

York Graduate Students in Education (YGSE)

Meeting: Wednesday January 10th, 2024 at 11.30am via Zoom

ATTENDING:

Esther Martinez (Co-chair), Aurra Startup, Shayna Brissett-Foster, Marika Kunnas, Ismath Bari, Chloe Jones-Westgarth, Chunlei Liu, Mercedes Veselka, Emina Gladstone, Ryan Collis, Jenna D'Andrea, Rick Powless, Sonia Martin, Stella Kim, Jessica D'Andrea

Apologies: Sheetal Prasad, Lisa Smith

MINUTES OF MEETING

1. Call to Order - Thank you to Sonia Martin for taking the minutes today.
 2. Land Acknowledgement
 3. Roll Call.
 4. Vote on the agenda. Unable to do this as there was no quorum. Decolonization topic moved up the agenda (see point 10 of these minutes for summary of discussion)
 5. Approval of previous minutes from November 18, 2023 not completed due to lack of quorum.
 6. Chair's remarks
- **a) Grad Exec Meeting**
 - i) We will have fewer admissions offers for funding (students may need to source out their funding with other departments).
 - ii) Laura Crane and the associates and academic are working to try to ensure that there are enough TA ships for next year.
 - iii) Vidya raised the point that faculty could create GA ships where students could assist on faculty research.
 - The Dean shot that down citing budgeting difficulties
 - Students have been taking TA ships in other faculties - Natalia remarked that the academic socialization is not the same in other faculties; Kate also brought up that incoming students need to know about this upfront.
 - iv) Dean was not present to discuss the upcoming budget. He will present for the Grad Exec meeting on Jan 30th. If you have any concerns about the budget contact ygse@edu.yorku.ca.
 - v) The computer which stored all our proposals has allegedly been removed by IT → discussions surrounding consent from students about their proposals and where the proposals end up → further discussions will be made on Jan 30 at the Grad Exec meeting
 - Stella suggested that perhaps it's time to create a repository, gathered and

stored ethically, in the cloud.

- Sonia asked what the Grad Assembly is; Esther responded that the YGSE chairs are trying to understand this; not clear how it differs from Grad Exec other than it has more people. Mix of faculty members, perhaps from different departments.

- vi) Approval of Dissertation Proposal/Comprehensive Exam policy and procedures (see Appendix)
 - Updated documented in the Forms website
<https://www.yorku.ca/edu/students/graduate-students/graduate-forms/>
 - Includes clarifications on the Proposal and exam and the process of the defense

- vii) Modification to the Masters structure
 - A 1 year MEd course work option - makes it easier for students to graduate, for faculty to know who will be looking for a supervisor, would save money; effective way to streamline the program academically; could be a joining program with other faculties that could be attractive to incoming students.
 - A 2 year MA could replace the current MEd for MRP/Thesis routes.
 - Process to make this happen - requires modification from MEd to MA from Senate > propose the new MEd to Senate > Consultation with FGS> potentially 18 months to get this considered and accepted.
 - Stella Noted that some full-time, fully funded masters students also have full time jobs; need to consider funding/need, etc; maybe we need to consider funding and/or other supports for part-time students (special courses, workshop series, to help students through)
 - Ryan - how much are we doing this for income vs academics?
 - Ismath - should mention minimum number of courses to maintain funding; need more clarity
 - Ismath - concern about 1 year length of MEd coursework - maybe need to consider

7. Announcements

For all faculty Committee Reps (ie, Admissions, Hiring, etc) if you have not been contacted by the secretary of the committee, please let us know. Some positions haven't started yet due to application deadlines (ie, admissions will probably start in late January as applications are due January 15 for full time admission).

8. By-elections

One position – The UIC Position.

