

**GEA Meeting Friday, September 16, 2016**  
**JHB 719, from 4:00-6:00pm**

- I. The President, Olivia Pellegrino, called the meeting to order.

Members in attendance:

Olivia Pellegrino	Dan Etigson
Stefan Krecsy	Robert Powell
Nicole Birch-Bayley	Angela Du
Kyle Kinaschuk	Tavleen Purewal
Emily Halliwell	Evangeline Holtz
Anastasiya Maryukova	Una Creedon-Carey
Clara Chang	Jenna McKellips
Joel Faber	Julia Mattison

- II. Olivia proposed a motion to approve the agenda, which was seconded by Stefan.

- III. Olivia proposed a motion to approve the minutes from April 6 2016, which was seconded by Kyle

- IV. General Announcements

A) Announcement re: Fellowship Workshop for upcoming SSHRC/OGS applications, which will be hosted by the GEA on September 23, 2016 in room JHB 719 from 2:00pm to 4:00pm

B) Announcement re: Pub Night at the Duke of York immediately after the meeting

- V. Reports

President's Report (Olivia Pellegrino)

Although I feel as if I've been saying it unremittingly for the past week or so, I'd like to begin by saying welcome just once more. Welcome to all of our new students in the MA and PhD cohorts and welcome *back* to all of our continuing students. There are many familiar and several not-so-familiar faces here today and I'm very much looking forward to working with all of you this year in my capacity as President.

I also feel it's necessary to issue some assorted words of thanks. First of all, to each of the volunteers who dedicated their time and energy to make Orientation such a huge success; those of you who helped set up or clean up, those of you who attended the drop-in reception to greet our new students, and all the reading group leaders who had to listen to my painfully awkward welcome speech twice. We couldn't have put together such a warm welcome for our new students without you. So thank you, from me, and from Marguerite, who has asked me to say thank you on her behalf. That, of course, works both ways, and I know I speak for the entire executive committee when I say that

Marguerite was *the* driving force behind Orientation. On the same note, I have to take a moment to especially thank this year's amazing VP, Stefan, who worked tirelessly to make not only Orientation a success, but has also put together this year's Sibling Program for the substantially sized incoming cohort. And, somehow, he still has the time to write the best emails I've ever seen cross my inbox.

Finally, a tremendous thanks to Katherine Shwetz and Joel Faber who, along with the faculty members on the Student-Staff Relations Committee, put together a hugely successful Student-Faculty Softball Game. It was seriously a *homerun* and I am grateful for their dedication to kicking off our year with such an amazing event. The attendance was great, the weather was great, the Greek donuts that Amy Cote brought were amazing. Thank you Amy. And thank you to everyone, student and faculty, who attended. So, I guess that's what it's like to win an Oscar.

The remainder of what I have to say will mostly be a recapitulation of what I outlined in my welcome letter and at Orientation for incoming students. I want to take a few minutes to sketch out what the GEA has planned for the year, what my goals and *our*, as an executive are.

One of our primary goals is to continue building strong and positive relations between students and faculty members. Each year, two graduate student representatives sit on the Student-Faculty Relations Committee. This year the positions will be filled by our Secretary, Kyle Kinashuk, and our Treasurer, Nicole Birch-Bayley, who will be heading our efforts to accomplish this first goal and will, I'm sure, have much to tell us throughout the year. One thing we learned from last year's Staff-Student Relations Committee is that it is important to strategize which events we plan to invite faculty to. Personally, my goal is to see higher faculty attendance at our Graduate Student Conference, taking place at the end of April this year. We are open to suggestions about which events you feel are most important and other strategies for faculty engagement. After our elections, we'll be having an open discussion forum, so if you have any ideas, please share!

Another of our goals is to continue a sustained discussion on health and wellness issues that effect graduate students. Last year, Nicole and the executive began an important initiative to bring health, wellness, and equity issues to the fore and I am happy to say that we will be continuing that work this year. We will be making a resource document put together by last year's exec available on the GEA website in the coming weeks and today we will be implementing the new position of equity representative at election time. We have also decided to re-evaluate the format of the health and wellness workshop as it was hosted last year and we've rejigged it so that this year, the workshop will instead take the shape of a symposium. We are currently putting together a Call for Speakers/Papers that will, hopefully, circulate early next week. I'm pleased to announce that the Department administration has thus far demonstrated their support for this idea and will be working with us to make this event happen. Topics on our CFP will include: coping with and talking about imposter syndrome, emotional labour, teaching difficult texts, and physical health and wellness.

