

PSAC 901

March 29, 2023

6pm

Robert Sutherland Hall Room 202

Minutes

Meeting Start Time: 6:10pm

Welcome – Astrid Hobill, President

Quorum Check

Information Officer notes # of Composite Unit 1 and Unit 2 members in attendance.

Final Count Unit One: 48

Final Count Unit Two: 9

Elect Secretary

Nominee – Samantha Twietmeyer – Political Studies

Nominated by: Astrid Hobill – Art History

Seconded by: Brittainy Bonnis – Cultural Studies

Agrees to Serve: yes

Vote by Show of Hands – pass

Motion that GRAFs be allowed into meeting with voting privileges as RAs

Moved by: Jake Morrow – English

POI – Why are we making this motion?

Jake – when one does research at Queen’s you are classified as RAs or GRAFs – these are often misclassified as GRAFs. It is the union’s stance that GRAFs are members of the local – even though they are not officially classified in the member list from the university.

POI – What does GRAF Stand For?

Jake: Graduate Research Assistant Fellow

POI – If you are classified as both, you are a full member?

Jake – yes

Seconded by: Anika Fuernsinn - Math

Vote by Show of Hands – pass

Land Acknowledgement – Jake Morrow – English

PSAC Statement on Harassment – Jake Morrow – English

Harassment Officer – Gabriela Castillo - History

Rules of Order

Moderator Lizzie Bygott familiarizes attendees with the rules of order.

Adopt and Approve the Agenda

Motion to Approve: Mia Akbar – Biology

Seconded: Nina Micanovic - Psychology

Discussion: None
Amendments: None
Vote by Show of Hands – pass

Approve the Minutes from the 2022 October Special General Meeting

Motion to Approve: Miles Lambert
Seconded: Brittainy Bonnis – Cultural Studies
Discussion: None
Amendments: None
Vote by Show of Hands – pass

Executive Reports

Motion to approve the Executive Reports as a Slate followed by discussion/questions for each portfolio.
Motedioned by: Brittainy Bonnis – Cultural Studies
Seconded by: Harshavardhan Thyagarajan - Biology
Discussion: None

- President
- Vice President Community Relations
- Vice President Postdoctoral Scholars
- Vice President Research Assistants
- Information Officer
- Treasurer
- Co-Chief Stewards
- Equity Officer
- Health and Safety Officer

Vote by Show of Hands – pass

Committee Reports

Motion to approve the Committee Reports as a Slate followed by discussion/questions for each portfolio
Motedioned by: Gabriela Castillo - History
Seconded by: Elizabeth Cameron – Sociology Department
Discussion: None

- Occupational Health and Safety Committee Report
- Mental Health Committee Report
- Political Action Committee Report
- Bursary Administration Committee Report
- Social Justice Committee Report

Vote by Show of Hands – pass

Executive Officer Elections - CRO Miles Lambert Explains Elections Procedures.

Election Results

President Elect:
Nominee: Justyna Szewczyk-El Jassem – History
Agrees to stand: Yes
2 min remarks

Question: Forging ties with AMS or SGPS which are student organizations, would it make more sense to make ties to other unions on campus

Justyna: Yes is it important to work with other unions, but even though these are student organizations they are important allies and we function together. Historically we haven't had the best relations with other groups on campus but we found in the lead up to the recent actions on tuition we are cooperating on shared interests.

Motion to have the vote as a show of hands while candidate leaves the room

Q. For all votes?

A. Only for the acclamation vote.

Moved by: Brittainy Bonnis – Cultural Studies

Seconded by: Ghazaleh Darini – Political Studies

Discussion: are we allowed to change our voting procedures in an ad hoc manner per our by-laws?

Answer: Our by-laws have been suspended due to the pandemic so we have not been back in regular order until this meeting.

Lizzie (moderator): Decision to discard motion and return to ballot

Vote by ballot: Win by acclamation

Vice President Community Relations Elect:

Nominee: Levi Duhaime – Biology

Agrees to stand: Yes

1 min remarks

Discussion:

Question: You allude to fixing housing issues for members inside and outside the bargaining process.

Answer: Putting pressure through media attention and on the university admin for offering more affordable housing for graduate students. It is their responsibility as the undergraduate body is responsible for the housing shortage.

POI (Astrid Hobill): Can we have everyone please say their name when they speak.

Vote by ballot: Win by acclamation

Information Officer Elect:

Point of Order (Brittainy): If nominees are not here to confirm they will stand they cannot remain on the ballot.

