1. CALL TO ORDER:
The meeting was called to order by NGUYEN at 5.01 pm.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA
HODGSON moved to approve the agenda for January 09, 2014 as tabled.
The motion was seconded by MALIK.
Vote 6/0/0
CARRIED

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES
HAMID moved to approve the minutes for December 17, 2013 as tabled.
The motion was seconded by MALIK.
Vote 4/0/2 (Abstentions by HODGSON and HWANG)
CARRIED

4. NGUYEN introduced councilor HWANG to the Grant Allocation Committee
ANNOUNCEMENTS (GAC).

5. OLD BUSINESS Updates on the future of the Access Fund

HAMILTON mentioned that there were no new updates on the Access Fund.

Letter of Expectation RE: Golden Bears and Pandas Legacy Fund

NGUYEN explained the history behind the Golden Bears and Pandas Legacy Fund and the need for the letter of expectation.

NGUYEN: In December, we met with representatives from Athletics to see what they thought about the Standing Orders. Several points were brought up:

1) Whether the Students’ Union councilor should be from GAC or not. I changed it so that the person should be from GAC.
2) Whether students at large should be decided by the Nominating Committee. Nominating Committee does that.
3) Mistake on about the chair of the Golden Bears and Pandas Legacy Fund committee. It is clarified more now in (27)-f.
4) Mention about the terms of reference the committee would have to follow. Those terms of reference are the Standing Orders. The only thing that is missing is the criteria for the evaluation of funding applications.

So, what do you think should be in the criteria for evaluating applications? Right now I have listed (33)-a.

Is there anything else that you would like to see?

HAMID: Maybe some financial documents to see whether they are properly spending the money.

LE: One thing is about the quorum. A recommendation was that quorum required a Students’ Union council member or an executive. One year, the Vice-president Student-Life didn’t want to go to this. Therefore, the whole process crumbled. We should remove this restriction on quorum.

NGUYEN: The big I wanted to know was about the evaluation of applications.

HODGSON: Does the award take travelling into account?

LE: I think it is okay for Can West games.

There is a terms of reference which we didn’t sign. They have been using it for the past few years. A lot of it is okay. However, we don’t want it to be a reimbursement.

NGUYEN: The goal is that the next round of applications will be according to our rules.

Is there anything more to add to the letter which will be sent to them? They
already follow most of the process, but it hasn’t been written up.
HODGSON: They have a bunch of criteria outlined. Those criteria are good.
NGUYEN: Send me anymore feedback you might have tonight as we will be meeting the representatives from Athletics again tomorrow.

6. NEW BUSINESS

Review limits for financial need calculation for the SU Awards Program

Note: HODGSON abstained from the discussion regarding the SU awards program.

HAMILTON: According to 58) of GAC’s Standing Orders, the allowable living expenses was set to the Canada Student Loans limits plus 25%. For a single student living with their parents, this would amount to $632 per month. It is $1323 for a single student living away from home, $1640 for a single parent, $2548 for a married/common law student, and $694 per child if there are dependent children under the age of 18. We don’t want to go through as much detail as we do in the Access Fund. Actually, these numbers are in line with the actual values we obtain for the Access Fund. I’m wondering if you guys are willing to increase it to 33%. This is not a bursary, so we don’t want to be as restrictive. The 25% was set when the Access Fund was more restrictive in order to make it more in line with the Access Fund. Quite a few students have been cut off from the “financial need pool” due to this 25% limit. 33% would widen the pool.
NGUYEN: Is there any program for us to compare this number?
HAMILTON: A lot of the other programs don’t check financial need to the detail as we do.
NGUYEN: I’m okay with that. How many more students would have got in if the number had been 33%?
HAMILTON: I don’t have a number. Susan was the person who did the calculation.
Another thing is, we don’t look at student loans here. The question that came up was, are we going to cap it the same way as we do in the Access Fund? Also, the choice to go into debt will push a student out of financial need, although they are in debt. So, do we waive all the student loans? What should we do? For part-time earnings, they are not expected to work. If they do work, we are not going to exempt those earnings. We need your guidance on that.
MALIK: What if you can’t take certain loans?
MARKOWSKI: If you can’t take them, we are not going to penalize you on that.
MALIK: Can you count student loans as a resource?
HAMILTON: Yes, we count that in bursary funding.
LE: Have there been any instances of this causing any issue?
HAMILTON: Susan found 1 instance of this. The student loan pushed the
person over the limit.
NGUYEN: What are our options?
HAMILTON: The options are: a) not to consider student loans, and b) count student loans as a resource if you are eligible.
TAIMUR: So will you guys push students to go for student loans.
HAMILTON: No. We will put the amount (e.g. $10,880) as a resource. This will be the case even if you don’t have a student loan or get more than that. We must level the playing field.
LE: Do you take part-time earnings as a resource? That’s a bit backward.
HAMILTON: Yes. This can penalize students who are working part-time. However, you guys can change it.
NGUYEN: What is the best option for students?
HAMILTON: Zeroing out everything would disadvantage students the least. This isn’t a bursary program. However, we will consider any other resources.
LE: Does that include part-time earnings as well?
HAMILTON: Part-time earnings are different from student loans. You don’t go into debt.
LE: Can students work more so that they don’t go into debt? Is that a common scenario?
HAMILTON: It does happen.
NGUYEN: Do you guys agree? I think everyone is good.
HAMILTON: So, going forward, we will take student loans out. For this year’s applicants, we will ignore what has been mentioned about student loans. However, we will still consider parental contributions and scholarships. My next question is regarding exceptional circumstances. This year we had someone who had made a large loan payment, and that has pushed him/her into financial need. My intuition is not to pay those circumstances. So, where do we draw the line in for exceptional circumstances?
MALIK: This is under their control.
HAMILTON: Yes. We usually include events which are out of the student’s control as exceptional circumstances.
LAM: Has there been any letter of explanation? There’s a lot of context we don’t know.
MARKOWSKI: I don’t think there is any mechanism for that this year. The awards program has not been as extensive as the Access Fund.
NGUYEN: Can you still have a mechanism of explanation this year?
HAMILTON: No. That’s why we have brought it here. From next year onwards, we can.
LE: What did you do last year?
HAMILTON: I don’t think there was an option for that last year.
MALIK: Can you follow up with them?
MARKOWSKI: There are 71 students within the financial need pool. Only Susan is doing it.
MALIK: Do you check whether the numbers they are giving are true or not?
HAMILTON: No. We don’t do a thorough check on the financial need because this is not a bursary program.
MARKOWSKI: So, should we include all exceptional circumstances or none at all?
LE: We should assume the goodness of heart in spirit of the original referendum question. We can tighten it up next year. Because we have the money, we shouldn’t penalize the people who actually need it even though that some bad people may potentially get some money.
MALIK: Yes, we should help as much people as possible.

MARKOWSKI: Last meeting, you guys asked me some numbers for the Access Fund. For the first part of the term this year, we gave away $119,000. This number for last year was $78,000. For the second part of the term, we gave $68,000 this year, and the number for last year was $35,000.

7. CLOSED SESSION  NIL

8. NEXT MEETING  January 16, 2014 at 5 pm.

9. ADJOURNMENT  The meeting was adjourned by NGUYEN at 5.53 pm.