



Agenda

November 1st, 2017 - 5:30pm
Dunning 12

The Society of Graduate and Professional Students recognizes the traditional and ancestral territories of the Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee Nations on whose lands we gather on today.



Adoption of the Agenda

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MOTION 11/01/17:1

BIRT SGPS Council adopt the Agenda for the October 17th, 2017 Council Meeting.



Main Discussion

JDUC Revitalization (See Appendix 1 – Briefing Note)

Adam Grotsky (President): Presented JDUC Briefing Presentation (as attached).

FAQ Session:

Leo: From my department – first, how long has the AMS been working on this? Will other graduate students be involved in this project, or more of the SGPS be involved in the MOU? And has the SGPS fully exhausted all other space locations that would be available for graduate-only spaces, outside of this student space?

Adam: The AMS has been exploring this since they received the 1.2 million as a residual from student fee collected by the ARC, because additional phases were not built. Last year was the first year they explored a feasibility study. That is one concept of the design – it was simply one way the building could look like. The AMS and SGPS would have a significant chance to have a say in what the JDUC looks like, both inside and outside. I think one important thing is the location – the JDUC is very central; one entrance-way to campus. We would not have access to LaSalle – I've talked to the Principal continuously, and the best I've been offered besides the JDUC is former houses on Albert street, which is simply not an option – it's too far off the beaten path and would set us backwards. The JDUC is our one space.

Tyler: It's a good point; what are our other options. For our opinion, one issues we face is voter engagement, recognizability of the brand itself. Moving to a location like LaSalle is a step backwards; this can help with our voter engagement and become a bigger part of graduate life as a whole. That's my opinion, and the Exec's opinion; this is a branding opportunity.



Agenda

November 1st, 2017 - 5:30pm

Dunning 12

Norman: Why do people not in the SGPS offices care about that – like those who use the SGPS services. If you need to use SGPS services; do you really care if the offices are centrally located.

Stefy: One thing we've been talking about is the Advisors – rebranding and thinking about how to share our services with the population of graduate and professional students – people still have trouble finding the offices. I understand the sentiment, but we can actually see a decline in services that have access to. I'd like to see students accessing those services go higher. That's my opinion, in terms of that service.

Adam: This is not about our office space; if the only value-add is SGPS Offices, I would not support this. This is more for other graduate students that offer bookable spaces, recreational spaces, study space, like with the library – but on a larger scale. Like a wing just for graduate students.

Tyler: Queen's Pub is a shared service; if part of the plan is to put a kitchen in the JDUC, which could serve up everything not just out of a microwave or deep-fryer.

Dylan: You talk about the hostility of the ARC. I'm wondering what the per student cost when it was being built and after it was built (fully funded). You also mentioned it went over budget. What mechanism would be in place for the JDUC to not go over budget, and if it did, what would we contribute to?

Adam: The University learned a great deal about the ARC failure. The Principal was fired on this basis. There's a contingency plan put in place and a number of projects to now predict and account for over-budgeting. The SGPS had a funny connection in that the agreement was with the AMS and University, with that "every effort would be made to collect the SGPS contribution"

Leo: \$147.95 was the contribution. I paid that in my first and second year.

Adam: Our fee would, in my mind, be probably half of that. We wouldn't go over \$100. Though that's not the discussion now.

Cory: Mostly one big question – do you know the cost of renting would be?

Adam: I don't have the answer to that question right now. Though rent for commercial groups would be high, but also high for student groups. I'll give you more details as this progresses. It would at some point become more cost effective.

Cory: Do you know who the contractors would be? What would their reputation be?

Adam: The University has a list of preferred companies who have done work in the past; selected through a traditional process.



Agenda

November 1st, 2017 - 5:30pm

Dunning 12

Jared: Both questions focus on the agreement that we are currently in. I want to understand the relationship we are in with the agreement. I also want to know if lawyers have spoken to this relationship.

Adam: We have not talked to our lawyer yet, though we can if need be. Our relationship with the AMS (Tri-Party with the AMS and University and SGPS) with the AMS have the authority to manage the JDUC, sitting on the Management Board, but the AMS and University and SGPS have a 1:1 vote relationship. The number is not in our favour, as the AMS and University have both approved. We need to actively be involved if we need to be.

