

**SOCIETY OF GRADUATE STUDENTS  
FEBRUARY 11, 2016  
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

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# **SOCIETY OF GRADUATE STUDENTS**

## **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

### **AGENDA**

**February 11, 2016**

**6:00 p.m.**

**UCC 41**

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1. Approval of Agenda
2. Approval of ratified 2015 AGM Minutes
3. Announcements
4. Orders of the Day
5. Executive Update Reports
  - a) President
  - b) VP Academic
  - c) VP External & Communication
  - d) VP Finance
  - e) VP Student Services
6. Updates
  - a) Committee Chair Reports
  - b) Non-executive updates
    - Aboriginal & Indigenous Commissioner
    - Accessibility Commissioner
    - Women's Concern's Commissioner
    - Pride Commissioner
  - c) Councillor updates
  - d) SOGS Board of Governors Representative update
  - e) SOGS Senator Representative update(s)

## **SOGS ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

### **Approved Minutes**

#### **UCC – Room 56**

February 12, 2015

6:08 - 7:40 pm

#### **7. Mission Statement was read by the Speaker**

The Society of Graduate Students is made strong by colleagues striving together to improve our working and learning environment and to preserve the rights that we have struggled to achieve. Mutual respect is the cornerstone of this cooperation. Every member of the Society is entitled to be free from discrimination and harassment on the basis of age, sex, gender, class, colour, national or ethnic origin, race, religion, creed, marital status, ability, sexual orientation, language, or political belief. Members are entitled to be free from personal harassment in the form of bullying. This may include, but is not limited to adverse treatment, inappropriate gestures, remarks intended to intimidate or degrade, and exclusion based on discriminatory grounds.

If any of us experience harassment at this Council meeting, let those of us who are involved seek an informal resolution through direct and peaceful discussion. If this initial approach is unsuccessful, then, please, contact the Speaker to discuss the situation and possible responses in keeping with By-law 18. If this is not successful or possible, the Constitutional and policy mandates on the issue of harassment will be fully and quickly enforced.

Harassment in all its forms detracts from and weakens our common purpose. Every member of our Society is responsible for fostering an environment free of discrimination and harassment. Let us treat each other with dignity and respect.

#### **8. Approval of Agenda**

Changes – Motion 4 considered before other Orders of the Day

Women's Issues Commissioner report at the beginning of Report section

Moved – M. Lefebvre

Seconded – A. Shott

Approved

#### **9. Approval of ratified 2014 AGM Minutes**

Moved – M. Lefebvre

Seconded – V. Wong

Abstention – M.S. Scale

#### **10. Announcements**

- Welcome to the SOGS Annual General Meeting for 2015
- Quorum is 24
- Light refreshments are offered at tonight's meeting.
- Nominations for SOGS President are open and will close Friday, February 20 at 4 pm.  
Nomination forms are available in the SOGS office, and here at the desk.

#### **11. Orders of the Day**

##### **Motion 4 – Martin Lefebvre (Geography)**

In the interest of expediting the Society's business while encouraging concise debate, BIRT that the following be adopted by the Society as part of our standing rules, as well as added to the Rules section of the Rules of Decorum/Debate at the end of every Council Package and AGM package.

- When recognized by the Speaker, each member shall have three minutes to make his or her comment.
  - This three-minute period of time may be renewed with a simple majority of votes cast by assembly.

Moved – M. Lefebvre

Seconded – Emily Lipkowski

M.S. Scale – this is a motion with good intentions, but it should be sent to the Disabilities Commissioner for careful consideration. Setting a time limit may be detrimental to our members with certain disabilities. Extra time may be necessary for them to express themselves.  
BIRT this motion be referred to the Disabilities Commissioner.  
Moved – M.S. Scale  
Seconded – P. St-Pierre  
D. Booth – time can be extended if necessary, as per motion.  
M.S. Scale – if the Disabilities Commissioner isn't present, then we should get this information first before voting.  
E. Wennekers – in favour of referring motion to Disabilities Commissioners. Often there are invisible barriers that can hamper members from expressing themselves.  
Abstentions – M. Lefebvre, E. Lipkowski  
Motion referred.

### **Motion 1 – VP Finance**

BIRT the 2015-16 budget recommended by Council on January 29, 2015 be approved.  
Moved – I. Chakraborty  
Seconded – K. Godbout  
This budget is a careful balance between student interest and fiscal responsibility. The SOGS and Grad Club budgets have been merged to create efficiencies. Food discount is being discontinued; prices will be increased depending on the economy and food costs; menus will be changed. This is a conservative budget based on current student numbers. (See Appendix A)  
P. Shulist – What needs to be done to make this a revenue neutral budget? (A) Ivey undergraduate students prepared a report, which will be carefully considered, efficiency will be improved; UWOFA will be asked to contribute \$10/pf instead of the current \$5/pf.  
If the occupancy cost was lower, there wouldn't be a deficit. The university administration is not recognizing that the Grad Club space is not utilized in the same way that the Spoke and Wave are used, but they are charging the same rate.  
E. Wennekers – since the budget almost balances, where would the surplus go? (A) Any surplus would be redirected into subsidies.  
K. Godbout – it must be remembered that the Grad Club generates over a million dollars in revenue. Graduate students are being double charged.  
K. Seanor – what arguments have been made to change this? (A-KG) we are on a month-to-month extension of the previous 10 year lease. We are trying to partner with other groups (UWOFA/Alumni) to get more support.  
N. Vulic – budget for current year showed a \$85K loss; however, now it's \$15K, please explain. (A) the budget was conservative last year and we may even break even.  
M.S. Scale – Please explain the Emergency loan administration line. (A) this is in case of NSF cheques – it is a bank flow through line.

### **Unanimously approved**

### **Motion 2 – President**

Whereas the Grad Club is owned and operated by SOGS, which is a non-profit corporation;  
Whereas Western University's administration charges occupancy fees to the Grad Club, which are the same fees charged to all ancillary units on campus (housing, food-services and other services);  
Whereas the ~\$120,000 occupancy fees charged to the Grad Club are a substantial financial burden for an essential service and academic space SOGS manages for the benefit of its membership; and  
Whereas the Grad Club is a space in which students pursue professional and organizational activities related to their academic pursuits;  
BIRT the Society, through the SOGS Executive, seek strategies to have Western recognize the Grad Club as a core part of graduate student academic space, rather than as a profit-generating business.  
Moved – K. Godbout  
Seconded – Danny Booth

This motion is seeking to get the support of graduate students with which to talk to Western Administration about the Grad Club occupancy cost. Cost should be levied on a lesser scale than strictly commercial space.

E. Wennekers – in favour – this is a public space and it is important to get Administration to see that this is not strictly a revenue generating space. Alumni are large donors and should be asked to weigh in on the importance of the Grad Club. Their opinions matter and Administration will take them seriously.

K. Seanor – are there any plans for a petition? (A) yes, it's in the works.

**Unanimous**

### **Motion 3 – Bylaws and Constitution Committee (BCC)**

BIRT Constitutional Article 6.2.5 be added: the Executive shall, at its discretion, call a meeting of all Executive Officers, Commissioners and Committee Chairs to discuss issues with the Society, which shall be reported to Council.

