



# GSS Caucus Handbook

This handbook was prepared by the GSS as a helpful informational tool for  
Caucuses; in the case of any discrepancies, the Constitution, By-Laws,  
Regulations, Procedures, Terms of Reference and any other governing  
documents of the GSS take precedence.

Assembled October 2011

Revised Spring 2014, Fall 2016 & Fall 2017

Contact the GSS Director of Internal Relations at [internal@sfugradsociety.ca](mailto:internal@sfugradsociety.ca)

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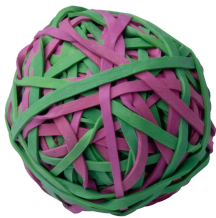
# Chapter 1

## The Graduate Student Society: A Caucus User Manual

Have you ever wondered about the relationship between your Caucus and the Graduate Student Society (GSS)? Do you have a sneaking suspicion that there is more going on at the GSS than you know about? Are you looking for contact information and tips on what to do as a Caucus (and how to do it)? Are you feeling solid about all of the above but seeking something that will help you turnover to a new Caucus executive?

# You have come to the right place!

**Welcome.** This document is intended to be a resource for you and your Caucus. It is a “living” document – so if you think of something that you think should be in here, please contact the GSS Director of Internal Relations (DIR) at [internal@sfugradsociety.ca](mailto:internal@sfugradsociety.ca)



### GSS and Departmental Caucuses: Working Together Since 2007

Ever since the GSS has existed as a separate entity from the Simon Fraser Student Society (SFSS) (and, indeed, even before), we have depended on the hard work of departmental Caucuses and have worked closely with them. As the GSS continues to grow and mature as an organization, we look forward to increased collaboration with Caucuses. So, how are we currently working together?



## COUNCIL

The central contact between the GSS and the Caucuses happens at the level of the GSS Council.

- Council is a central decision making body of the GSS. Council is made up of a representative from each Caucus (with larger Caucuses filling additional seats). Elected GSS Directors, GSS Advocate, the GSS Executive Director, Secretary, Speaker and up to five representatives from other groups on campus (such as the TSSU), although they are all non-voting members.
- Your Caucus representative on Council is an essential point of contact for the GSS. All departments are entitled to one GSS Council representative as well as alternates. Alternates attend Council meetings when the rep. is unable to attend. Representatives and alternates must be elected/appointed by the departmental Caucus and the minutes from the meeting at which they were elected should be submitted electronically through Formstack (<https://sfu-gss.formstack.com/forms/minutes>). Council reps./alternates are entitled to receive a stipend for the Council meetings that they attend at which they hold the voting seat (i.e., if a rep. and an alternate attend together, only the rep. will be eligible for the stipend).
- Council representatives (or their alternates) are expected to attend monthly Council meetings. If your representative *and* alternate are unable to attend a Council meeting, they must send regrets prior to the meeting so that their excuse can be approved. The excuse is sent by replying to the RSVP form in the Council email, stating that you cannot make it. **Three** (3) consecutive missed Council meetings without approved excuses will result in your Caucuses' seat becoming vacated and you will need to elect a new representative by vote at your next Caucus meeting. This not intended to be punitive, but rather to ensure that communication between GSS and Caucuses is occurring on a regular basis through Council meetings.
- Council agendas and packages are always circulated before Council meetings, usually a week beforehand. Caucus reps. **MUST** review the agenda, appendices and any other items circulated with the Council agenda before attending the meeting. This preparation accomplishes two goals:
  1. It ensures that all members of Council are on the same page, which allows meetings to be conducted efficiently; and,
  2. It gives reps. an opportunity to discuss decisions and issues with their Caucus before voting on them at Council.
- This is incredibly important given that Caucus reps. on Council are expected to represent not only their own perspective, but also the wishes of their Caucus. Particularly if there are potentially controversial matters before Council, proper consultation is essential. Council meetings are also opportunities for Caucus reps to update the GSS (and other Caucuses) on events, issues, and opportunities that their Caucus is facing.
- Councilors are encouraged to get involved with other GSS committees in order to gain a deeper sense of the work that occurs at the Society!

