.ca)**  
<<http://www.uwo.ca/sogs/>>

Below is an update on the portfolio of VP External Affairs & Communications.

**Website update**

Website was updated by September 2, 2009. Sorry for your inconvenience. I became father on August, 2009 and had been very busy with my wife and my new-born son. I assure you that next time, I'll be very sincere to upload all new information. Please visit <http://www.uwo.ca/sogs/News/index.html> for health plan opt-out and you can download all necessary forms from <http://www.uwo.ca/sogs/Forms/>.

**Campus Council Meeting**

Meeting was held on the 8<sup>th</sup> of September at Support Service Building. The discussion was divided into four important topics. At the beginning of the meeting, Dr Omit Chakma, President of the University of Western Ontario, announced fund raising campaign from October, 2009. He announced University would raise \$500 million from Individual and corporation. Then Jennifer Schroeder updated Dependents' Tuition Scholarship Plan. For more information, please see [www.uwo.ca/humanresources/facultystuff/comp/benefite/dep\\_scholarships.htm](http://www.uwo.ca/humanresources/facultystuff/comp/benefite/dep_scholarships.htm). Then Shelagh Bantock talked about pandemic preparedness-H1N1 and showed some campus self awareness activities against H1N1. Finally, "accessibility at western" was presented and "Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005" was discussed briefly.

**Town and Gown Committee**

TGC meeting was held on 14<sup>th</sup> September in the Board of Control Room at City Hall. Meeting was presided by Mayor. They defined near campus zone and presented proposed "Great Near-Campus Neighbourhoods Strategy". Please visit <http://www.offcampus.uwo.ca/> to find more information about student housing.

**Newsletter**

The monthly newsletter is an excellent way to distribute information to the graduate student body. A new newsletter will be coming out at the end of the month. There will be plenty of parties to announce. This newsletter will feature information for new and returning grad students. We will already have information on housing, bus passes, parking permits, services offered by IGSIC, and upcoming conferences.

**Equity Issues Committee**

The Equity Issues Committee has again been very active. At present, equity committee has been working on council development. Next meeting will be taken place at the end of the month.

**GSIC**

The Graduate Student Issues Committee (GSIC) met on September 6. GSIC continues to review national affiliation options for the Society, including the Canadian Federation of Students (CFS) and the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations (CASA). Given the number of outstanding tasks associated with the review, as decided upon by the committee and approved by Council, the committee resolved to complete its review in time for the October meeting of Council.

**Western News**

Our first article with Western News went out on September 17th, 2009. This article was written for new and returning grad students. Please find this article attached with my report.

**SUBMITTED BY:**

**Saidur Chowdhury, Vice-President External (sogs.external@uwo.ca)**  
**Society of Graduate Students (www.uwo.ca/sogs)**

**September 1, 2009**

The Society of Graduate Students (SOGS) is the students' union for nearly all full- and part-time graduate students at Western. Like most student organizations, SOGS provides many services, benefits, and programs to its members, and plays a key role in campus and community affairs. Another major part of SOGS' mandate is advocacy work, with a particular focus on collective advocacy to improve conditions for SOGS' diverse membership.

Of course, being a member-driven organization, SOGS is effective only to the extent that its members become involved. The good news is that becoming involved is easy. For example, graduate student members of SOGS may volunteer to represent their departments (or programs) on the SOGS Council, run for election for one of the five Executive positions, and join of the various SOGS committees. SOGS prides itself on being focused upon its grassroots.

For planning and carrying out advocacy work, four SOGS committees are especially relevant. The Graduate Student Issues Committee (GSIC) is the committee most concerned with general advocacy, issues, and campaigns. The Equity Committee (EC) deals with issues of human rights, discrimination, and accessibility. The Sustainability Committee (SC) handles matters pertaining specifically to environmental protection. Lastly, the International Graduate Students' Issues Committee (IGSIC) deals with matters of concern to international graduate students. Together, these four committees are the grassroots foundation of SOGS' advocacy work. Any graduate student member of SOGS is eligible to join a committee.

SOGS is Local 47 of the Canadian Federation of Students, meaning that all members of SOGS are also members of the Federation. The Federation is Canada's largest and oldest national student organization. Within the Federation, SOGS works together with scores of other students' unions, including dozens of other graduate students' unions. Because we are members of the Federation, we have the option of participating in various campaigns that are nationally and provincially focused, and that we helped to develop. Such campaigns are often taken up by the advocacy-oriented committees and executive members of SOGS.

At present, the Federation is running several important campaigns. Some of SOGS' committees are already working on these issues or will be considering them in the near future. Here is a brief overview of what's underway:

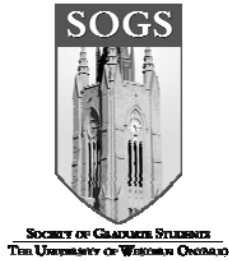
- In Ontario and across Canada, our Federation continues to advocate against skyrocketing tuition fees and ever-growing student debts.  
Website: <http://www.dropfees.ca/>
- In partnership with The Sierra Youth Coalition and The David Suzuki Foundation, our Federation is doing its part to pressure governments and institutions to prioritize environmental protection.  
Website: <http://www.studentsforsustainability.ca/>
- In response to incidents of racist discrimination and violence on campuses, our Federation launched a Task Force on Campus Racism.  
Website: <http://www.noracism.ca/>
- In Ontario, our Federation is advocating for fair and affordable health care coverage for international students.  
Website: <http://www.uhip.info/>

To reiterate, SOGS is effective only to the extent that its members become involved, whether through the Council, the Executive, or the various committees. Advocacy, lobbying, and campaigning are a central part of any students' union's activities. Here at Western, we are fortunate to be connected to the provincial and national efforts of Canada's most recognized student organization, the Canadian Federation of Students. I hope to see you, the graduate student members of SOGS, joining some of the committees in order to begin taking local action on the important issues that I have described above.

