

Memorandum of Agreement between the Graduate Student Association - University of Waterloo and the University of Waterloo

Introduction

The university recognizes the separately incorporated Graduate Student Association – University of Waterloo (GSA) as the representative of graduate students at the University of Waterloo (UW).

This agreement outlines the official working relationship between the GSA and UW in terms of communication and consultation, decision making and policy development. It does not speak to facilities, services or access to services provided to the GSA by the university for which there are agreements already in place¹. The Graduate Student Relations Committee and its subcommittee, the Graduate Student Support Advisory Committee, both of which include members of the senior administration and the GSA Executive, anchor the working relationship.

Graduate students, are represented on the Senate and Board of Governors, and their executive committees, and on the following Senate committees/councils: Finance, Long Range Planning, Honorary Degrees, Graduate & Research, Student Appeals. Graduate students (either GSA officers and/or graduate students recommended or appointed by the GSA), are also represented on other university-level committees, including: Graduate Student Relations, Graduate Student Support Advisory, Traffic & Parking (and its appeal committee), Alcohol Use & Education, Animal Care, Human Research Ethics, Joint Health & Safety, Student Services Advisory, University Tenure & Promotion.

Further, UW senior administration has confirmed the importance of the relationship between the university and the GSA through its commitment to consult with the GSA President on the appointment/reappointment of the Associate Provost, Graduate Studies.

Notwithstanding the formal processes identified above, the GSA, through its President, can and is encouraged to discuss matters at any time directly with the Associate Provost, Graduate Studies.

Embedded throughout this memorandum of agreement are links to various committees/councils (includes terms of reference and membership), and to a number of documents (regulations, guidelines, policies) which pertain to graduate students.

Graduate Student Relations Committee

Established by Policy 1, the Graduate Student Relations Committee provides for regular communication and consultation among the GSA and senior university officers. The committee is responsible for: developing and revising policies and guidelines concerning the terms and conditions of employment for graduate students and is consulted on policies that affect graduate students; informing, monitoring and coordinating efforts to implement the university's Sixth Decade Plan goals relating to student engagement; receiving, for information and comment, proposed changes in tuition and co-op fees; and

¹ The following agreements are held in the Secretariat: agreement and indenture between the GSA and the UW (i.e., agreement for the lease of the Schweitzer Farmhouse to the GSA and associated operating agreement); agreement between the GSA, GSS (Graduate Student Societies) and the university re: eliminating the 'strikeable' option for fees collected on behalf of the GSA and GSS; agreement to dispose of the proceeds from the demutualization of Mutual Life (Clarica) re: student health insurance plan.

reviewing and recommending to the Provost new incidental fees and changes to existing incidental fees assessed to graduate students (except for fees determined by the GSA, committees on which the GSA Executive officers sit, and those prescribed by contractual agreements between UW and the GSA). The committee meets monthly and is chaired jointly by the Associate Provost, Graduate Studies and the GSA President. While committee meetings are conducted in confidential session to allow its members the opportunity for frank discussion of sensitive matters, members of the committee are encouraged to maintain open communication with their respective councils/boards (i.e., GSA Board of Directors, Council and Executive; Deans' Council, Graduate Operations, Senate Graduate & Research Council) and to seek their endorsement on issues before they are put into action.

Graduate Student Support Advisory Committee

Also established by Policy 1, the Graduate Student Support Advisory Committee (see *Note at the bottom of Terms of Reference of Graduate Student Relations Committee) meets during the winter term each year to prepare a recommendation to the provost on increases in the TA rate and graduate scholarship and bursary funds, and the minimum funding level for doctoral students. It does this by considering various pieces of information such as tuition and incidental fees, shelter costs, graduate TA and bursary fund expenditures and graduate student income. The committee, chaired by the Associate Provost, Academic & Student Affairs, operates on a consensus basis.

Signed on: _____

Craig Sloss, President
Graduate Student Association --
University of Waterloo

David Johnston, President
University of Waterloo

David Pritchard , Vice-President,
Communications & Organizations
Graduate Student Association –
University of Waterloo

Alan George, Associate Provost, Graduate Studies
University of Waterloo

*Approved by the UW Board of Governors on April 7, 2009
Approved by the GSA Board of Directors on March 31, 2009*

April 8, 2009