BIFRT Constitutional Article 6.1.10 be added: Council shall, at its discretion, call a meeting of all Executive Officers, Commissioners and Committee Chairs and refer issues or agenda items for this meeting.

Moved – M. Lefebvre

Seconded – K. Godbout

M. Lefebvre - This is a housekeeping change for the constitution and therefore must come to the AGM.

K. Godbout – Since all Chairs now sit on Council in as ex-officio, the Executive Panel was no longer necessary and was removed from the bylaws. This motion allows the Executive and/or Council to call a meeting of the various bodies if necessary.

**Unanimous**

## **12. Executive Update Reports**

### *a) President, Kevin Godbout*

The larger issue this year was the Grad Club.

### *b) VP Academic, Mary Eileen Wennekers*

Post-residency fee campaign will be starting up soon. There will be a general assembly in March that should be attended by as many graduate students as possible. Current fee structure is not the same at all Ontario Universities. Some already have post-residency fees (i.e., lower fees once the compulsory requirements of graduate studies is completed) instituted at their schools.

### *c) VP External & Communication, Alison Shott*

The website has continued to be problematic and other options are being considered. They will be brought to Council in the near future. Sexual assault policies are being worked on – SGPS is open to suggestions. Input from students should be directed to [external@sogs.ca](mailto:external@sogs.ca)

### *d) VP Finance, Indranil Chakraborty*

Budget has taken up most of the time. Thank you for accepting it.

### *e) VP Student Services, Tamara Hinan*

Any questions on the report can be directed to Tamara's email.

### *f) Ombudsperson, Daniel Booth*

This is a new position and two complaints have been received.

### *g) CRO, Madison Bettie*

Presidential nomination forms are available at the front and in the SOGS office. Completed forms must be submitted no later than Friday, February 20 at 4 pm.

### *h) DCRO/Deputy Speaker*

The Constitution and Bylaws are being re-written in latex format. There will be a latex workshop coming up for those who are interested.

### 13. Updates

#### a) **Non-executive updates**

*Aboriginal & Indigenous Commissioner, Pauline Johnson*

No report or presentation.

*Disabilities Commissioner, Melanie Stone*

No report or presentation.

*LGBT+ Commissioner, Kirstyn Seanor*

Working on a new more inclusive name. A social event is being planned. February 26, there will be a presentation on a tolerant workspace. More information will be available on the website and twitter.

*Women's Issues Commissioner, Taniya Nagpal*

The Women's Issues committee is looking for new members. Female professors are being recruited as positive role models, balancing work and family life.

#### b) **Committee Chair reports**

##### **Policy Committee**

M.S. Scale reported the committee is reorganizing policies. Two sections are being developed (position statements and operational).

##### **Bylaws and Constitution Committee**

M. Lefebvre stated that the committee is re-writing the bylaws incorporating small housekeeping changes that will be brought to council. Documents are being reformatted. New members are needed.

##### **Bylaws and Constitution Committee**

M. Lefebvre presented the report.

##### **Academic Committee**

L. Guo said the organization of the Western Research Forum is moving along – more abstracts are needed. The event will take place on March 21 at the Grad Club. Talks will be by Tania Li and Charles Weijer.

M.S. Scale – how many abstracts have been received? (A) 15 have been received and are looking for between 30-40 for the day.

M.S. Scale – will they be peer reviewed? (A) Yes, a journal will be published after the event.

**Graduate Student Teaching Awards** – no report or presentation

##### **GradCast**

A. Moszczyaski reported that GradCast is the voice of SOGS. The format has changed from last year. Now there is one person interviewed for 15 minutes about their research and the second part is their insight into what is happening in the world in their field. The committee is working hard on increasing graduate student presence at Western.

K. Godbout – this is a really good idea.

E. Wennekers – website can be found easily.

##### **Equity Committee**

A. Shott reminded everyone to complete the Equity survey that will be up until February 20<sup>th</sup>.

**Graduate Student Issues Committee** – no one presented report in package

**Bursaries and Subsidies Committee** – no report or presentation

**Finance Committee** – no one presented, report in package

**Grad Club Committee** – no report or presentation

**Sustainability Committee** – no one presented, report in package

**Health Plan Committee** – no one presented, report in package

**International Graduate Student Issues Committee** – no one presented, report in package

**Orientation and Social Committee**

Madison Bettie told the assembly about a film screening on February 27 in Middlesex College.  
The Boler skiing event had to be cancelled for lack of interest.

- c) Councillor updates
- d) SOGS Board of Governors Representative update
- e) SOGS Senator Representative update(s)
- f) PSAC 610  
President David Blocker told the AGM that there is a bargaining survey on-line and those who complete it will be entered into a contest where you can win an iPad air.

Meeting adjourned at 7:41

Moved – D. Booth

Seconded – M. Vezer

## **Orders of the Day**

### **Motion 1 - VP Finance**

#### **SOGS 2016-2017 Budget**

BIRT the budget recommended by Council on January 28, 2016 be approved.  
(See Appendix A – Proposed Budget 2016-2017, attached document)

### **Bylaws and Constitution Committee (BCC)**

#### **Motion 2 (From L. Guo)**

Whereas a former constitution article (previously 6.5) limiting the terms of the president and other executive and non-executive officers was struck in the 2014 Annual General Meeting,  
Whereas currently there is no term limit of the president, so in an unlikely event the same president could be appointed for the third consecutive term,  
BIRT the following be added to the Constitution as article 6.2.5  
6.2.5.1. No individual shall serve as a president for more than two consecutive terms even if one of the terms is a partial term  
6.2.5.2. No individual shall serve more than 24 months as a president in their lifetime  
6.2.5.3. No individual who has already served as a president for two consecutive terms or a total of 24 months, whichever is earlier, shall be eligible to stand for election as a president.

#### **Motion 3 (From BCC)**

BIRT that list of examples be stricken from 1.5.1.2.10.  
The current 1.5.1.2.10:  
the reception of Society publications, including but not limited to the following: Society Handbook/Dayplanner, Society Health Plan information, the Society's newsletter, information on associations to which the Society belongs (CFS and CFS-O), and the Western Journal of Graduate Research.  
1.5.1.2.10 after the change:  
the reception of Society publications.

#### **Motion 4 (From T. Hinan)**

Whereas graduate students may be granted a Leave of Absence by SGPS for pregnancy/parental, medical or compassionate grounds;  
Whereas graduate students on a Leave of Absence are able to continue using Western email, the libraries, and Student Health Services at no cost, and are entitled to opt into Campus Recreation and the SOGS Health and Dental Plan;  
Whereas graduate students on a Leave of Absence remain important members of the graduate student community;  
Whereas graduate students on a Leave of Absence often require additional support due to the extenuating circumstances that led to their Leave of Absence;  
BIRT graduate students on a Leave of Absence be granted Associate Membership in the Society;  
BIFRT the following be stricken:

#### **1.5.2 Associate Membership**

1.5.2.1. The requirements for associate membership of the Society shall be:  
1.5.2.1.1. registration in the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies of The University of Western Ontario as a part-time graduate student (excluding those registered in the MBA



program in the Richard Ivey School of Business)

1.5.2.2. Associate members of the Society in good standing have the same rights and privileges as full members, with the following exception:

1.5.2.2.1. participation in Society programs which prohibit the participation of associate members..