Do not hesitate to contact me for more information. I welcome your questions, and especially your involvement! Simply e-mail me at: [sogs.external@uwo.ca](mailto:sogs.external@uwo.ca)

If you have any further questions, feel free to drop me a note. Best wishes on the fall term.

Best  
Saidur R Chowdhury  
**VP of External Affairs & Communications**



**VP Finance**  
**September 24, 2009 Final Report to Council**  
**Jonathan Meyer (sogs.finance@uwo.ca)**  
<<http://www.uwo.ca/sogs/>>

Dear Councillors,

As my term comes to and end I would like to reflect on the achievements of the past year; offer some suggestions for my successor, also for SOGS in general; and of course thank all those who made my job easy. This report is fairly lengthy but I encourage you to give it a read. You may find some funny tidbits as well as some, in my opinion, good information within.

Firstly I would like to start by sending out my thanks. Thank you to the University Administration (Gitta Kulczycki, Susan Grindrod, Linda Miller and the rest of the SGPS team) for an unparalleled synergetic relationship! We really made 2+2=6. To my excellent committee members (especially the chairs – Rebecca MacDonald, Duncan Sutherland, Ben Cook, Haroon Sheikh, Tanya Berkers, and Nathan Bridge) thank you for your creative input suggestions and for bearing with me as I propose half-cracked ideas. I want to personally thank Olga for all her hard work in the office and in council over the past 12 months. Marc and Mark (A.K.A Cookie) you guys run a tight ship over at the GC; it has been a pleasure working with you. Thank you for all of your help I defiantly could not have done it without you. Keep up the good work and I know that the GC and SOGS as a whole will flourish.

Raquel is possibly the best account manager out there. Everyone at SOGS is indebted to you for keeping us floating. Thank you for all the training and helpful tips they are greatly appreciated. Keep up the good work.

Past VP's (Dan Dechene, Kristina Neely and Sarah Detombe) I want to thank you for the very productive time we had together. You guys supported me while I was trying to change the business practices of SOGS for the better and I fully appreciate it.

However, none of my success (or any of ours') was possible without the strong leadership of Kai Pisters. Thank you for all of your support and advice, and for debating with me the tax benefits and real value of amortization. I definitely could not have achieved anything without you, even after your presidency ended you still remained my main source of encouragement and ideas.

Margie Davenport, you get a special thank you because you fit into both past and present. Thus I have you in between. Thanks for all the hard work you put into SOGS (especially the WRF and TA Awards) and for the support you have given me.

To the current VP's (Jenny Jiang and Saidur Chowdhury), it was great getting to know you and working along side of you. I encourage you to continue to work hard and I hope that your endeavours prove fruitful for both you and SOGS.

To all the Council Speakers (Fiona Simpson, Rebecca Feldman, Mike Burrell and Alison Braley) thank you for keeping me inline. I am clearly not a politician and need to be advised when I can and cannot open my big mouth. Being told off so often actually forced me purchase a copy of Robert's Rules – for which I am actually thankful for.

And last, I would like to thank Council for electing me and putting up with my (poor) sense of humour. In all my efforts I have strived for a bettering of SOGS and I hope that you have appreciated the job that I have done.

### Things that were accomplished over my incumbency

- Successfully brokered a deal to save students \$18 000 in fees with the health insurance broker.
- Worked towards office renovation and upgrades, still waiting on Physical Plant...
- Continued a great working relationship with the University
- Started and formulated a new working business plan for the Grad Club to increase revenues decrease waste and increase bursaries to the students.
- Creation of a budget that reflects the needs of the students, with the long term plan of preparing the society for unseen events and ease of operations within the budget
- Worked to increase access to drinkable water
- Operated the Society, as well as the Grad Club, in an open and transparent manner
- Worked for increasing transparency within the Society as well as the efficiency of processes
- Policy for the Grad Club Committee
- Almost finished policy for the Finance Committee
- Increased bursaries available to students
- Seen the creation of two new committees under the VP Finance portfolio
- Started the budgeting process sooner, to give my successor an advantage.
- New sound and video system at the Grad Club (to be installed) in which we can sell advertisement space to non-competitors and BEvERage companies.

### To my successor

Congratulations on your election. I hope that you are treated as well by Council and SOGS in general as I have been. Some things that I would like to suggest to you for your term.

Start investments; piggy back on the university, unfortunately for me we saw an extremely poor time to start investing, fortunately for you the markets have turned and are now in the investors favour. These investments can be made for grad club expansion, student bursaries, or funding larger events – the VP Academic and VP Student Services will love you for this.

Continue with my plan for the Society that the Finance Committee is using for a model. The long term effects of this budgeting style will benefit many grad students to come.

