

COUNCIL UPDATE

GSS Council met on May 28 2012 for its regular monthly meeting. This was the first meeting with our newly-elected Officers, Haida Antolick (interim AIRO), Franklin Verla (OFO); while Julia Lane (CERO) and Logan Ansell (AIRO) were both away.

Major decisions made at Council:

- Council approved the creation of Bargaining Committee to negotiate the next Collective Agreement with CUPE 3338. The Committee's membership and a total of \$1,100 for stipends for members were also approved to cover meetings that may be happening before the end of this fiscal year.
- \$1,000 in funding was provided to the new graduate student orientation that is being hosted by the Office of the Dean of Graduate Studies and the GSS.
- \$1,000 was also approved to be donated towards legal fees associated with students in the Quebec protests who had been detained or fined due to their civil disobedience. The Executive Committee was tasked with determining which group or representative body is best suited to receive these funds given the parameters of restricting groups only to those who have condemned violent actions.
- The Professional Development Coordinator introduced the proposal of hosting the Think Again! conference again in 2012, after the success of the initial conference last year. Council approved the proposal, and allocated a budget of \$5,000 towards this event.
- A budget surplus expenditure of \$5,000 was approved to increase the number of Professional Development Grants over the Summer semester by 5 grants (which will either be split evenly over the June and August deadlines, or split as 6 for June and 4 for August given the high number of applications expected in June).
- The Graduate Services Coordinator position was granted access to more hours for the months of May and June given the high volume of hours worked and anticipated to come given her responsibilities for the Benefit Plan and the U-Pass, both of which are being re-negotiated at this time.
- Approval to spend up to \$2,000 on a computer for the incoming MCRO position was granted.

Discussions held & future directions:

- The Videoconferencing Working Group informed Council of a trial that will be hosted on June 8 amongst the three campuses, and, of the full-scale trial that is scheduled for the July 23 Council meeting.
- Discussion about the progress of the Shared Services negotiations occurred. Negotiations with the SFSS have begun, and it was confirmed that while the SFSS has initiated plans for a Men's Centre, this is not part of the services the GSS is investigating at this time. More information should be available to Council at the June meeting.
- The anticipated plan coverage and insurance broker for the 2012-2013 Benefit Plan was provided by the Graduate Services Coordinator. A switch in providers will grant the GSS the opportunity to be able to afford a Pay-Direct card and get an insurance premium rate guarantee for 2 years, however, small cut-backs for some of the medical practitioners is anticipated to ensure that the plan costs are stabilized in coming years.
- Ongoing discussion regarding the membership of committees, the need for members on the Collective Advocacy & Campaigns Committee to lobby the university for things like increased support for graduate student travel to conferences, and membership recruitment to committees was also discussed.

Upcoming dates:

- Council - June 18, 1:00 - 3:00 PM (Thesis Defense Room)
- Professional Development Grant Deadline - June 1 @ 4:00 PM
- Caucus Funding Deadline - July 3 @ 4:00 PM
- New Graduate Student Orientation will be held during the afternoon of September 4 2012

The full agenda package containing more details and information is available at www.sfugradsociety.ca.