Nominees:

Abigail Bergeron – Philosophy – will stand

Elizabeth Cameron – Sociology – will stand

Nominee speeches: 1min ea

POI (Harsha Thyagarajan): No nominations from the floor were called

Nominations from the floor called three times: None.

Discussion:

Brittainy Bonnis – Cultural Studies: the information officer job is less communications and more running member lists, following legislation, keeping up on media contacts, etc.

Could you speak to your comfort on the level of that type of work?

Elizabeth: experience in information organization and storage including sensitive information. As a very detail oriented person, file management and being in touch with the other members of the executive.

Abigail: currently a Grad Student advisor in SGPS we deal with student and academic appeals with faculties. My background in law school was in civil and labour law.

Vote by secret ballot: Winner - Abigail Bergeron

Treasurer Elect:

Nominees:

Brittainy Bonnis – will stand

Mia Akbar – will stand

Nomination from the floor: Jamie Grove – Physics

Nominee speeches: 1 min ea

Discussion:

Lizzie: What is your experience working as a treasurer or in finance?

Brittainy – I have a certificate in business and experience running the finances and books for small businesses

Mia Akbar – Took accounting and management in high school. Worked on client accounts and billing

Jamie Grove – Handled student data at Laurentian, and data analytics such as supply and demand in energy Ontario

Seamus – Physics: Given the future outlook for the economy and potential future decline in membership dues, what actions will you take to prepare the budget for this situation?

Mia Akbar – I know we have quite a bit of reserve funding in 901 budget, I seek to run a progressive budget. The 2022-2023 ran a small deficit to support steward work. I plan to do the same in order to strengthen the stewards

Brittainy Bonnis – the new Treasurer will work with the budget that we pass today. We do have a healthy reserve. I don't expect hiring levels to change drastically. I push for spending money on our membership such as paying Stewards.

Jamie Grove – We want to make sure we have liquidity for bargaining next year which I would take into account for any motions brought forward in the fall. I would be carrying the deficit into the next year until we are beyond the negotiation period. I don't expect changes in membership trends.

Vote by secret ballot: Winner – Mia Akbar

Co-Chief Steward Elect:

Nominee: Nina Micanovic – will stand

Nominations from the floor: none

Nominee speech: 1min

Discussion:

Lizzie: How comfortable are you with the grievance process and sharing the role with the Steward for grievances?

Nina: I am very willing to learn about this and to work with the grievance steward depending on their willingness to share the role as well. I have had some informal experience.

Seamus: What kind of activities would you like to do that are new or would like to improve?

Nina: Beefing up orientation activities and awareness about PSAC rights and responsibilities. Beefing up the capacity for stewards organizing. More events that are focused more on accessibility but maybe not formal meetings just informal gatherings.

Jake Morrow - History: Not every department on campus has a steward, what are your strategies for increasing the reach of the stewards council.

Nina: One way is to look at how departments are already interacting and to reach out to the stewards themselves to strategize by department to raise awareness. Attending other events to maintain visibility, etc.

Milka Njoroge – Gender Studies: What strategies would you use to recruit more non-white students and international students to the union?

Nina: Consulting and listening to those who have this positionality in the union. I motivate an idea of listening and validating concerns which is something I understand is infrequent in a university environment.

Vote by Secret Ballot: Win by acclamation

Co-Chief Steward (Grievances) Elect:

Nominee: Nashita Syed – will stand

Nominations from the floor: none

Nominee speech: 1min

Discussion:

Jake Morrow: With the position being Grievances – how do you see the role functioning outside the grievance process?

Nina – Historically there's a bit of imbalance past the informal meeting stage because you're dealing with the lawyers on the employers side. I hope to help by bringing a similar toolkit when dealing with grievances.

Vote by Secret Ballot: Win by acclamation

Equity Officer Elect:

Nominees:

Qazi Mustabeen Noor – English – Will stand

Maximillian Biezenski – Philosophy – will stand

Nominations from the floor: none

Discussion:

Ikeoluwapo Baruwa – Education – please clarify your philosophy of equity which you referred to.

Maximillian – considering all aspects of an issues, critical analysis, debate, critical thinking and considering all information on the question of equity

Nina – what are some action items or goals you would want to achieve in the next year and how to achieve those goals?

Maximillian – evaluate and re-evaluate the trainings that we are currently given at Queen's. Otherwise make myself accessible and make my contact information completely available. Given any grievance, I want to make myself aware of all policies to be in the best position possible to do the job.