Same with the Grad Club, trust your committee for the direction.

Pay off the Grad Club loan as soon as possible, this will allow you to increase bursaries, and savings by more than \$2000 (budgeted) a month. That will go a long way to help students.

Learn from Raquel and Marc.

Meet regularly with the University administration, they are an invaluable resource.

**THIS ONE IS THE MOST IMPORTANT!!!** – DO NOT SIGN THE BANK CARD WITH A LONG SIGNATURE! You will have to sign many cheques.... Especially around opt out time!!!! Trust me, you will thank me for this one....

### To the Society and Council

Some suggestions I have for the future, work on your policy. This was something that I have been trying to work on in all of my committees, it can be a long and arduous task but I encourage all of you to suggest this in your committees.

The VP's put in a lot of work, it may be time to promote the pay grade and increase the time limits (per week) I know that there were some weeks where I spent more time in the SOGS office than in my lab...

Conversely it may be time to look into hiring another staff member, rearrange the office structure to have an executive assistant who attends most, if not all, committee meetings who records and catalogues minutes. This would increase the efficiency of the Society and speed up policy formulation, and updates. It would also keep institutional memory. This person would be in charge of the motions database and would become an extremely valuable resource for the Society.

I hope I get to see the renovations of the office space come to fruition before my time is up here at Western.

### Grad Club Committee

We will be meeting on Wed September 16<sup>th</sup> to discuss changes in occupational and safety policy. I will update orally at Council.

Finance Committee

Still working on policy and getting the ball rolling on the new budget. We are meeting on Thursday September 17<sup>th</sup>, I will update further in council.

Bursary and Subsidy Committee

Are meeting to award subsidies this coming week (still not set) will update in council and have the new VP submit results for both Subsidies and Bursaries next month.

Sustainability Committee

The Sustainability Committee created a handout to promote "green" initiatives for distribution to students and the Committee is working on creating a webpage that will promote "green" initiatives.

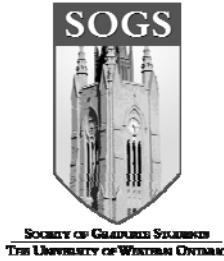
Other

I met with the VP Resources and Operations, Gitta Kulczycki, for one last time, we talked about the year and how productive it was between the Society and the University. I informed her that it was my last month as VP and asked if she would extend the same courtesies to my successor as I was given. She informed me that SOGS is always welcome in her office and that she would do her best to be the best resource possible. I cannot stress how good the VP Resources and Operations has been to SOGS.

Again, thank you SOGS for a productive year! I am gonna miss you guys.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jonathan Meyer". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Jonathan Meyer, BMSc.  
VP Finance  
Society of Graduate Students



**VP Student Services**  
**September 24, 2009 Report to Council**  
**Jenny Jiang (sogs.services@uwo.ca)**  
<<http://www.uwo.ca/sogs/>>

Dear councillors,

First of all, I would like to welcome all of the new councillors who are joining us today. It is a pleasure to have you all.

**Orientation Committee**

The Orientation Committee will be hosting a New Students Pasta Buffet on Sept 23<sup>rd</sup> @ Grad Club. This is an opportunity for new graduate students to mingle and find out more about Western. Students will also learn more about SOGS in general. A mini presentation on SOGS will be provided. *Pertaining to the 2009-2010 Graduate Student Handbook:* The Orientation Committee, SOGS office staff and I have not previously seen the Canadian Federation of Students (CFS) material & layout in the handbook during our final edit, nor were we aware of these additional CFS pages to be included in the handbook at any stage of its production. As well, I was not involved in the printing negotiations of this handbook. Please direct your questions or concerns to the President.

**IGSIC Committee**

The IGSIC Committee hosted a very successful International Student Luncheon Session on Aug 28<sup>th</sup>, 12-1pm. We had a room full of eager new students who just arrived in Canada. We will be arranging additional activities in the month of October. Stay tuned!

**Health Plan Committee**

On-line opt outs are available now. Opt-out status, once granted, will be in effect on an annual basis. Students are encouraged to fully consider their health plan status before opting out. Decisions for Health Plan bursaries are currently pending as we have requested certain supplemental materials from our applicants.

We are currently seeking new members into this committee. Please let me know if you are interested.

That's all for the month of September.

Thanks,

Jenny



**SOCIETY OF GRADUATE STUDENTS**  
**THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO**

**Commissioner for Graduate Students with Disabilities**  
**September 24, 2009 Report to Council**  
**Chelsea Mohler (sogs.disabilities@uwo.ca)**  
**<<http://www.uwo.ca/sogs/>>**



**Speaker's Note**  
**September 24, 2009**  
**Alison Braley (sogs.speaker@uwo.ca)**  
<<http://www.uwo.ca/sogs/>>

Jonathan Meyer to Speaker - Sep 3 (12 days ago)

Alison,

I would like to request a Speaker's Ruling on the validity of the motion submitted and passed during the August 12th General Meeting regarding the letter to the GTA union and PSAC expressing the displeasure with the GSE voting procedure. As this meeting was called by council for a specific purpose, I do not believe that this motion is valid as it was debated in new business.

I am concerned, however, that you may appear to have a conflict of interest due to your involvement with the GTA Union and the GSE Union drive. For this reason it may be appropriate for you to defer the ruling the Deputy Speaker.