9. Reports from Officers

- a) Executive
- **i) Secretary**

Please submit the [Constitution Agreement Form](#) ASAP. Post meeting note. The Secretary

will be getting in touch with individuals where necessary

- **ii) Treasurer's Report**

- i) YUGSA disbursed their funds (\$1764.60)
- ii) Esther finally received reimbursement for the Faculty Meet & Greet

- **iii) Equity & Communications Coordinators**

- i) Had a sub-committee meeting at the end of November, good turn out and conversation on Indigenous relations and the Palestinian conflict. Key points arising:
 - How to including Indigenous ways of knowing/being (Is it possible? Is it YGSE responsibility?)
 - Concern about lack of talk/statement re Palestine
 - Collaboration with Indigenous groups on campus
 - Funding? Can we pay Indigenous people for their time.

Additional comments/feedback: Sonia noted that these are important points and should be considered when we have our conversation on decolonization.

- ii) Request exec to attend sub-committee meeting in January.
 - Aurra - re: co-chairs attending sub-committee meetings - consider roles/responsibilities and boundaries around roles, need a realistic conversation around this; responsibilities of YGSE - is it YGSE's role to release a statement? What does a statement do with no power behind it? Could fall into performativity. How are we fostering opportunities to build greater relationships with students as opposed to a statement people won't read. How do we go beyond a statement to cultivating relationships?
 - Ryan - people who are elected are responsible for making decisions; so people at subcommittees have the discussions/make decisions, and anything relevant to the general YGSE body can be brought to these meetings to discuss and vote on
 - Stella - Gabby and Vidya are doing important work around academic freedom, very relevant/pertinent to us as students; See a useful example shared here <https://wgsi.utoronto.ca/wgsi-statement-on-palestine/>; we all have a relationship to decolonizing work; we can move forward with decolonizing work already because of this relationship even while learning from others remains an important aspect of decolonizing work

- **iv) Community & Professional Development Coordinators**

- i) Myrtle has joined the committee
- ii) Budget allocation of \$1,500
- iii) An honorarium event in August (for YGSE members in lieu of an honorarium payment)
- iv) February: Demystifying grad program - will share info about it with students
- v) March: BIPOC event
- vi) in April conference prep for Congress and YGSE (may need 2 meetings)
- vii) Career advice in June
- viii) Supervisor v supervises - fun activity
- ix) Emotional support karaoke with Gabby and Vidya
- x) Decorate your research cupcake
 - Stella will be visiting classes once at the beginning of semester, so it could be helpful if the social committee can share info; what to tell students about how to hear more.

- Will go event by event, will share info as planned at least 2 weeks before (still working on this)
 - Chloe asked if she could start to share conference info with Stella to take to classes
 - xi) Email isba23@yorku.ca with questions or to join
- b) Associates
 - **i) Chief Returning Officer**
 - i) Will start thinking about dates for next election soon
 - ii) No-one has nominated for the Indigenous cohort rep
 - **ii) Urban Indigenous Cohort Representative**
Position vacant.
 - **iii) Graduate Conference Coordinators**
 - i) Topic for the conferences is Taboo - a broad topic that encourages diversity, progress is steadily continuing
 - ii) Call will be sent out this week using emails and posters, with many options (salon, art, talk)
 - iii) Please message if you are interested in joining the sub-committee (never too late to join, and even focusing on one task will be helpful. Email gradconf@edu.yorku.ca to join or ask questions
 - iv) Will be looking for reviewers, with information to follow
 - v) Conference will be hybrid, with in-person closing event/mocktail hour
 - vi) Next meeting will be with sub-committee members to discuss budget - funding letters have been drafted and looks like approximately \$5000; if anyone wants details about the budget or documents please get in touch
 - vii) Last Friday of the month will be sub-committee meeting
 - **iv) Journal Managing Editor**
 - i) Budget created with our Journal Collective committee
 - ii) Drafting budget proposal for Dean's Office
 - iii) CFP (Call for Proposals) for the Open Call issue is now closed and the review process will begin soon.
 - **v) Graduate Lounge/Kitchen Manager**
 - i) Will post notices about lockers and send an email in next week or so; post-meeting note: also shared with Lisa and circulated
 - ii) Will purchase a few more items for the lounge soon; adding missing items as we go
 - **vi) YUGSA Representatives**
 - i) Request to have a committee to review bylaws
 - ii) YUGSA hosted a community safety panel in context of Jane & Finch and what safety means to students; interest in doing more panels; Aurra hadn't received info about that panel but will try to find out more
 - iii) YUGSA requested a third party mediator but university has declined as it is not their process; Dec 28 was deadline for YUGSA to put forward their stance;

lawyers representing YUGSA say that they don't know what the breach was, so cannot write a statement, if they were to apologize it would add another layer of liability, but university won't state what the breach was. The university has cited President Regulation 4. YUGSA have requested a formal document from the university; past requests from the university (1. Retract statement, 2. 3. 4.) pose problems so YUGSA will not do them