David: Just to follow-up on the break-even. Do you have a rough monthly estimate on rent? Are we talking thousands or tens of thousands.

Adam: Right now we pay \$70,000 a year for the JDUC, factoring in the cost of space and as partners pay for shared cost on utilities. But there's no cost added onto the base for our space.

David: To follow-up, if we pay \$70,000, if we move into the renovated space, we wouldn't have to pay space.

Adam: No premium for space. Our per annual cost, given that we are adding AC and heat and other added cost, paying as a tenant would be.

David: The second question I have is charging students these fees would be through SOLUS. Could we selectively ask students to pay, if in a 1 year program vs. a 4 year PhD.

Adam: It would have to be a mandatory fee; the goal is a 2 year program. We could certainly explore the possibility of education students who are on practicum. There's a lot of ways students could argue for payment and longevity of the fee. I'd be more in favour of a mandatory, non-reviewable fee.

David: Could you give more history on the 2/3 majority fee?

Adam: The VP Finance last year was very right-winged, small government, and didn't want students to pay fees. Strictest student fee process in Ontario, if not Canada. There are fair reasons for this; there should be resounding support for a fee with a turn-out. The risk for this, with essential fees failing. The Walkhome fee failed.

Norman: Why start it when construction begins and not at start of usage.

Adam: We can explore the possibility of the SGPS paying before use begins. They do need funding for the project to happen. They likely wouldn't support the funds. I can look into this further.

Norman: I think this would make a big difference in the long-run.



Agenda

November 1st, 2017 - 5:30pm
Dunning 12

Lauren: If you wait 2-3 years would require interest. We are still responsible for a total of the tab. If the interest is greater.

Adam: That's an interesting idea, and I don't want to make assurances, but our portion is relatively small. To better encourage our members, given that undergraduate students don't have a 10 month program.

Leo: Generally mortgages only take on interest. SO our loans would not incur any costs. Because nothing has been determined and nothing has been determined, if we don't have all the details including the mOU, when will we have them. It's unfair for students to ask this if we don't know what we are going ahead with. Is it possible to withdraw support should we see the deal is in our current Tri-Partnership (like our current partnership). Can we guarantee space?

Adam: We've had our current space in the building. We're a current partner in a smaller building. We have the capacity to make those changes. In terms of your first question, the referendum would happen in the Winter referendum period, or a referendum with the AMS in mid-February. What I am hoping for with Council is the support to be involved in the MOU and business case, this would not commit us to anyone. We just want support to begin negotiations. The two things: (1) Do we support the project? And (2) What is our contribution.

Dylan: Fee structures for buildings in the past... while they are constructing the building, we could still pay a fee during construction and a fee when the building begins?

Adam: Great question. We can explore this. Other student governments have done incremental fees, which takes into account the construction period. That is an option. With the ARC, given how long construction was going on, same with the Nest at UBC. This time, the AMS is pursuing a standard fee, but those options would be available as part of the next stage.

David: Are we hoping to vote on these questions?

Adam: I've been at the table on the premise that we will be in support of this; I have 4 hours of meetings tomorrow. I'd ideally like some consensus that we can be a player at the table. This would not be supporting a student fee or a 2/3 majority. We would advance as a partner in the project.

Discussion:

Alexandru: I'm the Graduate Student Senator; I now focus on teaching and learning. At our Senate meeting, how much progress we've made on the student experience. My experience at RMC; it wasn't an ideal student experience. Yes – to the first question; but there's a significant caveat – we are the



Agenda

November 1st, 2017 - 5:30pm

Dunning 12

Junior partner. There will always be clubs focused on Undergraduate students. I think we should make our support contingent on having graduate-only space, with the space specific for funding that is equivalent to the amount of graduate-only space we receive. I'm worried about turn-out rather than majority (2/3) with only 10%, can't really be a binding decision. So, perhaps it would make more sense that we have 30% of graduate student body approving this decision – whatever this percentage turns to be. I would suggest to have more legitimacy. As for #3, what would sway students in your department to support – the length of construction; there will only be those with a 7-year PhD that would benefit.