1.5.2.3. The requirements for associate membership in good standing in the Society shall be:

1.5.2.3.1. satisfying the requirements for associate membership from Section .1, and

1.5.2.3.2. payment of the designated membership fee.

BIFRT The following be inserted in the constitution:

### **1.5.2 Associate Membership**

1.5.2.1. The requirements for associate membership of the Society shall be:

1.5.2.1.1. registration in the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies of The University of Western Ontario as a part-time graduate student (excluding those registered in the MBA program in the Richard Ivey School of Business)

1.5.2.1.2. a Leave of Absence having been granted by the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies from a graduate program (excluding those in the MBA program in the Richard Ivey School of Business) on pregnancy/parental, medical, or compassionate grounds."

1.5.2.2. Associate members of the Society in good standing have the same rights and privileges as full members, with the following exception:

1.5.2.2.1. participation in Society programs which prohibit the participation of associate members.

1.5.2.3. the requirements for associate membership in good standing in the Society for part-time graduate students shall be:

1.5.2.3.1. satisfying the requirements for associate membership from Section .1, and

1.5.2.3.2. payment of the designated membership fee.

1.5.2.4. the requirements for associate membership in good standing in the Society for graduate students granted a Leave of Absence shall be:

1.5.2.4.1. satisfying the rules of associate membership form section .1

## **Executive Report – President**

Dear SOGS members,

It has been a privilege to represent you since last May. Here is a snapshot of my term as President.

### **SOGS Activities**

#### **Executive Committee**

The SOGS Executive has worked together this year to improve support, community and communication of graduate student issues on our campus. We are currently reviewing ideas for making SOGS Council more accessible and engaging for all members.

We have also worked hard to foster collaborative relationships with various other groups and individuals on campus. We have a renewed partnership with UWOFA surrounding the Grad Club, and hope to continue to support their advocacy efforts wherever possible. We have co-hosted events with PSAC 610 -- “Political Mondays” ahead of the Federal election in October. We have also worked collaboratively with SGPS on a number of projects, as well as the AVP Student Experience to ensure that graduate student voices are being represented across the university and advocating on graduate student issues. We will also be having our first of what we hope will become annual meetings with the University President and Provost on February 29<sup>th</sup>. We also hope to meet with representatives from departmental graduate student groups across campus before the end of this academic year.

#### **Policy Committee**

The Policy Committee is in the process of completing its review of all SOGS policies through the SOGS Policy Manual. As the policy manual is finalized, the committee is also working on policies to better define the role of SOGS commissioners, and to facilitate better transition of documentation for the Society's committees.

### **Western Activities**

#### **Graduate Funding Sub-Committee**

During the fall semester, I represented graduate students on the Graduate Funding Sub-Committee of the Provost's Budgetary Task Force. This sub-committee was tasked with reviewing how funding is allocated to graduate programs and graduate students across campus. The sub-committee's final report will be presented to the University Senate in February, and should be publicly available after that point. This report is important as it will hopefully provide transparency and accountability around graduate funding that is accessible to the university community, and is designed to make recommendations to improve funding. The Sub-Committee's consultation at SOGS Council in November was a particularly productive discussion, and I hope that the report will reflect our community's concerns with funding.

#### **Student Services Committee**

The VP Student Services, an at-large representative, and myself have sat on the Student Services Committee this year. This committee, comprised of entirely student voting members, considers proposals for ancillary fees. We have been discussing options to make the committee fairer to graduate students and more representative of our needs. We approved small fee increases to provide better mental health services to all students through Student Health Services, Psychological Services at the Student Development Centre and Indigenous Services. There was also a fee increase to the Student Success Centre to support experiential learning, and we are in talks with the SSC to make these services more relevant to graduate students, since we are paying for them. By the time the AGM occurs, all students will have voted on a proposal for a new fee for entrepreneurship on campus. Any members who read this report on February 8<sup>th</sup> or 9<sup>th</sup> should make sure to vote in the upcoming referendum, which is online.

#### **Senate and the Board of Governors**

I have attended the majority of Senate meetings this year, and made submissions to the committees tasked with reviewing structure and governance of both of these bodies. I hope to see increased emphasis on collaborative and collegial governance at Western in the coming year, and specifically I hope that graduate students broadly, and SOGS specifically, will be considered key stakeholders and partners in governance and decision-making on our campus. By the end of my term, I hope to have met with all of our incoming and outgoing Board and Senate representatives to have a better sense of how we can work together to advocate for graduate students and graduate student issues.

As always, if you have any questions or concerns, or if you have feedback on what SOGS could be doing to better support you during your time as a member, please don't hesitate to get in touch with me at [president@sogs.ca](mailto:president@sogs.ca).

Tamara Hinan  
SOGS President, 2015-16

## Executive Report – VP Academic

Here's what academic activities have been happening since my election in October.

### GradCast

It's business as usual for the GradCast crew, putting together an excellent weekly podcast show without interruption and downloaded over 5,000 times domestically and internationally. There is no shortage of graduate students wanting to be interviewed to showcase their research. **The future** of GradCast looks bright. There has been an expansion of the committee and production team, meaning more interviewers and the ability to host more university events. I am supporting them to hold more recruitment events, acquire new equipment to professionally produce the podcast, and also to get access for them to non-traditional venues, such as the Western Research Forum.

### Western Research Forum

The Forum is continuing as planned, thanks to the talented Academic Committee. The theme this year is "Research at a Crossroads." We have had many excellent submissions for oral and poster presentations and I think the format of the conference will be very interesting. **Looking forward**, this is the first year that I will try to blend together the Forum with interviews organized by GradCast. Mixing an interdisciplinary conference together with the podcast production by GradCast represents an innovative approach to highlighting the conference and the graduate students presenters to our members at large and beyond.

### The Western Journal of Graduate Research

After a 12 year lapse in publication, this year marks the publication of a new issue of the Journal, thanks to the hard work and dedication of the Academic Committee. I'm quite proud of the quality of the publication content and its production. Copies were widely distributed through the libraries, the Grad Club and the SOGS office. **Looking forward**, I will be taking steps to move this publication to a digital, open-access model using an existing publication platform. My hope is that next year, the Journal can be an indexed and searchable electronic publication to give our graduate student contributors a wider audience for their research.

### Joint Fund for Support of Graduate Student Research and Scholarship

There have been many excellent applications to the fund this year, and we have awarded 11 applicants as of the end of January. Most applications have been in support of traditional conference formats, but there have also applications for student publications and incorporation of teleconferencing and digital components to traditional conferences.