Thank you,

Jonathan Meyer, BMSc.

VP Finance and CFO

Society of Graduate Students

[sogs.finance@uwo.ca](mailto:sogs.finance@uwo.ca)

### Overview

I have been asked in my capacity as Speaker to rule on whether or not 'new business' was permissible during the last general meeting of the SOGS wherein a motion under 'new business' was debated and passed and if not, if that vacates the motion passed.

At issue is whether the meeting was properly a 'special' general meeting or a 'regular' general meeting. The difference being that 'special' meetings are called with the purpose of taking care of pressing business that cannot wait and at which business other than the purpose for which the meeting was called is inappropriate. While this might seem like a cut and dried question it is not.

First, even if the meeting was inappropriately treated as a 'regular' meeting when indeed it ought to have been a 'special' meeting does not tell us what we are to do after the fact; this does not *ibso facto* mean that the solution is always to vacate whatever transpired that would normally not have been permissible. On the other hand there are things that can occur that ought to be vacated because they harm the very principles for which the rules exist. As an analogy, when someone is wrongly imprisoned it is clear that the immediate remedy is to 'undo' the consequences by releasing them. However, if someone should be freely given a million dollars that they did not realize was obtained by the giver illegally and should that person spend every cent it is less clear that the appropriate remedy is to 'undo' the consequences by making that person return the money (the fact that they *cannot* be so required as it is not clear that they *should* be so required).

Robert's Rules are procedural rules that are undergirded by principles. In other words, principles do not serve to 'prop up' the rules rather the rules are made to better serve the principles. Such principles include ease of debate, democratic inclusion and transparency. It is the latter two with which we are here concerned. Robert's Rules also do not offer much in the way of the appropriate response as to what to do 'after the fact' when a rule has been otherwise 'broken'. Moreover, there is the question of SOGS' own bylaws and whether they are or are not silent on relevant issues. In other words, there is no obviously clear solution. A solution must be developed with reference to the principles by which the rules and bylaws are undergirded.

### Decision Whether or not to Recuse Myself.

One of the most important questions I was asked at my acclamation was in regards to potential conflicts of interest. My response was that where there was an apparent one, I would recuse myself. It has been suggested that as an officer of the GTA union who worked on behalf of the GSE campaign drive to which the motion that was passed under 'new business' refers, I am in a conflict of interest. I agree. While I believe I can undertake my job as Speaker despite this, this has no bearing on the fact that I am in an apparent conflict and as such recusing myself would normally be the appropriate course of action.

However, the person to whom the responsibility of rendering a decision would normally fall in the case of my recusing myself is also in conflict. The Deputy Speaker publicly took a stand against the campaign drive. I am neither impugning his character, intentions nor reasons for his particular point of view. But the fact remains he led a Facebook campaign that was entitled 'Vote NO to Unionisation of Western Grad Students.' While I accept my conflict, I do not accept that the Deputy Speaker is in any less of a conflict, apparent or otherwise. To wit the arguments that were offered (by someone other than the Deputy Speaker) that any monetary compensation I may have received for my involvement in the campaign make me *more* conflicted are not well taken. In the first place, this assumes facts not in evidence as it is not known whether I received monetary compensation or whether I volunteered any or all of my time on the campaign. In the second place, the opposite argument is made just as easily: that someone who gains nothing monetarily is as invested since the only 'benefit' to themselves is their own belief that this is the proper stance to take. Again, then, the point that I am conflicted and the other person is not or that I am *more* conflicted because of monetary compensation is not well taken. Finally, *degrees* of conflict are largely irrelevant: a conflict is a conflict. As such, I do not feel that I can reasonably recuse myself in this instance. I have, however, actively sought feedback from the executives, and, in particular, the Deputy Speaker, and have taken here into account all the arguments and suggestions that I have heard.

One such suggestion was that I meet with a former Speaker of SOGS, Ryan Robb, which I have declined to do for the following reasons. In the first place, I would not meet with anyone suggested by any interested party in this matter unless it was approved by the other interested parties. (By interested parties I am at this point referring to the executives and the Deputy Speaker because the request for a ruling was brought to me by one of the executive members and the motion in question requires an action on the part of another executive member. Furthermore, as the 'leadership committee' I believe they are the appropriate body to whom one should direct correspondence and seek input on matters such as this. For reasons that I hope are obvious I have included the Deputy Speaker, though not an executive member, as someone whose input I have sought and as one such interested party.) While I could have sought approval from all these parties to speak with the former Speaker, Ryan Robb, named above, I did not seek approval to do so because in order for a meeting with the former Speaker to be meaningful I would have had to do one of two things. Either I would have had to agree *in advance* to be guided by whatever decision the former Speaker made. Clearly, I cannot abdicate my responsibility and agree, however informally, to be bound by the decision of someone who has no chain of responsibility to SOGS. Alternately, I could have consulted him as one more of a series of 'impartial' and 'clearheaded' observers. I rejected this idea because as someone I have never met, it is not my opinion that he is an appropriate person to advise me. It is the opinion of the person who suggested him to me. And while he may very well be such a person, since I do not know him I have no basis to believe he is any more impartial or expert than those I believe to be impartial and expert in such matters because I have formed this opinion of them. From my point of view then, he is simply one more person of many who may or may not offer advice I would, in the end, respect and find useful. As such, there was no particular reason to consult him over others. Keeping my own counsel then, I sought advice and input from disinterested parties whose expertise in procedural matters I respect, as well as, of course, those interested parties as previously stated.

