



GRANT ALLOCATION COMMITTEE MINUTES

2014 – 2015

Date: July 24th 2014

Time: 6.09 pm

In Attendance:

JAMES HWANG (Chair)
NICHOLAS DIAZ (Arrival 6.35 pm)
CORY HODGSON (Arrival 6.35 pm)
ZHAOYI CHEN
ROGER CROUTZE
DONGWOO KIM (Proxy for TYMOTHY JADDOCK)
BO ZHANG (Proxy for ANDY WONG)

Excused Absence:

Others in Attendance:

JANE LEE (Senior Manager-Student Services at the Students' Union)
SIRINA HAMILTON
HAILEY MARKOWSKI
SACHITHA KUSALADHARMA

1. CALL TO ORDER:

The meeting was called to order by HWANG at 6.09 pm.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

*KIM moved to approve the agenda for July 24, 2014 as tabled.
The motion was seconded by CROUTZE.
Vote 5/0/0
CARRIED*

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

*HWANG moved to approve the minutes for July 10, 2014 as tabled.
The motion was seconded by CROUTZE.
Vote 4/0/1 (Abstention by KIM)
CARRIED*

4. CHAIR'S BUSINESS

Announcements

HWANG: Councillor Jaddock is the new member of the Grant Allocation Committee (GAC). Dongwoo Kim will be his proxy.

Council passed the first principles to amalgamate BFC (Budget and Finance Committee) and GAC. GAC will be named the Finance Committee. We will be adding their duties into our duties. However, it's not going to be too much extra work.

CROUTZE: Do we need to change our Standing Orders?

HWANG: Yes. That will come after passing the second reading.

5. OLD BUSINESS

(a) Access Fund Status Update

LEE: We have been working on 3 documents. Vice-president Hodgson had a lot of comments. I think those encapsulated the major points we wanted to hit on. We worked on those, and there have been pretty substantial changes. When vice-president Hodgson and I talked about this, we identified the essential items that we must have here right now. There is the Funding Agreement, the Terms of Reference, and the Guiding principles of the bursary program. The guiding principles of the bursary program are more of an internal policy. Let's go through the documents. Please let me know if you have any concerns.

Let's start with the Funding Agreement. He flagged a typo on the back end. I also need to confirm the amount of \$2.5 million.

CROUTZE: Is the \$2.5 million over 4 years?

LEE: Yes.

HAMILTON: That's how they do it. This is not a binding agreement. If the Students' Union (SU) wants to pull out, it can. It's just so that nobody will pull out in say three months after going through everything to set it up.

LEE: In the previous version of this document, it required the SU to transfer the money in advance. Now, it captures the fact that they would do the assessment first.

KIM: Is it expected to continue like this after 2018?

LEE: Yes, it is expected to continue until we decide otherwise. Because of the rolling average feature built on to the Access Fund, we don't know what the next year is going to be like. It could go up or down. Anyway, the expectation is that we would sign the agreement for another period of time after 2018.

HWANG: I'm a bit worried about the 1 year review period a bit.

LEE: We are setting it up in a way that we think would work. However, we would have to review it on an ongoing basis.

KIM: What will happen to the Access Fund reserve?

LEE: It's not specified exactly. If the amount we grant exceeds the amount we collected, we would be drawing from the reserve. Though there's a lifetime cap, there's no cap on the full amount we are giving each year.

CROUTZE: What does Beartracks say about the Access Fund?

HAMILTON: It's included in the SU dedicated fee.

LEE: It's broken down in the SU page.

CROUTZE: How many people opt-out?

MARKOWSKI: Very few. Around a 100 or so. Even fewer pick up the money.

KIM: How is the opt-out going to work?

LEE: Details are being worked on. Infolink will take on the processing. How we verify the information on who wants to opt-out is a bit hazy. But, the pick-ups will be done via infolink.

CROUTZE: Last time, Sirina and Hailey were talking about limiting the access of high cost students.

HAMILTON: It wasn't about limiting the access. But, the Access Fund was established to cater for the high need students. We would never turn a professional student away.

HAMILTON: If the University has the high cost programs, they should provide sufficient financial support.

CHEN: How can international students access the funds? International students have to show that they have a certain amount of money in the bank before getting the visa. Do they have to use all that money before applying for a bursary?

MARKOWSKI: We don't expect them to use all that money, but we look at those documents. We look at their plan.

HAMILTON: We expect all students to have a plan. We look at what went wrong with the plan.

LEE: Can we go ahead with the Funding Agreement barring the typo pointed out by vice-president Hodgson?

KIM moved upon the recommendation of the Grant Allocation Committee to approve the Funding Agreement as appended with the changes noted.

The motion was seconded by CHEN.

Vote 4/0/1 (Abstention by ZHANG)

CARRIED

HAMILTON: Let's move to the Terms of Reference. Access Fund used to have some flexibility around the GPA.

LEE: I suggest that GAC give consideration to an emergency bursary pot. Also, if all other criteria are met apart from the academic standing of an applicant, we should ensure that there is a way for those applications to come to us. We should have a special pot for those exceptional circumstances. There is no way around the University's requirement for a 2.0 GPA. This would not be a public bursary. It would be on referral.

HAMILTON: We can run it the way the GSA (Graduate Students'

Association) runs its emergency bursary.

The Terms of Reference have to go through the UASC (Undergraduate Awards and Scholarship Committee).

HODGSON: Instead of “satisfactory academic standing”, can we just give out the GPA of 2.0?

LEE: That’s the term they use.

DIAZ: It says “Annually funded by the Students’ Union Access Fund” under “Funded By”. Will the money be disbursed annually?

LEE: It’s just their phrase. The intention is to transfer at every assessment period.