Adam – It would be a 2 year project.

Alexandru – I've seen it successfully done at U of T. Predecessors paid the fee for them, and now they pay for the fee. We should have the fee equal the lifetime of the building, to spread it out across the generations.

Leo: Okay, yep, I'm the only one who has been to the nest. It's a great building, but I'm concerned. For the student fee, it's 2/3 because of our low voter turnout. Like with the Walkhome fee, they don't employ grad students, and they receive the University funding. Why are we paying for them if they're not willing to engage with graduate students. That's one of the issues that occurs in referenda. With the outside fee, I do support the JDUC being renovated. I was a student here when the \$1.2 million should go. An option like LaSalle – we can do it out of the JDUC and it only costs \$1M or \$2M, grad students are littered throughout this campus. We're doing more of our work on campus, so creating a new central location would not affect the brand. You could connect it in the SGS Orientation – I think that's the most important thing to way. That's what my department was saying. Let's make a graduate only space; that's what people are leaning to. The ARC is high-school focused, and the rest is undergraduate focused. In my department, people don't like going to Queen's. They like the research they have, but not the undergraduate students on campus.

Dylan: I brought this issue to my student Council; they overwhelmingly supported the renovation of the JDUC. I think the 2/3 majority is something we could redevelop, but should fit what other graduate student organizations are doing. The major point I got from my department is that we would want a graduate only space – a lounge exclusive to graduate students. Not just SGPS Offices. Able to have more than 10 people in there – like the underutilized space we currently have. That was the major point: graduate space that is more relaxed.

Cory: Speaking on behalf of the Faculty of Education – the general opinion is that because we are on West Campus. It's not something that we would not be interested in, because the majority of our population would not use it.



Agenda

November 1st, 2017 - 5:30pm

Dunning 12

Matt: We're having our monthly meeting tomorrow, so I haven't had the opportunity bring it up. One question is with regards to voting – I did my undergrad here, and voter turnout is larger than 6% in the AMS, as it is with the SGPS. My concern is if people aren't voting for something this big, they're giving people around them the power to make a decision. This is just my opinion, but the idea of a democracy is that we invite others to make decisions on your behalf. The second question is about long-term leasing options. If you put together an agreement for 15-20 years, structured based on inflation, and make that agreement and designate space, that was something I thought of and other people have suggestions on. Could that be answered.

Laura: I've talked a lot with my department and the general feeling is of extreme apathy going forward. It's their ethical duty for us to have better experience for future generations, but they want mock-ups, services that would be available, as much detail that would be available as appropriate now. They are concerned with making the space that is welcoming, equitable for all, and accessible. They are less concerned about offices (though security of documents is important), rather than making the space more welcoming. They'd like to be involved in the planning and mock-ups and as much information that is available.

Jared: I appreciate the comments that have been made about the space. I'm afraid something has been lost in the discussion. We have a Tri-Party agreement with the JDUC, and this is my assessment – we have a meeting next week with my department. In that agreement, we are equal parties. Either we hand over money or head into renter status, or we leave the space. That doesn't sound like a friendly thing to do in an equal partnership. I think they have put us in a tough situation, and if they are not reflective on that fact, then we should wonder why we want to maintain a relationship or partnership if this is how they are treating us. If they don't reflect on this, we should get our own space, so we are not constantly renegotiating with the AMS.

David: Similar to Jared, the idea of the 1/3 partnership, I would want to know more about what that looks like. In the JDUC, we are in partnership in "terrible offices", so if we are already in this 1/3 partnership, why have we not used this vote to get better offices. If we already don't have that much power on this Council, what does this look like moving forward? Is the AMS just not that smart in handing over \$\$\$. On paper is it 1/3, while the AMS is really getting more out of this. With Matt's comment, I think it's less so students turning over votes to us, rather than realize or care about what's going on. That speaks to issues with SGPS branding, and I think that shows in these voter turnouts.