I have also declined the suggestion that we let Council decide. It is within my purview, more to the point it is my responsibility, to offer decisions in these sorts of matters. I take this very seriously as I am sure my ruling will attest, and I trust those who read this ruling, particularly those who are unhappy with the outcome, will appreciate the very serious consideration I have given the matter evident in my careful consideration of the relevant arguments. This requires a depth of analysis that I do not believe is possible in a meeting with a group as large as Council and it is for this very reason it is the Speaker and not Council who has been entrusted with rendering such decisions in the first place.

## **History**

To be brief as possible, and without accusing either SOGS or the immediately preceding Speaker before me from whom I took over, I was given no training. I was offered help should I need it, which I believe was most genuine and for which I was grateful. However, and as I am sure others will recognize, you can't know what you don't know and sometimes it is hard to know what help to ask for. As such, I 'hit the ground running' armed with a basic working knowledge of Robert's Rules and the relevant capacity to keep a meeting orderly and smooth running. I will admit I was initially unaware of the distinction between a 'special' and 'regular' meeting. I cannot remember when I became aware. I know for certain it was some time before the meeting of Aug. 12<sup>th</sup>. Having said that, my 'newness' meant that I depended on the executive members' experience in terms of how agendas are sent out, who finally puts one together, what are the parameters of my responsibility/purview in that respect, most of which I did not know as these things differ from organization to organization.

The long and the short of it is that I approved the sending of an agenda for the Aug. 12<sup>th</sup> meeting which came to me with 'new business' already on it as an item. At this point I did realize that there was some talk about the constitutional motion being the only thing to be discussed at the Aug. 12<sup>th</sup> meeting, as it came up at a BCC meeting. (Also, I do have a 'document' of sorts that states that no other business should be discussed at the Aug.

12<sup>th</sup> meeting. However, as I did not yet grasp the distinction between a 'special' and a 'regular' meeting, I didn't understand why it said that; it was not made clear that this was because there was an important distinction, noted in Robert's Rules, between a 'special' and a 'regular' meeting.) I was left with the impression that SOGS had decided this motion was important and at this time they felt nothing more needed to be discussed at the Aug. 12<sup>th</sup> meeting. The 'casual' and 'informal' sense I left the BCC meeting with in regards to the 'new business' issue was compounded when I realized the agenda contained 'new business.' I was confused as to the disjoint between what I was hearing at one place and what I felt the agenda was telling me. My error was in not exploring this further at the time. I did not because a) I assumed that those with experience knew better than I what was permissible at this meeting which was decided on before I became the Speaker and that the agenda likely reflected that b) I also, at this time, believed that SOGS normally held an AGM in Aug.

Before the meeting things crystallized and I realized there was, indeed, an issue here. The issue was that a) it was now clear that the intention had been to call a 'special' meeting and b) that the agenda had gone out nonetheless with the 'new business' item on it; what I have been calling six of a 'special' meeting and half a dozen of a 'regular' meeting.

I discussed the issue privately with an executive member immediately before the meeting at which time I said that if the agenda was challenged I would be happy to deal with it at that time, but otherwise I would let the agenda be decided by the assembly.

### **Ruling**

I am being asked to rule not on one, but on (potentially) two things. The first is whether 'new business' was permissible. The potential second is whether or not the consequences of the motion there proposed and passed should be vacated if it is deemed that 'new business' was not permissible. These are, as I have intimated, two separate questions.

Robert's Rules states that "a *special meeting* (or *called meeting*) is a separate session of a society held at a different time from that of any regular meeting and convened only to consider one or more items of business specified in the call of the meeting." In the first place, I acknowledge that the intent of the meeting was to hold a 'special' meeting, which is now obvious retrospectively. Robert's Rules continue: "only business mentioned in the call of a special meeting can be transacted at such a meeting." (2000:89- 90). This is tricky. On one hand, the purpose of the meeting was, specifically, to discuss the item of business of the change to SOGS' constitution. On the other hand, the call out contained the item 'new business' in the attached agenda in which case, and on one interpretation, this gets 'fused' to the business at hand as part of the entirety of what the meeting is about and becomes one of the 'one or more' items of business possible for discussion. The fact that this was not the original intention or purpose for which the meeting was called and that 'new business' cannot normally be said to constitute an "important matter[ ] that may arise between regular meetings and that urgently require[s] action by the society before the next regular meeting [ ]" (2000: 90), and which is the purpose of holding a 'special' meeting, does not alter the fact that once the agenda went out it appeared as if 'new business' was expected as an item of business. As such the underlying principle that no business should be discussed that is not stated in the call is not harmed since 'new business' was stated in the call's agenda.