KIM: As a student, it would be good to know the maximum you can get. Should we list it here?

LEE: This is the more general document.

HAMILTON: It’s good to maintain the Access Fund’s webpage. The Registrar’s Office (RO) can link to that.

CROUTZE: We are giving out \$2.5 million over 4 years. How sustainable is this?

LEE: It’s a rolling fee. If the demand went up, the fee for subsequent years would increase.

CROUTZE: What’s the maximum that you can charge? Would it go too high?

HAMILTON: As I remember, the original referendum question had it at \$5 per term in 1996. But, the fee is indexed to the tuition. That’s how we were able to increase it later on.

LEE: The way it is set up, I don’t want the Access Fund to be granted first, and the demand to go up and up forcing the fee to increase ever more. So, my recommendation was to go for a 50-50 award. Also, we can tell them what they can spend. So, it’s in our control.

HODGSON: Jumping back to the Funding Agreement, can you provide clarification on the annual budget being provided to SFS (Student Financial Support)?

LEE: it was my request to put them in. We tell them in advance what we anticipate in the upcoming year.

DIAZ: The acknowledgement statement talks about us as donors.

LEE: I think it’s a UASC template. I don’t know whether we can change it. We’ll try to change it.

DIAZ: It’s fine if we can’t change it.

HWANG moved upon the recommendation of the Grant Allocation Committee to approve the Proposed Bursary Description as appended with any changes noted.

The motion was seconded by HODGSON.

Vote 6/0/1 (Abstention by ZHANG)

CARRIED

LEE: Let’s move to the Guiding principles. It’s currently a work in progress.

We had flagged the Assets section. It's a bit different from what the Access Fund requested before.

HODGSON: I understand that it's a Canadian student loan guideline from which the Access Fund deviated previously. You can technically apply for money from the Access Fund and put that in a GIC. It's not okay to do that.

LEE: I'll follow up with this with Rachel.

The next flagged part is about the eligibility of first and second year students. This deviates from previous Access Fund policy.

HODGSON: I was a bit iffy about the wording. I think it's less rigorous.

Some of the comments I typed in are still there. Are those being looked at?

HAMILTON: We left your comments in there because we wanted to talk with Rachel.

LEE: The next flagged point is about the GPA requirements. You (Hodgson) have asked about what would happen in the last academic term.

HODGSON: In the Access Fund policy, there was room to make exceptions in those cases.

HAMILTON: In the last year, if a student hadn't reached the lifetime maximum, we would award above the yearly maximum. Regarding the GPA, it must be there to go through the UASC. But that doesn't mean the SU can't have its own side mechanism.

CROUTZE: There's a minimum GPA listed for graduate students. But, they don't have access to the Access Fund right?

LEE: Everyone applies to it. The most restrictive awards get awarded first.

HAMILTON: Basically, this document is for everything.

LEE: The next point to discuss is the appeals section. They need to figure out what is appealable, in what process, and what the make of that committee is. Fiona said they hope to capture all the exceptions so that the person making the decision can do so at their discretion. It's a little bit fuzzy right now. We don't know if they are going to continue having an appeals committee.

HAMILTON: When we talk about appeals, we mean occasions where the student disagrees with the decision. It's not about a change in circumstance. In such a case, the student can just reapply.

KIM: Would they be meeting 6 times each year?

LEE: We don't know yet.

In the previous appeals committee for supplementary bursaries, there was a graduate student representative. Will it be okay if a graduate student may be potentially involved in making decisions about the Access Fund? That was one thing we flagged. As mentioned before, the whole process is not finalized.

DIAZ: Would the applicant have a chance to mention accentuating circumstances?

HAMILTON: Yes. We want to get that information upfront. They have a section to write about it in the application.

LEE: Fiona's preference would be to not have students-at-large if they do go ahead on that route. If there's a graduate student from the GSA, they can refrain from voting.

KIM: What's happening to the interview process?

HAMILTON: We will do a pre-assessment. Those which are straightforward will be pushed through. The others will be asked to come for an interview. So, in essence, we will not be interviewing every applicant.

HODGSON: I would like to see 2 GAC reps or SU reps here. Especially if we are going for the 50-50 model, we should have more representation.

LEE: The problem with the students-at-large position was that we may be getting somebody who doesn't have the background about financial stuff or know the context.

HODGSON: If we use Nominating Committee, we can pick someone with the background and intent.

LEE: The other piece that was flagged was the opt-out process. We are still deciding on the logistics of that.

(b) Access Fund Summer Selection Committee

HWANG moved to appoint HODGSON and KIM (on behalf of JADDOCK) to the Access Fund Summer Selection Committee.

The motion was seconded by CROUTZE.

Vote 7/0/0

CARRIED

CROUTZE: Can proxies be part of the selection committees?

HWANG: Yes, especially long-term proxies.

HODGSON: I think that you can't appoint someone else to the selection committee once you are chosen to represent GAC. But Councillor Kim has been appointed as a proxy by GAC to sit on the selection committee. So, I think it is okay.

(c) Non-voting Permanent Membership

HWANG moved to amend the Grant Allocation Committee Standing Orders Section 7) to read as:

7) The Students' Union Senior Manager of Services, or their representative, and one (1) representative from the Office of the Dean of Students, shall be considered non-voting members of the committee.

The motion was seconded by CHEN.

Vote 7/0/0

CARRIED

6. NEW BUSINESS *None.*

7. NEXT MEETING *August 7, 2014 at 6 pm.*

8. ADJOURNMENT ***CROUTZE moved to adjourn the meeting.
The motion was seconded by CHEN.
Vote 7/0/0
CARRIED***

The meeting was adjourned by HWANG at 7.16 pm.