### Future goals

In the remainder of my term, I have two remaining objectives. First, will be awarding the winners of the a Graduate Student Teaching Awards. Those who have been nominated in the Fall or Winter terms may be eligible to receive anonymized feedback from their students so that they have tangible evidence of their excellence to display in a teaching portfolio.

Second, through discussions with SGPS, I would like to raise the awareness for the post-residency fee survey results and advocate for alternative fee structures for graduate students in "Year X." This is a point that resonates with many of our members, especially when facing the loss of funding or TA opportunities, who may only have to write up and defend their thesis.

Lastly, I hope that I have the time to begin a conversation about creating an interdisciplinary workshop series on campus, bringing together students from various backgrounds to learn shared methodologies. This is still in a design phase, but could be implemented for the following year.

# Executive Report – VP External & Communications

Dear SOGS members;

My report focuses on three themes: advocacy, communications, and community. Preceding the discussion of these themes, an overview of projects I have reported on over the past year is provided.

## Projects overview

For ease of skimming and accountability, this sections details projects described in my previous reports.

Projects that I've reported on **and have completed/made significant progress:**

- Get more active in sexual violence prevention education projects around campus
- Develop and improve the website
- Develop a communications and promotions plan

Projects that I've reported on **and which are still in the works:**

- Look into copyleft options for our bylaws and governing documents

Projects that I've reported on **which are being reconsidered:**

- SOGS Forum: Its usefulness is being called into question.

## Advocacy

### CFS

The information in this section is shared primarily for visibility. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions about the research and advocacy done by CFS.

### Conferences/meetings

- CFS-O Annual General Meeting – August 21-23, 2015
- CFS-O Executive Meeting – October 24-25, 2015
- CFS-O Semi-Annual General Meeting – January 14-17, 2016
- National Graduate Caucus – February 19-21, 2016
- CFS-O Executive Meeting – March 11-12, 2016

### Recent campaigns

- Getting It Right for Good: Student priorities to strengthen & improve Ontario's university funding formula
- Improving the Employment Standards Act
- Not in the Syllabus
- Think Global, Act Local: A path towards re-integration of international students into the Ontario Health Insurance Program

### Graduate Student Resource Fair

This was a major undertaking on the part of the Equity Committee to bring community and campus resources together to better inform graduate students about the supports available to them. We had a great showing from community groups, and they all seemed to appreciate the opportunity to mingle. We learned a lot from organizing this event, and look forward developing it further in future years.

### London Pride

SOGS continues to be a member of the London Pride Planning Committee. We participated and contributed swag in 2015, and are already included in planning for the 2016 parade.

## Communications

This section outlines advocacy that has been supported through my portfolio. Communications covers a broad range of subjects; my projects to date have focused on document management and electronic access.

### ***Documentation development and management***

#### **Cataloguing**

I have been working to get all the documents hosted on our site to be catalogued in [LibraryThing](#). This project is intended to increase access and visibility of the documentation available through SOGS. After the online documents have all been catalogued, print materials in our office will also be catalogued.

#### **Communications Plan**

The initial research and inquiry for our communications plan development is available in a presentation developed for November 2015 Council: <http://bit.ly/1NalBkB> This work has since been supported by a focus group with Councilors, and will be continued in the near future with a focus group for SOGS members more broadly.

My draft in development can be viewed here: <http://bit.ly/1mbyHla> At this point, it's primarily promotions and a layout of desired sections. I'll update the publicly available draft as it develops.

#### **Equity Resource List**

The Equity Committee did a great job at developing a community and equity resources document. This question and answer style document was based on focus groups done on campus, and received feedback from community partners. My role was primarily editing and formatting the document, but I mention it as part of my report because it's a useful document containing a lot of information and contact details. The full document is available online: <http://sogs.ca/PDFs/EquityResourceList.pdf>

### ***Website and online presence***

Although still hosted by EthicalHost, we've switched to a Wordpress installation for our site. This switch was initiated to make it easier to customize the site in-house.

Major developments/accomplishments:

- *Blog-style newsletter*: Built in archiving and searchability
- *Documentation*: Centralized to increase visibility and accessibility
- *Events calendar*: Easy-to-view and includes reminders; potential for users to subscribe in order to have reminders pushed to them
- *Forms*: Website feedback and bus pass reporting forms built into the website menus
- *Search bar*: Increases navigability and usability
- *Wordpress platform*: Usability, familiarity, and increased mobile functionality

Next steps:

- Streamline emails to consistently use @sogs.ca addresses
- Possibly eliminate or reduce some content to make it easier to keep the site consistent and up-to-date (e.g., reducing the community resources page)
- Increasing the accessibility of our site through implementing some recommendations from our former Accessibility Commissioner, Mel Stone, and modifying the CSS

Major website updates and milestones are recorded in a [publicly visible spreadsheet](#).

#### **SOGS Forum**

A dedicated OWL site was created to facilitate communication among our members. This project will likely be cancelled; its forums remain unused, it is unclear how many grads frequent OWL, and its main asset - the calendar - has been imitated and surpassed by the Events calendar on our website.

## **Website feedback**

The main feedback mechanisms have been:

- A trivia question in the newsletter
- A website feedback form on the site (to report errors and issues)

## **Community**

I chose to dedicate a section to community to show appreciation for some of the people and groups, which facilitate SOGS' initiatives. One of my ambitions with this portfolio was community development, and it is rewarding to learn of so many ongoing initiatives where this is taking place.

### ***Collaboration with SGPS***

Many of our priorities have been shared with SGPS this past year, most notably graduate student mental wellness. Lorraine Davies has supported us on initiatives such as the Graduate Student Resource Fair, and Mark Wolfe offered advice and documentation to support the development of our communications plan.

### ***London area***

Various projects have engaged the wider London area. We invited many groups to our campus for the Graduate Student Resource Fair, we sought out and promoted Atloh's activities for the National Day of Remembrance for Missing and Murdered Aboriginal Women; our Equity Committee has been in contact with Connect about supporting the development of Graduate Peer Support on campus,

### ***Office staff***

In the Fall 2015 term, we organized a professional development day to tackle some difficult projects around our office such as building/moving shelves, organizing documents, and hanging white boards. I'd like to thank our office staff for their initiative that day, and for the work they do year-round to support our members and SOGS initiatives.