- Copy of relevant (extensive) document shared by Ryan [here](#)

- **vii) CUPE 3903 Steward(s)**

- i) Strike mandate vote: 84% in favour of strike
- ii) Nothing has happened since; will wait and see if it helps with negotiations (Ryan's opinion is that it may not); need to see how York responds
- iii) For the moment, status quo

- **viii) MEd and PhD Representative**

- i) Will continue to reach out to MEd students to get their feedback
- ii) Stella will be going to classes at the beginning of the term - let us know things to share
- iii) Request to share the MEd rep's email with the PhD rep.

- **xi) Graduate Mentorship Program Reps.**

- i) Running well; collected forms from participants with glowing feedback
- ii) Meeting this afternoon to discuss how to continue

- **c) Committee Representatives**

- **i) Faculty Council Representatives**

- i) Dean says that we have no money, one suggestion is to increase number of international students; Ryan suggested that this is not good for international students and the government advises against this
- ii) CUPE TA-ship issues - Ryan is advocating
- iii) Students are supposed to receive a letter with link to collective agreement and other info; please check your offer letter - if the CUPE/collective agreement info

is

not included, Ryan can file a policy grievance.

- **ii) CFRAG Representative**

Post-meeting notes:

- i) The committee operates with a rotating chair of the committee. The outgoing chair commented that "sharing research/research outcomes is going to become very important in the future" and that it was something that they hoped would happen more frequently in the future
- ii) Suggestion: Within the central (Faculty) library area at Winters (?) to display or screen works by profs/York repository/YU-Write publications. Will keep an eye on any progress with this
- iii) There will be a Graduate Teaching Award next academic year, probably open from January 2025. It alternates with the Undergrad Teaching Award (this year). They don't always get many responses.
- iv) Planning a series of events through the year, with a number that might be useful

- for grad students. Details to follow and these will be planned to fit in around the YGSE conference schedule
- “Global”
- vi) Under AOB: Lecture in coordination with York International/Provost Office University in the 21st Century”, will be an in-person event on a Thursday in early March. More information to follow.
 - vii) Under AOB: Potential event for people attending AERA in April.
- **iii) Admissions Committee Representative**
 - i) Received email yesterday; first meeting on Monday at 11am on Zoom
 - **iv) Hiring (TSAC) Representative**
 - i) Committee members currently completing the Polaris equity training. We are not given access to the applications until training is complete. This should be by January 16th
 - **v) Tenure & Promotions Committee Representative**
 - i) Waiting for the next meeting to be scheduled
 - ii) Mostly confidential information
 - **vi) C & P Representative**
 - i) Most recent meeting was today (same date as this meeting)
 - ii) Discussion about adding parameters to the undergraduate application process
 - iii) Chloe indicated that faculty members need to update their profiles
 - iv) Had 3000 applications last year for the whole faculty, with 61 for PhD application (10 fewer than last year)
 - v) Email or WhatsApp Chloe with any issues that you want her to bring to C&P meetings
 - vi) Issues around race SOGI
 - **vii) Anti-Black Racism Committee Representative.**
 - i) Currently reviewing the committee mandate and adding additional roles such as the Jean Augustine Chair, adding voting members, etc and bringing these to the Faculty Council for a vote
 - ii) Moving forward will collaborate with Jean Augustine Chair for events instead of hosting independent events, more information to come
10. Any Other Business
- Only 10 people here right now; suggestion to discuss/review the points together
 - Ways to decolonize YGSE and expand the Indigenous Cohort Rep roles and responsibilities, see shared document [here](#)
 - Marika - re: the Land Acknowledgement Fund - last year the money was not accepted, so if we continue, we need to find a different organization
 - Sonia - maybe we need to rename the Land Acknowledgement fund so it does not get confused with Land Acknowledgement work
 - Rick - does the money have to go to an external org? Maybe money could be used toward involving the cohort more e.g. a speaking panel at the YGSE conference; a cost to engage Indigenous people at conferences etc. is offering tobacco pouches to show

respect; let's make this a positive solution

- Ryan - started that fund to move beyond lip service; like Rick's suggestion - could be a better plan for the budget line