This is also a good opportunity for me to mention that Karma Yoga classes are happening again this year, beginning next Thursday and happening weekly in this room from 4:00-5:00. The classes will be taught by PhD 3 Christina Turner and DGS Lynne Magnusson.

Finally, some of our secondary goals for this year include taking care of maintenance and housekeeping items. This involves certain tasks that we've already begun working on, for example: updating the Reading Group page on the GEA website, maintaining and growing the student profile directory, and working with the department administration to assess the use of study space in the JHB in order to ensure that our current system is best serving the graduate students working here. We will also be testing out a month-at-a-glance newsletter and following up with the Department on the Comps survey that was completed and presented at last year's spring GEC meeting, thanks to last year's incredible exec.

I believe I've said all of what I wanted to say, so I will end by saying thank you once more, because that seems to be the running theme of this report. Last year's executive, Nicole, Veronica, Joel, and Katherine, worked very hard to advocate for student interest in the department and had a great many achievements. We look forward to continuing their work and we're all, though I think I am myself especially, very thankful to have Nicole on board with us again!

#### Vice-President's Report (Stefan Krecsy)

So, it might go without saying that the primary focus of my work over the summer was helping Marguerite organize orientation, as well as the sibling program. I think I can characterize both as something of a success. With these two events over with, I'm in the process of turning my attention (after a bit of a off-week) towards two other aspects, namely the Carrel Census and the Squash league.

Carrel Census.

The carrel census has been, more or less, completed. Next Monday, I'll be going around and cross referencing the carrels that are being used with the census to see how many of them are being used but have not otherwise been identified as in use on the census. Afterwards, I'll be sending a final e-mail highlighting the carrels which I plan on cleaning to give one final chance for individuals to claim their items.

GEA Squash league.

Also, I'll be sending out an e-mail regarding the squash league next week. I'm still thinking about the logistics of this, however, I have two broken squash racquets that I might consider repairing in order to ensure some community rackets, but I'm going to see if the demand requires

## Kitchen and the Fridge Issues

This is just a minor point, Olivia and I cleaned the kitchen and the fridge. I'm hopeful that we won't have to do this on a continual basis, and am eager to hear any suggestions on how we might address (any potential) mess in the kitchen.

## Treasurer's Report (Nicole Birch-Bayley)

First of all, thank you to Katherine Shwetz for getting the budget on track during a strike year. She did an amazing job as treasurer, by somehow managing to cut expenses here and there without (at least as far as I can see) making anyone too upset. Ultimately, Katherine's objective was to make sure each new executive had some money in the bank account to start the New Year, including some funds for Orientation.

We are trying to take a cautious approach to this fiscal year as well, making sure we aren't purchasing things unnecessarily but also making it known to students that we plan to invest some of our funding in important student initiatives, for example, equipment for the karma yoga classes.

Budget for this year is ON TRACK: head grant has not arrived (this is something the GSU reps will pick up and requires their attendance at the GSU meetings)  
Current balance: \$900 range, as anticipated after the Orientation events (and we actually went under budget for both because we tried a different approach to the Sibling Meet and Greet).

Re-structuring reading group funding – I will send out an email indicating that you need to REQUEST funding, it is not a given anymore because we simply have too many reading groups and not enough funds to pay for snacks. But we encourage you to come to us to request funding for special events.

Also, unless you run expenses by the GEA, there is no guarantee that you will be reimbursed for your expenses. I think this is a reasonable guideline for the year moving forward. I would also ask that unless you have stipulating reasons, I would like to now implement a rule that requires students to submit a receipt no later than TWO WEEKS after an event. It was pretty crazy how many receipts kept trickling in throughout the summer for expenses student forget to claim. We have a pretty sophisticated budgeting system thanks to Katherine that allows us to keep track of expenses based on cheques not yet cashed and our *actual* balance but otherwise we can't possibly keep track of expenses NEVER claimed that come in months later. So I think two weeks is a reasonable expectation. Again, like the reading group funding guidelines, I will send out an email in the coming week outlining how this will work.