Adam: Five things to respond to – to the voter turnout point. Jenny, Precious, and I had a great discussion about voter turnout earlier today. Looked at stats from the last 6 years as to how turn-out changes. An important point to make; turn-out was really bad this year, largely due to uncontested elections. There was no incentive to go out and vote. There was a Rector election last year, turnout was 25%. That demonstrates that when there is competition, we will see higher turn-out. We will be in the



Agenda

November 1st, 2017 - 5:30pm

Dunning 12

next month or two to incentivize voting, whether that is giving out free coffee – or a free drink at the grad club. When you couple that with pressing hard with the number of candidates involved, I do believe we will see a better turn-out. The debate of 2/3 is both the percentage of turnout not the threshold. The issue with the complexity of the JDUC, it takes difficulty for a student at large that sees a number on a referendum, it will unfortunately hurt us.

Why not a long-term lease agreement? It's a possibility. The difference is while we can do that, we wouldn't have the control that we would hope for. We end up with a space situation, not in ideal locations. In partnership, we design floorplans, pick out our space. I've been assured that we will have centralized space across a floor or wing, visible. It will improve our brand, not hurt us. The referendum would be next semester, so, Laura, we will definitely get more detailed mock-ups. They will see floorplans, there will be more information at their fingertips.

LaSalle is unfortunately not an option, and we wouldn't be able to go there. I think it would be a wasted opportunity to be in the newest building.

Why have we not sought out better office space – there is very little office space to be given out. There's nowhere currently that is available – the QUIC would allow us the space we need, but it's not a good idea to displace them. I would not blame the agreement on that. We could have a pretty loud voice in the partnership.

About the Tri-Party agreement, I really think the agreement is to our benefit, we pay much less for an equal involvement. The AMS is the managing partner – they have staff and employees to manage the JDUC, but we have deferred that to them willingly. We pay a small fraction to have, in theory, an equal say. Most things happen in consensus, however, a formal vote would not go in our favour if we vote against.

Tyler: I wanted to start out by saying, what was fuzzy in my mind, what are we asking of the SGPS and what is the timeline look like? What will be asked of you – like Adam said, the business plan and MOU are being brought up, which will provide us with vital answers. So that's going to happen. Adam will produce numbers. If we want to be a partner in this, how do we structure this, fee wise, contribution wise. We are essentially in a negotiation with the AMS about how much we're going to give on our part, submit that to the University, going through two different committees at the University, and then they decide if it's going to happen. This would occur before we give our vote. So the plan would have approval before we submit a student fee.

Adam: The referendum would occur before the final Board of Trustees meeting. We wouldn't vote in favor, we would have a contingency involved. The second thing I wanted to say is to give you reasoning why I personally I think it's a good idea; I think what you said Leo about graduate students not enjoying their time at Queen's is not something we should just swallow. I think all of us at the Exec-level are



Agenda

November 1st, 2017 - 5:30pm

Dunning 12

passionate about. While we don't want to mimic the undergraduate experience, we want unique character and be proud of where we went to school. I think this is a great step in that direction. 6.5M\$ is a lot of money. I would like to visit a school at Homecoming with a building like the Nest, so that's the emotional reasoning. More on the rational side of things, I had the same sentiment as Jared – the AMS is pushing us into something, they're pushing us into a corner. The more I've thought about this, the more I feel the school and AMS have given us an opportunity to take part in an expensive next step forward, at the fraction of the cost. Not to mention that our currently relationship will end in 2020, with an unequal relationship. We're going to be then asking the AMS to sign a lease with them for valuable space, but can we lock you into a 25 year lease – they won't look favourably on us. This is giving us a seat at the table for a fraction of the cost, to aid in controlling our fate in the JDUC. The JDUC will be the building on campus. As a student union with 20% of students on campus, that we are represented.