**Although the Caucus reps. are the voting members for each Caucus, all Council meetings are open for any graduate student to attend!**

### **Director of Internal Relations (DIR)**



The second significant liaison between Caucuses and the GSS is the Director of Internal Relations (DIR) of the GSS.

- The DIR is responsible for “Caucus Relations” – meaning that the DIR is your primary contact at the GSS (aside from your Council representative). You can find current Directors at <http://sfugradsociety.ca/about/executive-committee/>. Please feel free to contact the DIR with any questions that may arise for you in the reading of this document or throughout your term as a Caucus executive.
- The DIR is responsible for planning Caucus orientation and ongoing training events. The DIR is interested in providing increased opportunities for Caucuses to gather together for training purposes, but also to meet socially in order to collaborate, share ideas, and celebrate the important work of the departmental Caucuses. If you have ideas about ways to go about offering any of the above – or for a service for Caucuses that has not been mentioned – please do not hesitate to contact the DIR at [internal@sfugradsociety.ca](mailto:internal@sfugradsociety.ca)
- The DIR is also available to attend Caucus meetings in order to answer any questions or address any concerns that you may have. Often Caucuses like to have the DIR attend their first meeting of the year (or their first meeting after their turnover happens); however, if there is something that arises at any point during your term as a Caucus executive that you feel the DIR should become involved in, he/she will be most happy to attend your meeting or schedule an individual appointment to discuss your concern. The DIR is also available to support Caucuses with election procedures, and with any matters that relate to Caucus governance. Essentially, if you have a Caucus related question, the DIR is your “first responder” at the GSS...and is eager to hear from you!

### **CAUCUS CONSTITUTION & MINUTES**



Every Caucus has a Constitution document that governs Caucus activities including (but not limited to):

- Procedures for Elections
- Procedures for Meetings
- The Composition of your Caucus Executive

At least one member of your Caucus should be familiar with your Constitution in order to ensure that a) your Caucus meetings and decisions are in line with the

regulations set forth in your Constitution and b) that your Constitution remains up to date and relevant.

- The GSS archives all Caucus Constitutions. If you are unable to locate a copy of your Constitution, you are welcome to contact us and we will retrieve one for you. The DIR is also available to discuss your Caucus Constitution with you to ensure that it will continue to meet the needs of your Caucus.
- All Caucuses are also responsible for producing **minutes** at their meetings. These minutes should be submitted electronically through Formstack (<https://sfu-gss.formstack.com/forms/minutes>) and your minutes will be reviewed for any potential issues. This means that if you need access to previous minutes from your Caucus, you can also contact the Office Administrator or DIR to access them. If you have questions about how to maintain proper minutes, please refer to the GSS Minutes Template and Motion Cheat Sheet. If you have questions that are not covered in any of these documents, contact the DIR.

### FUNDING

The GSS distributes funds to the departmental Caucuses in two central ways. The first is the **Core Caucus Funding** and the second is **Caucus Grants**.

- The **Core Caucus Funding** is allocated to Caucuses based on when they hold their first meeting of each semester based on the following template:

Time of First Meeting	Funding
1st month of semester	100%
2nd month of semester	75%
3rd month of semester	50%
4th month of semester	25%



- Core Caucus funding can be spent at the Caucus' discretion (with expenditures being voted on at quorate Caucus meetings).
- The total funding available to Caucuses varies based on the number of graduate students in the department.
- Core Caucus Funding and expenditures are documented by the GSS and can be monitored by access the following spreadsheet:  
[https://docs.google.com/a/sfugradsociety.ca/spreadsheets/d/1D6dZcqqqtqU7vZqgc7Da3HT1Ofl1n\\_UT4ohwyXmvKDvQ/pub?output=html](https://docs.google.com/a/sfugradsociety.ca/spreadsheets/d/1D6dZcqqqtqU7vZqgc7Da3HT1Ofl1n_UT4ohwyXmvKDvQ/pub?output=html)
- Please ensure that your Caucus Treasurer is also tracking caucus expenditures!!