As always, questions, comments, and stories about your best/worst Valentine's Day are welcome at [external@sogs.ca](mailto:external@sogs.ca)

## Executive Report – VP Finance

I have had the pleasure of serving on the SOGS Executive since October 2015 and am pleased to report that within my role as VP Finance I have worked alongside my colleagues on the following initiatives:

1. Working towards sustainability in the Grad Club
  - Eliminated the deficit and have a plan for capital improvements to better match the ways in which grad students make use of the space outside of peak hours
  - Developed a sustainable, long term vision for the Grad to better support management and future executives
2. Promoting the principles of equity amongst staff and Council members
  - Implementing a living wage for non-salaried employees who do not earn gratuities
  - Removal of non-standard benefits that were extended to salaried employees only (ie. holiday bonus) and redistribution of funds for all staff to benefit from, regardless of their employee category
  - Proposal of hourly rates of pay for Commissioners, Deputy Speaker, and Ombudsperson instead of stipends to promote the principle of equal pay for equal work amongst the positions
3. Strategic planning to improve the relevancy of SOGS for all Grad Students
  - Conceptualizing ways to engage/re-engage with graduate students across campus (increasing departmental grants; improving advocacy for non-resident students)
  - Eliminating barriers to participation (bringing more documentation online); funding initiatives that directly engage the larger grad student community; investigating funding options to better support communications strategies
4. Finding ways to better support grad students without funding
  - Increasing fieldwork bursary, developing a criteria that supports those in professional programs who leave for placements and do not receive any funding
  - Working alongside SGPS to address issues with degree completion times and funding issues for 'year x' students

The role has been quite busy as the Chair positions on both the Finance Committee and the Grad Club Committee are currently vacant. Given the turnover on both committees, due to graduations, there has, understandably, been some resistance amongst the new members to take on the position of chair when they are quite new. Ideally both positions will be filled by the end of February. I would like to thank the Chairs of the Subsidies and Bursaries Committee, Eric Diehl for his continued leadership, and to Sara Belontz and Rebecca Doyle, the new co-Chairs of the Sustainability Committee for their energy and enthusiasm they have brought to the group.

Please contact me at [finance@sogs.ca](mailto:finance@sogs.ca) if you have any comments, concerns, or general feedback. The only way we can improve SOGS is to be open to new ideas and to hear your concerns so please do not hesitate to contact me!



## Executive Report – VP Student Services

### Priority Projects since May, 2015

- Development of Graduate Student Mental Health portfolio.
- Creation of transitional Manuals and further housekeeping of portfolio/policy documents.
- Increased traffic of SOGS social media (Twitter and Facebook).
- Stronger collaboration between VPSS committees and commissioner projects.
- Reassessment of the SOGS Handbook and expansion of Graduate Orientation.
- Outreach to SGPS and Western Student Services.
- Outreach to Graduate Student Associations (In progress).

### Portfolio Alterations

#### **Orientation and Social Committee:**

SOGS Handbook: At January's Council, a motion to discontinue printing the Handbook was approved. The OSC intends to work closely with the SOGS Executive in order to design a targeted marking campaign for incoming graduate students.

SOGS Orientation: In line with the above, I am now working closely with Katie Merchant from SGPS. We have a meeting set up for the end of February to meet with all Grad Chairs to discuss Orientation. Moreover, Fall 2015 Orientation was the first time in many years SGPS and SOGS worked (informally) together. I intend to redesign this part of my portfolio to ensure that future VPSS' begin planning Orientation with SGPS as early as January/February. I have invited Katie to attend February's Council, as we are beginning to solicit feedback regarding what graduate students would like Orientation to be.

#### **Communications:**

Social Media: Since our VP External & Communications had to redesign our entire website this year, I have been actively running both to help out. Members might consider encouraging Council to hire a Communications Officer, so the External portfolio could devote itself to Advocacy and CFS. I also recently ran a social media content for Clara Hughes. Given the interest, I hope to have future contests to draw in more graduate student interest in SOGS and SOGS-promoted events.

Additional Resources: We have begun dialogue with Western Communication (Western App), Western Student Services, and SGPS in order to develop a more targeted communication plan for grad students.

#### **Mental Health/Wellness/GradLife**

Graduate Sub Committee for Mental Health: After we learned about Western's Student Mental Health and Wellness Committee, I joined and then struck, and am now chairing, a Graduate Sub Committee. Talks for Graduate Peer Support have begun; however, a number of graduate students, our VP External and Women's Concerns Commissioner, are currently working on a document that will be presented on behalf of the Sub Committee to the Western Committee. This portfolio will encompass the general state of Graduate Mental Health/Wellness in the effort to get Western to recognize it has a long way to go. The SOGS Executive has submitted a request for the relocation of SOGS to the International Graduate Affairs Building. We feel that this would be one step towards acknowledging the importance of Grad students.

Thesis Writers' Retreat/Thesis Writing Program: For a year and a half, I was in conversation with SGPS about creating a Thesis Retreat, something akin to the one Queen's has been running for years. I am very pleased to say that we had our first extremely successful three-day Retreat in November. From there, I asked SGPS to create a more informal version of this program. The pilot project is set to launch **March 1**. Please pass the following information along to your departments:

The Thesis Writers' Program is a pilot project dedicated to providing a comfortable and distraction-free space conducive for graduate student thesis writing. Inspired by the feedback received from graduate students during the initial launch of the Thesis Writers' Retreat in 2015, this program offers graduate students a chance to step away from the obligations and distractions of everyday life so that they can focus exclusively on dissertation writing for three hour blocks each week.

Along with the space and outlets for laptops, each session will provide coffee, tea, and fruit. These sessions will also be informally facilitated by graduate student volunteers. In order to ensure the future of this program, we encourage graduate students to contact [services@sogs.ca](mailto:services@sogs.ca) to find out how to get involved.

**Location:** The Chu Centre in the International and Graduate Affairs Building

**Dates:**

March 1 (1-4pm), March 11 (9am-12pm), March 14 (1-4pm), March 25 (9am-12pm),  
March 31 (9am-12pm)

We'll be sending out an email once the Writing Support Centre registration link goes live!

VPSS Portfolio to Date

**Health Plan Committee:** As per Council's recommendation in 2015, HPC has been working on developing a Flex Plan with Studentcare, to be implemented September 1, 2016. Please see HPC Chair's Report for further details. This committee has been extremely productive, which has allowed me to spend more time developing the Graduate Mental Health component of my portfolio.

**International Graduate Issues Committee:** I ensured that IGSIC presented the 2013 Survey Results to Council earlier this year. Based on this information, I have encouraged IGSIC to reach out to the International and Exchange Student Centre. We will be meeting with them in February in order to discuss better relations as well as hosting an Orientation targeted specifically to International Graduate Students. Moreover, I have also encouraged the committee to reassess its mandate. Since it is an Issues committee, and has been predominately a social committee in the last few years, I hope that IGSIC will consider splitting into two separate committees, one for socials and the other for advocacy. Given that the OSC and GSIC already function in this matter, it only makes sense to do so at the International level. Additionally, we have already hosted one successful Graduate Student Immigration seminar and we are hosting another one during Reading Week. The committee is also looking into hosting additional International Graduate student events that focus on addressing the concerns raised in the Survey.

**Orientation and Social Committee:** Please see the OSC Chair's Report. She has class tonight and therefore cannot be here, but please do not hesitate to contact her should you wish to propose an idea for an event.

Winter Projects

- Reach out to Graduate Student Department organizations to foster stronger community.
- The SOGS Executive intends to reassess Council and its proceedings.
- Continue to foster a stronger relationship between SOGS, SGPS, and Western Student Services.
- Ensure that my portfolio, along with my committees, have completed Transitional Manuals.