It has been argued that those who believed this was a 'special' meeting and who therefore did not believe 'new business' would be discussed because impermissible and who therefore did not come to the meeting where 'new business' was subsequently discussed demonstrate that the principle alluded to above was harmed. I believe this argument alludes to important principles of notice and inclusion and so I will address it. It requires the following: a) someone knew it was a 'special' meeting b) that they also knew that 'special' meetings do not normally contain 'new business' and c) they were comfortable that 'new business' would be removed from the agenda by a vote of the assembly or by the Speaker before the agenda reached the assembly and therefore did not need to attend the meeting confident that 'new business' would not arise. Alternately, one might argue that such a member might have known that the meeting was a 'special' one and not even *looked* at the agenda comfortable in the knowledge that as a 'special' meeting no 'new business' would arise. I think this situation could likely only represent the most *infinitesimal* percentage of our membership at best, however, I do take it into consideration.

A further argument which has been stated is that the Council 'sets' the agenda (and Council specifically had set a 'special' agenda) and therefore it is unclear whether the assembly can 'override' the agenda. This argument is not implicated here for the following reason: the issue is not whether the assembly can override the agenda which went out, since the agenda which went out contained 'new business.' The 'intentions' of Council become the issue and such intentions (whether or not they had intended to call a 'special' meeting) is one of the issues in question. More generally, though, I would like to take this time to address the issue of agenda-setting. According to Robert's Rules: "Unless a pre-circulated agenda is formally adopted at the session to which it applies, it is not binding as to the detail or order of consideration, other than as it lists pre-existing orders of the day, or conforms to the standard order of business or an order of business prescribed by the rules of the

organization" (2000: 363). Therefore, according to Robert's Rules, pre-circulated agendas are not fixed in their entirety.

SOGS bylaws take precedence over Robert's Rules in the event of a conflict. It is not clear, however, whether the relevant SOGS' bylaws indicate that the assembly may not alter pre-circulated agendas and whether there is, therefore, a conflict between Robert's Rules and the relevant SOGS' bylaws in this regard. Bylaw 15.2.4, for instance, is not 'on point.' It reads: "Notice of a General meeting, including an agenda showing business to be transacted, shall be advertised..." Nothing here indicates that it is Council which 'sets' this agenda nor even that such an agenda is 'set.' Moreover, the bylaws indicate that it is the *Speaker's* responsibility to 'prepare the agenda' for both general meetings and Council meetings (2.2.6). More reasonably, past practice indicates that agendas *are* alterable since the minutes of all general meetings since 2004 inclusive contain the item 'ratification of the agenda,' which is irrelevant in cases where the agenda is predetermined and unalterable: there is no point in ratifying what cannot be changed. As such it does not seem reasonable that it is Council which 'sets' the agenda as has been argued nor that the assembly cannot alter the pre-circulated agenda. Even if this was the case, it is unhelpful in *this* instance wherein the agenda contained 'new business' anyway. Therefore, I believe it is reasonable that the assembly, in general, can alter the agenda provided that necessary 'orders of the day' are dealt with. None of the above means that Robert's Rules are not implicated with respect to 'special' meetings, the procedures for which SOGS' bylaws are mostly silent. Therefore, even though Council does not 'set' agendas for general meetings, this does not mean that 'special' general meetings need not conform to Robert's Rules. Robert's Rules are clear: 'special' meetings cannot transact business that does not appear on the call of such a meeting. The issue then is not whether the assembly can override Council, but which rules/bylaws are here applicable. Having said that, it is my interpretation that in regards to meetings that do not fall under the rubric of 'special' that agendas are not pre-set in their entirety.

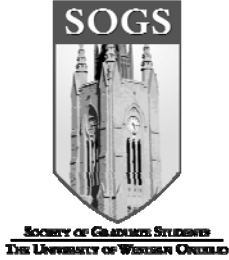
As for transparency, I believe that the fact that the publicized agenda went out with 'new business' on it to the entire membership and that not a single executive member, or former Speaker, or Officer or general member made a single mention of this to me in any email before the meeting amounts to acquiescence and admits of the transparency principle to which I here allude. Nor was it brought up by any member; executive or otherwise, during the meeting itself. Had the agenda not contained 'new business' when it went out a week before the meeting my ruling here would read very differently. That is because Robert's Rules are very clear that items that do not appear in the call to a 'special' meeting cannot be discussed. But, the pre-circulated agenda *did* contain 'new business' and there was ample time to address this. These two factors seem to me to be the most relevant points in this situation.

Last, there has been a suggestion that 'vacating' this motion amounts to a dangerous precedent and that for this reason, perhaps I should not even have been asked for a ruling and things should be simply allowed to 'lay as they are.' This point is not well taken for the following reason: The decision to let 'new business' stand if it is *not* in order provides the very same basis for a possible 'dangerous precedent' as ruling to vacate the motion that was passed: either way one can argue a 'precedent' is being set. Furthermore, whatever reasoning is applied here can be *misapplied* in the future. This is true of every law that exists: Self-defence could be used to 'get away with murder,' but we do not remove it nonetheless. What of the 'gray areas' such as 'battered wife syndrome?' Is this 'self-defence' or is the principle being misapplied? And yet, we do not get rid of the reasonable defence of 'self-defence' on the basis that it may be misapplied or that its application is 'tricky' or 'controversial' etc...We leave it on the basis that people must demonstrate that their actions fall in line with the principle. And the same is true here, which is why I have tried to demonstrate that my 'consideration' falls in line with certain principles that are most widely accepted-transparency and democratic inclusion.

One final note before my conclusion: I would like to draw your attention to the fact that any answer for me, is an answer 'against interest.' If I vacate the 'new business' I am viewed as 'biased.' If I don't I am viewed as attempting to avoid the appearance of bias. If I recuse myself I leave it to someone equally 'conflicted.' I hope this will be taken under advisement as you consider this ruling.