Leo: One other major issue is communication seems to be a major issue now. We're pretty divided society. I think the most important thing of our membership is that everyone has an undergraduate experience here, so we will likely ask more questions than an undergraduate student. I personally am in support of this, but communication needs to be a bit more clear, and that our stakeholders want to ask more questions. Have an at-large member sit in, ask questions, be critical – that could be something that is added. Invite them to the meetings to share their views. I understand why this needs to be done; the JDUC was the major issue 7 years ago, the ARC was a brand-new business, we were just deciding what to do. So, I think with the space, it would be amazing to have that opportunity, if it's going to be "the" building on campus. We kind of need to mold our graduate experience to that space, with a 25 year plan. I really think it is of value, but again, from my department, they are apathetic – the University would never leave them without space, I got a lot of questions, but I'm answering them with more questions.

Norman: I'm skeptical about the store-front aspect, with increasing services through foot traffic. I used to work with a real-estate building and moved away from foot traffic, because people now find services online. When you go in the Queen's Centre, it's a bunch of undergrads hanging out. I'm skeptical that there's no other options for graduate only space. We get more bang for our buck in getting creative about an older, cheaper space. Sometimes the aesthetic, you kind of feel you're going to a dentist in a new mall, it doesn't have the "our place" aesthetic.

Lauren: Skip.

David: Thanks for more details on the Tri-Party agreement. I realize there is a risk and un-tested relationship with David. We haven't had to vote, and which way will the University vote if the AMS and SGPS aren't aligned. So 50% of the cost is coming from the University, but in my mind the University makes money from students. In a way, if we didn't charge fees, I would imagine we would still pay for it in our tuition? But throw away our say if indirect.



Agenda

November 1st, 2017 - 5:30pm

Dunning 12

Stefy: I think responding to your questions, I think graduate student tuition is a bit complicated; but there's a weird twist that would make it more complicated. What is concerning, apparently graduate students are not enjoying Queen's – I've been talking to graduate students at Queen's, I've never spoken to anyone who has hated their experience. At one point is it dependent on space versus culture. Wherever we go, we'll have issues with culture. We're here paid to do research for an institution, and we always have a hard time to get to know people. We're in these silos. I think we need a graduate-student space, though I don't think we've ever said we won't have space. We always said we would have floorplans and talked about not necessarily just office spaces. I think people actually want to feel part of the student experience. There's too many things we are saying here, that undergraduate students are taking over the library and Grad club, but we're hoping to re-create space for graduate students only. I'm worried about this culture where we are disliking what we are doing, going into this space where we are worried about undergrads. We just moved into MacCorry basement. We were worried undergrads would hide in our lobby. Eventually undergraduate students will back off. Become a part of that space, rather than saying that undergraduate students are taking over. We need a culture change, rather than a space issue, now that we have a stake at a table. We just need support to have conversations at those tables. That's what we're asking for.

Adam: Thank you for continuing to engage in this. I'll respond to a few comments, because I want to hear from you. To Leo, you asked about the AMS providing updates. I'm happy to talk to any departments that want to hear from me – whatever you think is most effective. The rest of the Exec would be helpful. I don't think a student at large would be a good idea in business meetings. We couldn't provide updates before this meeting, but we will begin to make more updates with your approval tonight. Norman: new space versus old space; I've asked about new space lots of times. One of the first things I did to the Board of Trustees was about space. I was told that efforts had been made – there's not much space on campus right now. The long-term master plan; the Health and Wellness Center was already accounted for by the time we began our conversations. There is no more remaining space. The only other option is old housing units. The Principal has said that Massey Hall would be ideal – an entire unit just for graduate students; however, given other priorities, that space does not exist currently and the will is not there. However, what we do have going for us is that the graduate student experience is a key issue the Principal wants to focus on with our experience here. They recognize that things need to be done. A little on space (i.e. Reading Room), but if there's a chance we would get our own space. I don't know all the details, but David asked about building and funding. Essentially the way the University will share with use – the only funding the University gets is for academia – bums in seats. That's why we attempt to get donor support, and unfortunately a student fee is required. Perhaps there would be a situation where the University would develop the JDUC without the student fee. However, there are other avenues they are going down – building the Physics-plus building. I think it's reasonable to ask for half student fee, and donor support to reduce our fee overall. We can limit the length of our



Agenda

November 1st, 2017 - 5:30pm

Dunning 12

fee. The way the fee would be written, it would be until a contribution is satisfied – recognizing enrollment and future donations.