## **Committee Chair Report – Policy Committee**

Report to be presented orally

## **Committee Chair Report – Bylaws and Constitution Committee**

Dear Members,

It has been my pleasure to serve as the Bylaws and Constitution Committee (BCC) chairperson for the past year. During this time, we have continued to review the bylaws and constitution in order to optimize the running of the society, in fact we have a housekeeping motion in today's agenda.

Furthermore, in order to simplify the use of our governing documents, in association with the President and the Policy Committee, have unified our governing documents into a single document. Furthermore, while last year the index was completed for the bylaws, the index has been completed for all of the material currently hosted on our new website.

Lastly, in my capacity as BCC Chairperson, I also serve as the society's Deputy Chief Returning Officer (DCRO). As such, I will be assisting our society's Chief Returning Officer (Kevin Godbout) in this year's presidential election. Currently, the nomination period is open for all qualified members of the society, and the nomination forms are available at the SOGS office in the UCC during normal business hours.

Cheers,  
Martin Lefebvre

## **Committee Chair Report – Academic Committee**

This year the Academic Committee focused on two projects: Intersections: the Western Journal of Graduate Research; and the 2016 Western Research Forum.

### *Intersection: Western Journal of Graduate Research*

Participants from the 2015 Western Research Forum were invited to submit a full-length paper to include in the graduate student publication. We had 5 papers submitted. Each paper underwent double blind peer review. This process took place throughout the summer and early fall. The committee also sought submissions from the master's of fine arts program for cover art. The committee voted on submissions and chose a piece to be the cover of the journal. Some of our budget went to hiring a qualified copy editor to review a semi-finalized version of the journal, and some went to printing hard copies of the journal. The journal was placed around campus, including the Grad Club, SGPS, and the SOGS office. Next year we will look into making the journal paperless and possibly open access.

### *2016 Western Research Forum*

Planning for the 2016 Western Research Forum is well underway. We received plenty of submissions, thanks to the committee members and our VP Student Services Madison Bettel for their promotion efforts. A second round of promotion will begin again shortly, this time to promote the event in general, not a call for submissions. The VP Academic has coordinated double-blind peer-review of abstract submissions. This year the forum will feature oral and poster presentations. We have a great location booked, thanks to SGPS for helping us to book the IGAB atrium. Our keynote speaker is lined up, and the smaller detailed preparations are being planned as we speak. The remainder of our budget will be used for food, promotional posters, conference schedules, and supplies for the conference day (nametags, etc.). We also plan to reach out to Grad Cast to arrange an onsite podcast to be taped at the conference.

We have a great group of committed members with a wide range of skills. They have made putting together a graduate publication possible and have been integral to the review process and planning for the 2016 WRF.

## **Committee Chair Report – GSTA Awards Committee**

Report to be presented orally

## Committee Chair Report – GradCast

Hello SOGS members,

Gradcast has been building itself into a great team of energetic students showcasing what Western does in its offices and laboratories. In January of 2015, Gradcast moved from a weekly radio show to a biweekly one, and the committee responded by starting a weekly podcast. We are now close to the 50<sup>th</sup> episode of the series, featuring guests from a rich variety of disciplines. The committee is now 10 people strong, bigger than its ever been, and continues to look for new ways to grow.

Gradcast has been downloaded 5 and a half thousand times. Of the listenership, only 2/3rds come from Canada. We have listeners in the United States, United Kingdom, Bangladesh, Russia, and many other countries. Our most downloaded episodes discussed topics such as chakmagate, the new Canadian passport, Second World War refugees, medicine, Metis leader Louis Riel, and harm reduction in rave culture drug use.

Also important to mention is that we have had a changing of the guard. Alex Moszczynski stepped down as committee chair, and I Tristan Johnson took the role in September of 2015. Alex still remains as an active committee member, and still gives great advice to the group. We have also found a lot of interest in the committee, and new recruits from our very successful recruitment event last November.

Gradcasts future looks better than ever. With our larger team, we have plans to incorporate reporting university events, host panels with multiple students on interesting topics, and possibly even host our own Gradcast live event in the months to come. And of course if you haven't been on the show yet, email the show at [Gradcastradio@gmail.com](mailto:Gradcastradio@gmail.com) and consider booking a time to be on the show in the summer. Thank you all for your continued support.

## **Committee Chair Report – Equity Committee**

Report to be presented orally



## **Committee Chair Report – Graduate Student Issues Committee**

Report to be presented orally

## **Committee Chair Report – Bursaries & Subsidies Committee**

As is usual, the BSC reviewed hundreds of applications for funding over the past year. The Committee was able to award all applicants who applied for travel subsidies in both the summer and fall semesters, with a minimal amount of carryover for the winter term. Unfortunately, there was not enough money to cover all applications for the childcare subsidy. That said, individuals are welcome to apply more than once for the childcare subsidy and as the demand for this particular subsidy continues to grow, the committee will likely be redefining the criteria and/or place application limits on this bursary.

The committee is also in the process of revising the Travel Subsidy Application Form. The number of incomplete applications is growing, and the amount it takes office staff to follow up with applicants is becoming more burdensome. We hope to make the process easier for students all while ensuring that the proper documentation is in place.

The Committee has learned that some departments with travel funds are instructing their students to see if SOGS will award them travel monies first before they can apply for their department's pool of money. Given that many departments have cut their travel funding entirely, the Committee wants to ensure that students have applied to their departments first so that those who do not have any access to funding will have priority in regards to SOGS subsidies. This will be clarified on the website and on the revised Travel Applications.

## **Committee Chair Report – Finance Committee**

In March 2015 SOGS received a letter from the Property & Finance Committee of the Board of Governors expressing concern with the SOGS Budget, noting:

“Members of the Committee were pleased to see the progress that you and your colleagues have made with respect to resolving the deficit your organization faces as a result of decisions taken by previous executive teams and that you have been successful in getting agreement for a fee that is much closer to meeting the real costs of the important services you provide to your members. However, the Committee remains concerned that you are still greatly reliant on short-term sources of funds that are not sustainable.

The Board of Governors approved the SOGS fee for 2014-15 with the proviso that “the fee proposals in 2015 include a long-term, sustainable, balanced budget plan.” That proviso has not been met fully in the budget presented to the Property & Finance Committee today. The Committee determined that it would recommend to the Board that your fee be approved again for the coming year but asked that you be informed that the commitment to a long-term, sustainable, balanced budget plan is one that must be met next year.”

The Finance Committee has presented a balanced budget to Council for the 2016/17 budget year and is hopeful that the members of Western’s Property and Finance Committee will be satisfied with the progress we have made in reducing the Grad Club deficit and for our plan for sustainability as an organization. We will be presenting our concerns to the PFC about the Occupancy Costs, particularly given that the Grad Club is charged as a for-profit enterprise, which we are not. While we do not expect change to come from this meeting, we feel it is important to urge the PFC to reconsider how it classifies space on campus.

Many thanks to past members of the committee who have graduated and left the committee. We are always looking to recruit new members; please contact the VP Finance if you are interested in becoming involved.

