Date: December 17th 2013  Time: 5.02 pm

In Attendance:
JESSICA NGUYEN (Chair)
JOSH LE
ABDULLAH HAMID
SAMANTHA LAM
TAIMUR MALIK

Excused Absence:

Others in Attendance:
SIRINA HAMILTON
HAILEY MARKOWSKI
SACHITHA KUSALADHARMA

1. CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order by NGUYEN at 5.02 pm.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA NGUYEN added “Appeals Committee” to the agenda.

   LE moved to approve the agenda for December 17, 2013 as amended.
   The motion was seconded by HAMID.
   Vote 5/0/0
   CARRIED

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES LE moved to approve the minutes for December 05, 2013 as tabled.

   The motion was seconded by MALIK.
   Vote 4/0/1 (Abstention by HAMID)
   CARRIED

4. ANNOUNCEMENTS None.
5. OLD BUSINESS

Access Fund: Updates on the future of the Access Fund

HAMILTON said that there were not many updates regarding the future of the Access Fund. The project manager responsible for the consolidation of financial aid had only started his duties on the previous Wednesday, and everyone was waiting till he caught up with the rest of the staff. She also said that Carl G. Amrhein was returning as the provost, and expressed hope that he was okay with the initiatives.

Access Fund: Medicine, Dentistry, and Law debt ceilings

LAM asked whether exceptions will be granted to certain students who had to endure unforeseen circumstances. HAMILTON replied that the Access Fund was very flexible in those regards. HAMID asked whether the conditions would be set on a yearly basis, and MARKOWSKI replied that it would be reviewed yearly. HAMILTON added that they would be looking at the total debt as opposed to the line-of-credit debt because student loan maximums differed from province to province.

LE asked about funding for students in the PharmD program. HAMILTON said that they could potentially include Pharmacy and PharmD in the professional student category. She further said that they treat market modifiers similar to a differential fee.

LAM asked how often reasonable debt limits would be reviewed, and whether there will be any discussion with the faculty officials regarding this. HAMILTON replied that it will be reviewed every year, and that there will be contact with the faculty.

LAM raised a point on debt due to students going on international electives. HAMILTON said that there could be a letter stating the reasons, and that it could be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

MARKOWSKI presented drafts of 2 different options for Standing Order wording amendments. The committee discussed which is most appropriate and chose the first option. The motion was made after further minor amendments to this.

MALIK moved to amend 51 (o) and 54 (i) of Standing Orders as follows.

51 (o)
Professional Student debt considerations: Students in professional programs will only have Line of Credit and/or Credit Card minimum payments included in the assessment of financial need if their overall debt load, Student Loan, Line of Credit, and Credit Card is considered to be within reasonable debt limits. Reasonable debt limits are to be set by the Financial Aid Advisors and will be reviewed yearly.
54 (i). Canadian or Permanent Resident students are required to apply for student loans and receive the maximum available to them up to the lowest provincial average. Students registered in Medicine, Dentistry and Law are required to receive the maximum student loans that are available to them.

The motion was seconded by HAMID.
Vote 5/0/0
CARRIED

Access Fund: Covering Academic Conferences

MARKOWSKI said that Academic Conferences would enrich a student’s experience. HAMILTON said that there should be a cap on the funding, and that there should be proof of attendance.

LAM asked what conferences were included in the term “Academic Conferences”. HAMILTON said that it should be for presenting your research, and if it was for a company, the company should sponsor it. HAMID asked about how the applications will be judged. HAMILTON replied that they will be judged similar to everything else.

HAMID said that Academic Conferences were to develop your own self, and not as part of the degree requirement. LE asked whether there still would be a financial need assessment. HAMILTON replied that there would be.

MALIK asked for how far the Access Fund will be pushed, and said that there may be less money for everything else if new stuff was added. HAMILTON said that there was a large amount of money available, and that there was a drop of applicants. She added that the Access Fund needed to be opened up for students more, and that more money needed to be given to students.

LE said that he was in favor of the initiative because it adds to the student’s experience, and also because there was money available to fund this. LAM pointed out that there should be ways to mitigate any abuse of this funding. HAMILTON said that they would ask for documents to prove the student’s attendance of the respective conference.
The committee decided on a suitable upper limit for the cost covered. Tentatively, a value of $1000 was decided as an upper limit. MARKOWSKI agreed to do the wording for the necessary Standing Order changes.

**Access Fund: International Students**

LE asked what the current situation regarding international students was. HAMILTON said that they had tightened up the documentation requirements for international students in line with what the International Center does. She added that they expected international students to plan their finances.

LE mentioned that all required the documentation may not be available. MARKOWSKI said that usually, the documents can be obtained. If not, they would be able to come and talk to the staff. HAMILTON said that international students apply to the Access Fund in disproportional numbers, and that they must be held to the same standards as Canadian students.

LE said that international students were not able to plan for the proposed tuition hike for international students, and asked whether that would be taken into account. HAMILTON replied that it would be. She added that international students can access all the money available to domestic students in addition to money from the International Center.

**Letter of Expectation RE: Golden Bears and Pandas Legacy Fund**

NGUYEN explained about the Golden Bears and Pandas Legacy fund, and its history. She said that it was originally intended to be a grant. However, it is now a reimbursement. She added that this had to be rectified, and what the process is had to be made clear. Therefore, two things were required to be done: 1) a letter of expectation, 2) changes in the Standing Orders. NGUYEN also said that there was a committee to administer applications for funding, and to recommend allocations to the Grant Allocation Committee. The members from the Department of Athletics who were in discussion had been on board with what the Students' Union is doing. LE explained to the committee on how the process was broken with regards to the Golden Bears and Pandas Legacy Fund, and the importance of a letter of expectation. The committee also discussed about the deadline for the funding recommendation, and approval. NGUYEN said that there needed to be the addition of a non-voting member. HAMID asked about the consequences if the submission was not done on time. NGUYEN replied that GAC can discuss with them, and that GAC wants to give away the money. LE said that if they didn’t apply by the date, they won’t be eligible for a grant. NGUYEN said that there will be a
meeting on this with members from the Department of Athletics the following Thursday, and that the final letter of expectation will be approved by GAC in the new year.

6. **NEW BUSINESS**

MARKOWSKI stated that 2 members were needed for the appeals committee on January 9/10, 2014. LE replied that he was available. It was decided that the other member should be selected from among LAU, LAM, and MALIK after checking their schedules.

7. **CLOSED SESSION**  

NIL

8. **NEXT MEETING**  


9. **ADJOURNMENT**  

HAMID moved to adjourn the meeting.  
The motion was seconded by MALIK.  
Vote 5/0/0  
CARRIED

Meeting adjourned by NGUYEN at 6.27 pm.