I'm looking forward to working as treasurer this year and making sure that all your funding dreams are made possible this year, whether it be social committee or GEA exec; the caveat is that funding dreams, in grad school, are always limited, but I think we can always be creative while efficient with the funding we are allotted for this course union.

Secretary's Report (Kyle Kinaschuk)

I would like to begin by way of thanking Joel Faber for his dedication & work in his position as secretary during the previous two academic years. Today, my report is rather brief. As the secretary of the GEA, my responsibility is to maintain the GEA-listserv, update the events calendar, record meeting minutes, circulate the agenda, and serve on the GEC and the staff-student relations committees. During the past few weeks, I have updated the events calendar, and I am in the process of preparing to update the GEA directory, so please do expect an e-mail on this front by the end of early October re: the directory. I'm happy, of course, to open up a dialogue about the form and shape that this directory might take. If you have any questions concerning the GEA listserv, the directory, and so on, I invite you to ask a question now, or, alternatively, to write to me via e-mail.

MA Report (Anastasiya Maryukova)

The MA was a good experience, and I look forward to another great year.

PhD1 Report (Olivia Pellegrino)

The cohort has successfully finished writing the comprehensive exams.

VI. New Business

A) Elections:

MA Representative: Anastasiya Maryukova & Jenna McKellips

MA Creative Writing Representative: Open

PhD-1 Representatives: Robert Powell & Julia Mattison

PhD-2 Representative: Rohan Ghatage

PhD-3 Representative: Evangeline Holtz

ABD Representative: Open

Equity Representatives: Clara Chang & Tavleen Purewal

Graduate English Council Representatives: Scott Herder, Angela Du, Joel Faber, Clara Chang, Robert Powell, & Evangeline Holtz

English Department General Meeting Representatives: Angela Du, Joel Faber, Clara Chang, Robert Powell, & Evangeline Holtz

Program and Planning Committees: Olivia Pellegrino & Stefan Krecsy

Student-Staff Relations Committee (SSRC): Kyle Kinaschuk & Nicole Birch-Bayley

Graduate Students' Union Council Representatives: Daniel Etigson & Jenna McKellips

Social Committee: Anastasiya Maryukova (chair), Robert Powell, & Emily Halliwell

Welcome Committee: Stefan Krecsy (chair), Angela Du, Anastasiya Maryukova,

Conference Committee: Angela Du, Rohan Ghatage, & Kyle Kinaschuk

CUPE 3902 Stewards: Emily Halliwell, Cristina D'Amico, & Jordan Howie

ACCUTE Representative: Dan Etigson

International Student Representative: Una Creedon-Carey

GEA Webmaster: Joel Faber

## VII. Open Forum Discussion of the GEA 2016-2017 Calendar

Comment I: I like the focus on syncing reading groups/subfields for coffee hours, because it more concretely draws the reading groups into the GEA. By linking coffee hours with specific fields, we open up chances for networking, and mitigate the fact that many of us are feeling busy, esp. for first year students, as these coffee hours are brief and offer the chance to meet the people in one's field.

Comment II: Students on the student-faculty relations committee have to come up with a list of events for faculty members to prioritize

Comment III: Faculty have the same perspective as graduate students do re: attendance of events, because there are certain events that faculty want graduate students to attend, yet these events are poorly attended by graduate students, so there should be a parallel relationship (reciprocity) between faculty and students on the issue. It is important to faculty for graduate students to attend events such as job talks. Job talks offer a professional advantage (who gets chosen), and it gives students a sense of what a hiring committee is looking for in a candidate.

Comment IV: There is a discussion of shortening the research roundtable to a smaller, less intensive, event that discourages students from dropping in. In other words, the duration of the symposium is a bit too long, so much so the room isn't full.

Comment V: Kyle and Nicole are happy to answer any questions concerning the staff-student relations committee.

VIII. Adjournment

Olivia motioned to adjourn the meeting, which is seconded by Joel