## **Committee Chair Report – Grad Club Committee**

Over the past year members of the Grad Club Committee have worked hard to ensure that the Grad Club will continue to meet the expectations of its members for good food at a low cost, but also ensure that it remains a sustainable venture in the future.

Regrettably, the SOGS Executive has been unable to negotiate a lower occupancy rate with Administration, but we will continue to look for other options to support our operations, such as inviting Western Alumni to host events in the Grad Club and making improvements to the space in order to have more flexibility in terms of room usage.

Many of our members have graduated this year or are close to graduating and have left the committee to focus on their dissertation. We are continuing to recruit new members and welcome anyone who would like to get involved. You do not have to have food/beverage experience to become a committee member, and we would appreciate having input from anyone, regardless of your experience.

## **Committee Chair Report – Sustainability Committee**

Report to be presented orally

## Committee Chair Report – Health Plan Committee

Dear SOGS members,

It has been a busy and productive 2015 for the SOGS Health Plan Committee (HPC). We are committed to providing our graduate students with the best health insurance available at the lowest rate possible. We currently have 7 members on our team and all have been active in participation throughout the year. I, Richard Harris, took over as Chairperson of the HPC from Clayton Hamilton on April 30, 2015.

This past year, SOGS entered a tendering process to procure a new Extended Health and Dental Plan contract, which began September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2015. The details of this tendering process can be found in the SOGS HPC Majority Reports of April 23, 2015, and May 28, 2015 (<http://sogs.ca/index.php/documents/>). On May 28<sup>th</sup>, 2015, the SOGS Council awarded the Extended Health and Dental Plan contract to StudentCare (<https://www.ihaveaplan.ca/>) for an additional 2 years at a price of \$520.99 per student per year under the insurance provider Desjardins Insurance. We are currently in a fixed price, fully insured contract model from September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2015, to August 31<sup>st</sup>, 2017.

The HPC also decided to include an evaluation of a flexible plan option (flex plan), which could be implemented in the 2016 year. We reasoned that a flex plan would provide each individual student with the health coverage that suits their individual needs the best. We have met regularly with StudentCare to discuss the implementation of flex plan options. They presented us with drafted plan options that include “horizontal” and “vertical” models.

The horizontal model is as an option for students to choose: enhanced dental, enhanced vision, or enhanced practitioner services, at the same premium price by lowering coverage in all other areas. The vertical model would provide the option for students to choose from the standard health plan (unchanged from the current plan), or an enhanced plan option at a higher premium and additional coverage, or a reduced coverage option at a lower premium cost and lower coverage. There is an inherent risk in providing individual students with the option of choosing a health plan option that suits their immediate needs but may limit their resources available in the event of an emergency. We are currently finalizing details of each flex plan model and will be making a recommendation to the SOGS Council in the next available meeting.

The HPC is also interested in optimizing the current health plan to ensure that our money is well-spent. In essence, this process will increase our coverage in areas that are used most frequently, while other areas that are not used are reduced or removed from the plan. This will ensure that our money is spent only on the products and services that are being used by our students, thus reducing premiums and saving money in the long run. This is a long-term goal of the HPC and will likely be implemented in the next contract for the Extended Health and Dental Plan starting September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017.

In addition, we meet regularly to resolve students' issues with the health plan, such as opt-ins and opt-outs. The HPC welcomes feedback from our SOGS members and is working to maintain the good health of our students.

Be in good health!

Richard

Richard Harris, MSc  
SOGS Health Plan Committee Chairperson

## **Committee Chair Report – IGSi Committee**

Report to be presented orally

## **Committee Chair Report – Orientation & Social Committee**

For the larger changes under this committee, including the Handbook and Fall Orientation, please see the VP Student Services' Report.

In line with our committee's policy document, which was recently updated last semester, the OSC's goal is to plan and coordinate social events in order to provide opportunities for graduate students to enrich their student experience. The OSC also strives to help promote the Grad Club, which is why we aim to hold the majority of our events there.

**Board Game Night** (February: <https://www.facebook.com/events/182628365433340/>) Between May, 2015 and January, 2016, the OSC has held nine Board Game Nights, the majority having had at least 20 or more people in attendance. Board Game Night initially started at the beginning of 2015. Since then, it's done very well. The most successful Board Game Night to date was during Fall Orientation, when more than 70 students attended. Having a consistent event with a drink special is particularly important, as it's easy for grad students to drop in when their schedule allows. Two months ago, the OSC put more money towards this event by purchasing brand new games to add to our collection. We're always looking for more feedback, though. Want to suggest a game or have other feedback? Let us know!

### **Summer Events**

In the summer, on top of Board Game Nights, we had a fairly successful film screening of Blade Runner in June, and a sold out trip to Grand Bend in July. Now that the Handbook is no longer on the OSC's list of summer items, it can devote its full attention to organizing more summer events for those that are here, and devote its attention to planning Fall Orientation.

### **Fall Events**

On top of Orientation, we also sold tickets to the Homecoming Football game, and tickets to the London Knights opener. The former was not very successful, and while the latter mostly sold out, we ended up having to sell tickets to non-graduate students. Since our London Knights playoff event last year was successful, we plan to repeat this event again this year, depending on the standings.

We hosted two brand new events in October and November: Oktoberfest @ the Grad Club and BATL Axe Throwing off campus. The former was very successful, and the OSC is hoping to repeat the event next year. Although roughly 15 people attended BATL Axe and had a great time (see the Social FB page for the group photo), the OSC would like to plan events that allow for more graduate students to attend. In December, we repeated our Ugly Sweater Party at the Grad Club; however, while the event sold out and then some last year, it was not as successful this year. Timing is extremely important, and the OSC will ensure that this party is hosted earlier on next year. In January, we hosted a Welcome Back/New Year Party in coordination with the International and Graduate Student Issues Committee. Our intention is to collaborate further during Orientation, and at least twice a year to foster a stronger community. This month, we are hosting another Free Film Screening (<https://www.facebook.com/events/788667921279152/>) of Warm Bodies.

Interested in getting involved? Email me: [tsaiyin@uwo.ca](mailto:tsaiyin@uwo.ca).  
<https://www.facebook.com/Western.SOGS.Socials/>



## **Report from Aboriginal & Indigenous Commissioner**

Position currently vacant

## **Report from Accessibility Commissioner**

Position currently vacant

## **Report from Pride Commissioner**

Report to be delivered orally

## **Report from Women's Concerns Commissioner**

Report to be delivered orally

**Reports from SOGS Representatives on  
Board of Governor and Senators**

**APPENDIX A**  
**PROPOSED 2016-17 SOGS BUDGET**

SEE EMAIL ATTACHMENT.