## **Conclusion**

Given all the above, I have concluded that the 'new business' while not initially permissible became permissible when it was adopted by the assembly. This is owing to the fact that it appeared on the pre-circulated agenda allowing any member ample time to make their arguments as to its inadmissibility before the meeting, which was not done, nor at the time that we began discussing 'new business' at which time I would have entertained a motion to alter the agenda. Had it not appeared on the pre-circulated agenda I would have ruled any 'new business' out of order as in violation of the 'special' meeting provisions of Robert's Rules. But, members came to the meeting with the expectation of discussing 'new business' and it was never raised as an issue on the floor or before the fact by any member(s) who could not be present as inadmissible for a 'special' meeting. Therefore, it is my decision that the democratic principle was not harmed nor was transparency undermined. As such, the motion arising from 'new business' on Aug. 12th stands.



**Candidacy Statements**  
**September 24, 2009**  
<<http://www.uwo.ca/sogs/>>

**VP Academic**

Dear Councillors,

I hereby submit my name as candidate for the position of VP Academic. The following is a brief summary of my experiences and background that I believe supports my candidacy for this position.

I have been actively involved in SOGS from the beginning of my time as a graduate student at Western. During the completion of my master's degree I served as a SOGS councillor. Upon my acceptance into the doctoral program in the Department of Health Science, School of Kinesiology, I was elected to the Kinesiology Graduate Board as the Vice President of Finance. My responsibilities included balancing, adjudicating, and ensuring that the activities of the board were fiscally responsible and in the best interest of the students. In addition to my role with the Kinesiology Graduate Board, I have also been actively working under the portfolio of VP Academic. Beginning in 2007 I served as a member of the Western Graduate Review committee. In 2008 I was elected by the committee to the position of managing editor. In 2009, I also served as a member of the Western Research Forum organizing committee.

In the beginning of fall term last year I had the opportunity to serve as interim VP Academic. During this brief period I was able to interact more closely with the Executive Board. I also participated in discussions with the library staff that were aimed at ensuring that policies that governed resource availability supported the needs of graduate students. As VP Academic, I would be committed to recognizing, understanding and representing the needs and concerns of graduate students across the university.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Natalie Szudy  
PhD Candidate

## VP Finance

Dear Councillors,

I am officially submitting my candidacy for the position of VP Finance in the 2009-2010 academic year. I am entering my third year of research in a chemistry Ph.D. program. As SOGS councilor, I have been involved with the grad club, bursary and finance committees. I was involved with the drafting of the 2008-2009 financial budgets for both the society and the grad club. Additionally, as chair of the finance committee, I am currently involved in drafting the 2009-2010 financial budget and financial committee policy manual. These have given me invaluable experience in the financial operations of this society.

Our society is currently in transition to a more fiscally conservative budget that was established by the past two generations of VP finance and their respective committees. The aims are to minimize the charges students incur, and to adjust spending to match current needs. To improve continuity in budgeting, the Finance committee has been producing a policy manual to aid future students in running the society. If elected, I will continue the tradition of fiscally prudent budgeting that will be solidified within the policy manual.

I have also had experience in maintaining large organizations through my position of editor for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Georgian Bay International Conference on Bioinorganic Chemistry. My position required me to receive, edit and correspond with top ranking international researchers. I gained valuable leadership skills and communications skills that I believe would be an asset when managing a group as diverse as the graduate student body.

I believe an elected individual must take many views into consideration. That is why my platform amalgamates the views of many of the people that help run the society, including two generations of president, two generations of VP finance, the accounts manager, and both manager and kitchen manager of the grad club. From them I have determined several areas of focus in the coming year:

1. Debt payoff of the grad club. As of the end of August, the grad club owes a total of thirty five thousand dollars to the society. When paid off, the grad club will have an additional twenty three hundred dollars a month for both renovations and bursaries.
2. Increase funding to awareness raising campaigns, as needed, initially focusing on diversity, multiculturalism, environmental sustainability, disabilities and pride.
3. Examining different avenues to increase awareness of the grad club to help bolster patronage.
4. Maintain a strong tradition of minimizing membership fees for students.

If elected, I promise transparent finances that strive to listen to and benefit from the views of all students. I would like to thank council for its time and look forward to working with you in the future.

Sincerely,



Duncan Sutherland

# APPENDIX A

## Mass Emails Report from BCC

Council recommended that the BCC consider bylaw changes to reduce the impact of spurious mass emails sent to members. The BCC has so far failed to draft satisfactory bylaws which encompass the scope of the recommendation and are prudent enough to cover general workings of the Society, not reactions to specific instances. The BCC's recommendation is that instead of making bylaw changes, Council recommend that future CROs take mass emails into consideration when drafting election rules for future elections. Should Council find this unsatisfactory, the BCC still has time to make a bylaw change proposal for October Council.

As justification for the inability to draft broadly scoped bylaws, the BCC reminds Council that SOGS does not have authority over its members email use. uwo.ca email accounts are under the jurisdiction of ITS and ITS policies dictate mass email usage among its users. Email addresses outside the uwo.ca domain are not under the authority of any University body. The BCC further reminds Council that members' uwo.ca email addresses are, by default, publicly available on the Western student directory and that SOGS members can opt out of that directory at any time.