- **Caucus Grants:** In addition to the Core Caucus Funding, Caucuses can apply to the GSS for Caucus Grants. Caucus Grants are allocated to Caucuses so that they can plan events or undertake expenditures that might otherwise be beyond their means. For instance, Caucuses often receive grants to help pay for orientation or conference events. Caucus Grants must be applied for and are adjudicated by the Grants Allocation Committee of the GSS and approved by Council. More information about Caucus Grants can be found on the GSS website at:  
<http://sfugradsociety.ca/caucuses/caucus-funding/>
  - If your Caucus is approved for a Caucus Grant, you can access these funds the same way that you access Core Caucus Funding. That is, when you fill out a cheque requisition form, you need only check off “Caucus Grant” as opposed to Caucus Funding.
- **Trust Accounts:** Sometimes Caucuses receive donations or fundraise money that they would like to keep separate from their Core Caucus Funding and/or designate for specific expenses. These funds can be placed in the GSS Trust Fund and the GSS will keep a record of the designated expenses for the funding. What’s more, Core Caucus Funding that is not used during any given fiscal year can be carried over to the following year. 50% of the total unused funding to a caucus is automatically transferred and everything above 50% requires a motion approved at a quorate meeting and the filling out of a Trust Account Deposit form. (For instance, if a Caucus received \$1000 in a fiscal year but only spent \$400 then they would have \$500 transferred to the trust and \$100 returned to the GSS)
  - Your Caucus can access funds in your Trust Account the same way that you access Core Caucus Funding. That is, when you fill out a cheque requisition form, you need only check off “Trust Account Access” as opposed to Caucus Funding.
  - Note that amounts in the Trust Accounts are not published on the Caucus Funding spreadsheet. In order to find out about the balance of your Caucus Trust Account please contact the GSS office administrator at [help@sfugradsociety.ca](mailto:help@sfugradsociety.ca) or the Director of Finance at [finance@sfugradsociety.ca](mailto:finance@sfugradsociety.ca).
  - Your Caucus treasurer should maintain an accurate record of the balance of your Trust Account and any expenditures made.



## EVENT INSURANCE

The GSS is able to extend their insurance coverage to Caucuses for events that they hold on campus, that are sports related, and/or where alcohol is served. Caucuses must submit an “Event Insurance Certificate Request” form **at least two weeks in advance of an event** in order to ensure sufficient time to approval. For more information about event insurance please contact our office administrator at [help@sfugradsociety.ca](mailto:help@sfugradsociety.ca). You can find the Insurance Certificate Request Form here:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0ByP3i--grlLbdEhBelRTS0o2NU0/view>.

## LOUNGE, BOARDROOM & AV EQUIPMENT BOOKING



The GSS has a lounge, a boardroom and AV equipment that your Caucus can book **for free** for your next social event or meeting. (Though a \$20 security deposit is required, it is returned as long as nothing is broken)

- Our boardroom fits 16 people comfortably, and includes a projection screen and white boards.
- Our lounge has a 70 person capacity (about 35 seated) and includes a projection screen, couches, small tables and a beautiful view.
- These services are increasingly important as rules are changing for usage of university spaces. If you are interested in booking any GSS space, please access the room booking calendar and the room booking form can be found here: [https://sfu-gss.formstack.com/forms/room\\_booking](https://sfu-gss.formstack.com/forms/room_booking)
- Note that AV equipment must be booked separately. AV equipment booking rules and the AV booking form are also available at the above URL.
- The GSS lounge is only available for booking after 4pm. This is because during the day, the lounge is made available to all grad students as a space to study, eat lunch, hold informal meetings, etc.
- Please contact the Administrative Assistant at [info@sfugradsociety.ca](mailto:info@sfugradsociety.ca) to confirm room availability prior to sending a booking form.