- Marika - title suggestions: Indigenous events seed grant? / Indigenous seed grant (speakers, events, workshops...something along those lines)

- Sonia - suggestion to take turns doing Land Acknowledgement, opportunity to learn something new and reflect on relationships to land

- Stella - meet in person for one meeting - can think about shared connection to the land

- Marika - yes, rotating land acknowledgement, people could sign up; if we do a seed grant, then people apply for it - maybe that makes it more meaningful? Or something used for a different decolonial initiative each year

- Ryan - we've had so little interaction with the Indigenous cohort that a seed grant may be the same issue; anything we try to do as non-Indigenous people, here's what we think you need - could be problematic, but what do we do

- Marika - last year's Indigenous student bursary, some students did engage and about \$1000 sent out

- Rick - on a panel at the cohort within the next month, have taken cohort courses and paneling with people on the cohort; Rick is Haudenosaunee and has a relationship with the cohort; Dr. Susan Dion is supervisor; offer to approach the cohort and have

someone

step forward to support our bylaw changes - if we reach out, we can show them that we want them to be a part of this; we won't get everyone's support, but here to make a change and be part of the solution to correct these issues that aren't sitting well with the Indigenous community; we need cohort representation

Sonia - thank you Rick for seeing this as an opportunity and offering to reach out to the cohort; Part of the issue is that we need to focus on relationship building vs procedure - e.g. Roberts rules of order are problematic

Esther: For next meeting - vote on name of fund?

- Rick - let's keep the name for now because we do not have cohort input yet, but maybe will have cohort representation/input for next meeting; then they could participate in the new title for the fund

- Ryan - quorum - double edged sword, yes, quorum is limiting, but do we have the moral right to make decisions without enough people

Esther: NEXT MEETING talk about Land Acknowledgement Fund if we have cohort representation

Marika - brainstorming - workshops on building community; sponsor someone who is an expert on colonialism; decolonial book club

Rick - having a relationship with people on campus will benefit; my background is food sovereignty and security - at end of this month doing a 3 part Indigenous cooking workshop and having a feast - Rick teaching students how to source Indigenous food in an urban center e.g. seal meat; so there are many opportunities to find ways to utilize this fund - for Indigenous and non-Indigenous students to collaborate to decolonize the academy; York University does not have one Indigenous sign, for example, so many opportunities to get organizations together to promote Indigenous ways of knowing/ being/doing on this campus

- Marika - Description for the cohort rep could include brainstorming and sharing events that could be of interest to Indigenous and non-Indigenous students to build relationships; re protocols, YGSE should have a better idea of how to approach

- Ryan - Perhaps how the above should change should be informed by the involvement

- Stella - Volunteered to do the first land acknowledgement. Suggested we just start a list for people to volunteer and sign up, with resources and ideas added to the bottom for people to reference

- Marika - Observed that there are things we have to do because we are part of the University. For example, we need to do the land acknowledgement, we have to Robert's Rules in order to receive funding, so these ideas on what we can we do within the institution are important

- Ryan - We need to keep working on how we can ensure there is meaning to the work we do. Referenced how in other meetings elsewhere, groups are obliged to read the land acknowledgement and the human rights statement; over time these things can become meaningless, we need to think how to keep them fresh and imbued with intention

- Stella - Shared link to a resource. (From Stella: I think this might be a really good book for us to read because it almost directly talks about some of the problems we face operating within a colonial institution, but I'm biased! It's by la paperson, the pseudonym of Yang of Tuck & Yang): <https://manifold.umn.edu/projects/a-third-university-is-possible>

11. Meeting ended with no quorum.