SOGS does have jurisdiction over election campaign behaviour and specifically communications behaviour. Attempting to specify exactly volume or frequency or the nature of email behaviour during campaigning has not been fruitful. It is the opinion of the BCC that mass email behaviour is difficult to codify well and, consequently, mass email behaviour should not be codified in bylaws.

The Chief Returning Officer (CRO) of the Society, in essence, creates election rules at the beginning of each election, as per Bylaw 4.5.3:

4.5.3 Prior to the beginning of the campaign period, all parties and their campaign managers shall attend a meeting wherein they will be briefed on the terms of the election by the Chief Returning Officer and Deputy Chief Returning Officer. At that meeting an agreement will be signed by all parties wherein they acknowledge being bound to conduct their campaign in accordance with the Society's Constitution and Bylaws, and define any terms of the election not covered by these Bylaws.

It is the opinion of the BCC that policies regarding mass email behaviour be defined during the All Candidates Meetings, as described in bylaw 4.5.3. This allows election rules to be set according to past behaviours and has the added benefit that all parties are explicitly made aware of mass email rules before campaigning begins. Failure to abide by the set rules is actionable, as per bylaws 4.9.6 and 4.9.7 (note: 4.9.8 referenced in 4.9.7 is not applicable to this situation):

4.9.6 'Campaign Impropriety' is defined as any action undertaken by a candidate or their representative during the campaign and polling period that can be shown to be violations of any part of the Society's Constitution, Bylaws, or the agreement between the parties reached at the All Candidates Meeting.

4.9.7 Except in those instances outlined in Section 4.9.8 below, where the CRO has determined that an act of campaign impropriety has occurred, the CRO has the discretion to take the following actions:

4.9.7.1 reduce or eliminate a candidate's/referendum group's subsidy

4.9.7.2 declare the election to be void

The BCC reminds Council that the Executive has their own established policies on email communications that they must adhere to.

# **APPENDIX B**

## **Timeline report**

Currently the timeline for SOGS presidential elections and referenda is a month or two after that of other university elections, such as USC elections. There has been some talk within the BCC of synchronizing our elections with the rest of the university. Arguments for and against are considered weak and consequently the BCC does not see any clear benefit to synchronizing our elections.

Since the BCC does not feel any compulsion to act in this matter, the BCC leaves it to Council's consideration. The BCC is open to any recommendations or guidance from SOGS members.

The BCC will not act unless direction is provided by Council.

## **APPENDIX C**

### **Weldon Library – Study Space Review**

I would like to talk with you about getting a couple of graduate students to work with me to review applications for the assigned study spaces in Weldon Library. These study spaces are over subscribed every year. This year we have requested that students provide a rationale for their request with their application. I would like to have 2 students to review the applications and make recommendations to me regarding assignment of study spaces. I anticipate that this process would take 1 -- 1.5 hour meeting at the end of September.

## ELECTIONS TABLE

<b>Position</b>	<b>Month Elected</b>	<b>Date Office Taken</b>
President	March	May 1
Vice President External & Communications	April	May 1
Vice President Student Services	April	May 1
Speaker	June	July 1
Vice President Academic	September	October 1
Vice President Finance	September	October 1

## SOGS Committees

Type	Position	Nominee	Department
SOGS	Academic Committee	Stefanie de Jesus	Anatomy & Cell Biology
SOGS	Bursary Committee		
SOGS	Bylaws and Constitution Committee		
SOGS	Equity Committee	Diana Bumstead	
SOGS	Finance Committee		
SOGS	Grad Club Committee		
SOGS	Graduate Student Issues Committee	Shakir Chambers Diana Bumstead Stephanie Vieille	X Geology Political Science
SOGS	Graduate Student Teaching Awards Committee		
SOGS	Health Plan Committee	Siamak B. Tajali Sunwei Li Selma Saadaldin Taesung Ahn Andrew Delong	Health & Rehab Sciences Engineering Medical Biophysics Engineering Computer Science
SOGS	International Graduate Student Issues Committee		
SOGS	Orientation Committee		
SOGS	Personnel Policy Committee		
SOGS	Policy Committee		
SOGS	Sustainability Committee		
SOGS	WGR Editorial Board		
Other	Weldon Library – Study Space Review x 2		
Other			
Other			
Other			
Other			



## Society of Graduate Students Alternate Councillor/Proxy Form

The purpose of this form is:

**Alternate Councillor Designation**

or

**Proxy Designation**

\_\_\_\_\_  
*First and last names of Issuer (please print)*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Student Number*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Department, unit, or constituency of Issuer*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*E-mail address of Issuer*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Duration of leave (dates)*  
*Only applicable to Alternate Councillors*

### **Alternate Councillor/Proxy Voter**

\_\_\_\_\_  
*First and last name (please print)*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Student No.*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Department, unit, or constituency (for verification purposes of Alternate Councillors)*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*E-mail address*

### **Authorization**

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Signature of Issuer*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Signature of Recipient*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Date*

\_\_\_\_\_  
**RECEIVED (FOR OFFICE USE ONLY)**

Please return completed form to the SOGS office before the next meeting of Council.  
**Room 260, University Community Centre • Fax: (519) 661-3374**