1	Point of Order	Council (or a member thereof) is not following correct procedure	Raise placard, state "Point of Order!" and wait to be recognized, address the issue	Speaker rules; Council does not vote
2	Point of Privilege	I cannot participate at Council under these adverse conditions	Raise placard, state "Point of Privilege and wait to be recognized, address the issue	Speaker rules; Council does not vote
3	Object to a motion	I object to this motion under consideration, it is out of order	Raise placard, wait to be recognized, address the issue	Requires a vote by council, the vote passes with a 2/3 majority
4	Amend agenda	We have adopted the agenda, but we need to address a later issue now	Raise placard, wait to be recognized, suggest the change to the agenda order	Must be seconded; requires a vote by council, the vote passes with a 2/3 majority
5	Overturn Speaker	The Speaker's ruling on this matter is incorrect, I want to challenge the ruling	Raise placard, state "Speaker, I challenge your ruling" and address the issue	Must be seconded and can be debated; requires a majority vote
6	Amend a motion	This motion is acceptable, but it requires an adjustment	Raise placard, wait to be recognized, suggest the change to the motion	Must be seconded and can be debated; requires a majority vote
7	Refer a motion	Council should not vote on this motion, it requires further study by a committee	Raise placard, wait to be recognized, suggest Council refer the motion	Must be seconded and can be debated; requires a majority vote
8	Table a motion	There's another pressing matter to attend to, we should debate this motion later	Raise placard, wait to be recognized, suggest Council table the motion	Must be seconded and CANNOT be debated; requires a majority vote
9	Raise a motion	Council should resume debate on a tabled motion	Raise placard, wait to be recognized, suggest Council raise a tabled motion	Must be seconded and CANNOT be debated; requires a majority vote
10	Postpone debate	Council needs to postpone debate of this motion	Raise placard, wait to be recognized, suggest Council postpone current debate	Must be seconded and can be debated only on its timeframe; requires a majority vote
11	Reconsider a motion	Council must reconsider the motion debated earlier, it's important	Raise placard, wait to be recognized, suggest Council reconsider a motion	Must be seconded and can be debated (if the former motion was); requires a majority vote
12	End debate	We have exhausted debate, it is time to vote on this motion	Raise placard, state "Speaker, I call the question;" remember, this ENDS debate	Must be seconded; CANNOT be debated requires a 2/3 majority vote by council
13	Roll call vote	We should record Councillor votes in the minutes	Raise placard, wait to be recognized, suggest the roll call vote to Council	Speaker rules; Council does not vote
14	Call for recess	This has been a long meeting, we need a recess	Raise placard, wait to be recognized, suggest Council have a recess	Must be seconded and can be debated only on its timeframe; requires a majority vote
15	Call to adjourn	We have completed the agenda, it is time to end the meeting!	Raise placard, wait to be recognized, move to have Council adjourn	Must be seconded and CANNOT be debated; requires a majority vote

## Rules of Decorum/Debate

### Right of Council Members and Non-Council/Non-Society Members

- The Speaker has the right to deny a non-council/non-society member the right to speak. A non-society member is someone who is not a full or associate member of the Society. Only those that are full or associate members are given the right to attend and speak at any meeting of the Society according to the SOGS constitution.
- Robert's Rules state that a guest is not allowed to come to a Council meeting unless it is an open meeting, or unless they were invited to the Council to give input on an issue because that guest has special knowledge about the subject. In that case, after the guest has spoken and answered any questions, they would leave and would not be allowed to participate in debate.

### Rules:

- **Direct any questions/comments to the Speaker.**
- **A member can only speak twice during the presentation. The second question will be asked at the end of the queue.**
- **Comments must be relevant to the topic and be of a general nature.**
- **Only one person speaking at a time.**

### Removing an Offender from the Assembly Hall

- Anyone attending a meeting can be removed from the assembly hall. The Speaker has the power to remove a non-member at any time during a meeting, and this person has no right to appeal the Speaker's decision. (However, a member can make an appeal on behalf of the non-member.) An assembly vote is required to remove a member.
- If a person is asked to leave the assembly and refuses, the Speaker should take the steps necessary to see that order is enforced. The Speaker must carefully appraise the situation and act wisely. The Speaker can appoint a committee to escort the person to the door.
- Those escorting someone to the door must be careful how much force they use, because they can be liable for damages or be sued. If those appointed to escort the person to the door can't persuade the person to leave, they will call the police.

Though members have the right to debate, established parliamentary rules concerning the privileges of debate exist:

- A member must obtain the floor and be recognized by the presiding officer before beginning to speak. A member can't begin speaking until recognized by the Speaker, the presiding officer.
- The member who made the motion has the first right to speak to the motion. He/she does so by being acknowledged by the Speaker once the Speaker has placed the motion before the assembly for discussion.
- A member can speak twice to the motion on the same day, but he/she can take the second turn only after everyone who wishes to speak the first time has spoken. If debate on the motion is continued at the next meeting, which is held on another day, the member's right to debate is renewed.  
Debate must be relevant to the motion.
- Members must address all remarks to the Speaker; cross talk between members is not allowed.
- Members must be courteous and never attack peers or question the motives of other members. In controversial issues, the discussion should be focused on ideas, not on personalities. Members must not use inflammatory statements such as "it's a lie".
- When speaking to a motion, it is important for the member to first let the assembly know which side of the issue he/she is on. If in favour of the motion, the member states: "I speak for the motion" and gives the reasons why. If opposed, the member states: "I speak against the motion" and gives the reasons why. Doing so helps the Speaker alternate the debate.  
On controversial issues, the Speaker should alternate the debate between those speaking for and those speaking against the motion. After someone speaks for the motion, the Speaker asks, "Would someone like to speak against the motion?" and vice-versa.  
This practice ensures that all sides are represented, keeps tempers down, and prevents one side from dominating the discussion.
- A member can't read (or have the secretary read) from part of a manuscript or book as part of his or her debate without the permission of the assembly. However, the member can read short, relevant printed extracts in debate to make a point.



- During debate, a member can't talk against a previous action that is not pending, unless one of the motions to *rescind*, *reconsider*, or *amend something previously adopted* is pending; or unless the member concludes his/her remarks with one of these motions.
- During debate, member should take care not to disturb the assembly by whispering, talking, walking across the floor or causing other distractions.

#### **Limitations on Debate or "Call the Question"**

- Only the motion to *limit debate* can limit debate; and debate can be closed only by the motion *to call the question*. These motions need a second, are not debatable, and require 2/3 vote to adopt.

#### **To Amend a Motion**

- Purpose: To change the pending motion before it is acted upon; proposed amendments must be relevant to the main motion.
- Needs a second
- Amendable, but the secondary amendment must be relevant or related to the primary amendment.
- Debatable. Debate goes only to the amendment.
- Majority vote required to adopt. If amending a motion or document that takes a 2/3 vote to adopt, the proposed amendment takes only a majority vote.
- Can be reconsidered.
- **Result:** If adopted, the proposed change becomes part of the pending motion.



## PROXY FORM

(No more than two proxies can be held by any member)

I, \_\_\_\_\_, hereby proxy my vote for the February 12, 2015  
(Proxy Issuer)

Annual General Meeting of the Society of Graduate Students, at Western University

to \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_.  
(Proxy Holder) (Student No. of Proxy Holder)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature of Proxy Issuer)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Student No. of Proxy Issuer)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Department of Proxy Issuer)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Received

**Only Proxies Submitted On This Form Will Be  
Accepted**