Qazi – With the tuition abolition movement, it seems the authorities might get us to meet in the middle. As equity officer I want to make sure that with the other members that actions continue to bring international students under the umbrella

of all actions – ie. Abolish tuition. Also organizing more wider hybrid events so more historically underrepresented students can find a voice.

Vote by secret ballot: Winner – Mustabeen Noor

Occupational Health and Safety Officer Elect:

Nominee: Ikeoluwapo Baruwa – Faculty of Education – will stand

Nominations from the floor: none

Nominee speech: 1 min

Discussion:

Elizabeth Cameron – Sociology: Generally in terms of strategy, what are your plans in terms of educating members about their rights and accessing Health and Safety protections.

Ikeoluwapo: I plan to work with others as a team. From education I learned on the ground that there was no representative and as I reached out I gathered even greater interest through information. Enlightenment about upcoming events to ensure everyone knows their rights on campus.

Vote by secret ballot: Win by acclamation

Vice President Postdoctoral Scholars Elect:

Nominee: Armineh Azizi – Civil Engineering (PostDoc)

Nominations from the floor: none

Nominee speech: 1 min

Discussion:

Elizabeth Cameron – Sociology: What do you plan to champion for post-docs?

Armineh – my foremost goal is to raise the salaries of post-docs and you can see many gaps between postdocs and faculty. And also another challenge is healthcare services – unfortunately due to the agreement with the government they cut funds for mutual care. So if you don't have a family doctor you don't have full service from medical clinics. Additionally a key challenge is housing as there are no housing opportunities offered by Queen's currently.

Lizzie Bygott – Chemical Engineering: A big complaint from postdocs is that they don't feel part of the community and they want to be involved – what would you do for this?

Armineh – we did a survey that showed postdocs are interested in more social events, out of university events, to gather as part of the Queen's community and in their own post-doc community.

Vote by secret ballot: Win by acclamation

Vice President Research Assistants Elect:

Nominee: Milka Njoroge – Gender Studies

Nominations from the floor: none

Nominee speech: 1 min

Discussion:

Nina Micanovic: A major issue is that people who should be RAs were classified as GRAFs – what is your plan to bring in these students and end the practice of doing this?

Milka – I want to make the contract so clear that if the work does not contribute to a student's PhD work they are properly classified as an RA. And also to make these details clear to RAs and support them in

Elizabeth Cameron – Sociology – Can you speak to collaboration with the Tas and other graduate student workers, how do you see your role in working with the rest of the executive?

Milka: Absolutely I would want to work with all graduate student workers and particularly in regard to tuition abolition.

Vote by secret ballot: Win by acclamation

Moderator Election

Nominee: Lizzie Bygott – Chemical Engineering

Nominated by: Brittainy Bonnis – Cultural Studies

Seconded by: Mia Akbar – Biology

Will stand: Yes

Vote by show of hands: Win by acclamation

Budget 2023 – Presented by Treasurer

Motion to pass Budget by: Harshavardhan Thyagarajan

Second: Nina

Discussion:

Lizzie – question on the investment income from our budget

Harsha – we made a decision to invest our reserve funds and first checked in with Regional and CRA that we were allowed to create an investment for three years

Seamus – what is our current surplus if we are planning to run a deficit this year as well as last year.

Harsha – I assume you are talking about the reserve (yes) – so first of all we balanced our budget last year rather than actually running a deficit on our budget. Discussion moves in-camera.

Levi – Biology – Is there any discussion to increase the size of the strike fund? Is this something that needs to be addressed with PSAC regional?

Harsha – this has to go through our by-laws so I would identify this as a budget priority for our by-laws to discuss our caps on strike funds. Moves in-camera.

Brittainy – in camera.

Levi – Biology – Are there any changes in the membership dues in this budget?

Harsha – the way we predict income is that we make the assumption that our number of members will not change so we index our percentage of dues to the changing rate of income

Elizabeth – what is the role of the budget and finance committee in making decisions on the budget?

Harsha – decisions on the budget tend to occur around budget and finance committees but these decisions can begin and happen out side of those meetings as well and you can watch for announcements in this regard in the coming year.

Vote by Show of Hands: Pass

Announcements

- Event with OPIRG at Grad Club April 11th – great place to organize with community
- April 19th digital accessibility workshop with Emily Harmson, a digital accessibility specialist.

- Next Stewards Council April 19th

New Executive Swearing-in

Meeting Adjourned