Laura: Two things, one thing I didn't mention – in my department, they felt very strongly that we should keep a 2/3 majority, to keep it consistent moving forward. The other issue I'm having difficulty, is swaying them to moving forward. We feel our space in Watson is our graduate home. To displace them, that would be an ethos shift about benefit. I've spoken to graduate students in other departments – I feel comfortable in my department's space, with little benefit to them personally. I think we need to work towards communicating openly and specific benefits to have the culture thrive.

Paulina: I just wanted to comment on what Stefy has said. For me, if I want a social space, I've been able to use the Grad club and have had a positive experience. It doesn't always feel like an exclusive grad space, because undergrads are going in and out of that space. I sometimes feel displaced – as a geographer – in the Grad club. I know I have my lab, and services are pretty accessible, and I've been to the SGPS offices – I haven't found that too hard to find, but it's not accessible for everyone. My overall would be positive, but I would like to be more represented, with the SGPS office space to be more open and accessible in location, so I do support this moving forward, and in talking to John – we would both support the redevelopment and student fee and would like to see this conversation moving forward.

Leo: Also to your point Stefy, one thing I strongly think about the experience side is that we have GSLAG – the opportunity we have as the Executive and elected representatives is to present the vision that comes with it. The selling to graduate students – I suggest we strike a committee, outside of the business case – to sell. These are core values for graduate students. Had I not gone to Queen's previously, there's some failings on the SGS and SGPS, with not as much support provided to an incoming first year. If we're going to build this new space, we should also be looking at how we should be presenting ourselves to the membership – this is a commitment now that graduate students should have the same experience as undergraduate students. We don't get these basic needs, you're on your own – the department, SGS may tell you something – but often it's not there. As a lobbying group, our graduate student society outside of the SGPS and that has to be a key part of the messaging. I would love to have this part of a newsletter – JDUC renovation update that comes out every month that goes to graduate student associations. The only reason my department is skeptical is because they are unaware. It's fair that with 2/3 majority, the marketing needs to be there – especially for how long the fee is going to be there for; we're making decisions for those who are not there yet.

Lauren: I think the issue that I have with the 2/3 majority is that students are not well informed. If all students are not well informed, the 2/3 majority will not take this into account. Other Universities do 50%, it's odd we have a 2/3 majority



Agenda

November 1st, 2017 - 5:30pm

Dunning 12

Adam: Based on the material I've been reading, the decision to move out of that fee, the way the Queen's student fee pulled out. The AMS President at the time, with the support of the Executive at the time, determined the fee ineligible.

Joanna: I think that if this is a decision for the SGPS, we need to provide opportunity to

David: Misinformed students. I would like to say in general, I think it's important to sit at this table. There's a lot of dialogue going on. More information would be useful going to our department.

Kara: I just wanted to express support with staying at the table. I'd like to express my support and that these issues will be re-addressed.

Leo: Building on when students aren't informed – I've engaged with 30 some people the effort has to be in educating. That's why I'm asking so many questions, is because I think people will be engaged.

Lauren: Perhaps well-informed was not the best choice in words. We've talked a lot about apathy within the graduate student community. People have a lot of apathy towards this issues; we're going to campaign to move this forwards.

Adam: I just have two comments – I think we've come to a consensus, which is to stay at this table. I think a better way to phrase it is to say that the fee is incredibly complex. We have the ability to debate the intricacies of the complexity of this issue and relay that to your bodies. The consequences are, at a following meeting, look more into simple majority vs. 2/3 majority. For the purpose of this meeting, if I can do a straw pull, to gauge support, and provide further.

Motion in principal to stay at the meetings: to be involved in the MOU, business meetings, just the framing of a vote for a referendum or not. To be actively involved for the next month or so.

Motion carries.



III. Adjournment

Adjournment

Motion 11/01/17:2

BIRT this meeting of SGPS Council be adjourned.



Agenda

November 1st, 2017 - 5:30pm
Dunning 12

Brad – Print Placecard

Motion carries.