The GSS is here to serve you. And we are incredibly grateful for the work that you do as departmental Caucuses. If there something that we can do to better support you, please do not hesitate to contact the DIR ([internal@sfugradsociety.ca](mailto:internal@sfugradsociety.ca)). If there is something that you feel is missing from this “user manual,” please also communicate this to the DIR so that she can add it!

**We are looking forward to (yet another) great year together and we hope you are too!**



## Chapter 2

# Minutes Template

Full Name of Caucus -- *please spell out your acronym for us!*

Meeting Minutes (draft until approved)

(Date, Location)

### Attendance

**Present:** list first and last names **and positions** of people present.

NOTE: In your first meeting of the year, and after any elections/by-elections occur, the minutes should also reflect a correct e-mail address for each executive member.

**Absent:** list first and last names **and positions** of people absent (can indicate if regrets were received prior to meeting)

### Minutes

#### 1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at (time) (place).

- #### 2. Appointment of Chair
- Include the first name and last initial of the person who will be acting as chair for the meeting. This is often the President/Vice President/Co-President/Chair of the caucus, however, it does not necessarily have to be. If the President (etc.) has many items to discuss on the agenda (and motions to bring forward) it is sometimes best *not* have this person chair the meeting.

**3. Appointment of Secretary** - Include the first name and last initial of the person who will be acting as secretary for the meeting. Many caucuses include a position of secretary/communications officer, however, this person may not always be the person taking minutes (if they need to miss a meeting, etc.) The person who takes minutes at the meeting cannot sign cheque requisition forms (even if this person is generally a signing authority) for motions passed at the meeting for which they acted as secretary. This is a safeguard against someone producing minutes and signing cheques without having the proper caucus consultation. If you would like more information about this, please contact the DIR at [internal@sfugradsociety.ca](mailto:internal@sfugradsociety.ca)

**4. Approval of Agenda**

Moved to adopt the agenda (you can also move to adopt the agenda as amended if an agenda was circulated and then changed by the caucus at the time of the meeting).

Moved by:

Seconded by:

Decision: (motion *carries/passes*, motion *fails*, motion *carries/passes* unanimously, motion *carries/passes* with the following objections/abstentions)

The above is the general format for anything that is motioned and voted on during your meeting. You can also include discussion after the motion is moved and seconded.

**5. Approval of Minutes**

Moved to approve the minutes from our last meeting.

If committee members have changes that they have not yet suggested for the minutes (or that have not been reflected in the minutes as they are presented at the meeting), these should be presented at this time and the motion should read that the minutes are being approved *as amended*.

(Mover/Seconder/Decision).

**6. Items to be discussed at your meeting can be divided into “New Business” and “Old Business.”**

Items which have previously been discussed and/or approved at caucus meetings and items which are being carried over from previous meetings (for example, items which were not discussed or were “tabled” at a previous meeting or items which are subject to long term discussion) would be considered “old business.” Items being brought to the caucus for the first time are considered “new business.”

## **7. Committee Reports**

Your caucus may have a variety of different “committee reps.” (for example, you should have rep(s) on the GSS Council). Asking your reps to report at your meetings helps to ensure that your caucus is kept informed about items arising on these different committees. This can also be a time for your caucus to highlight items that you want to ensure are raised at other committee meetings where you are represented. If you have reps on more than one committee, it can be a good idea to list them all individually on the agenda (i.e., GSS Reps Report, TSSU Rep Report, Faculty Council Rep Report, etc.) to ensure that all reps are provided with time to report (and are aware that they are expected to report!) If the agenda for a meeting is particularly long, reps can be asked to circulate written reports before or after the meeting so that meeting time is not taken up with oral reports. The written reports can be attached to the minutes.

## **8. Financial Motions**

See the motions cheat sheet for a template on how to make motions (with all the proper info. included!) These motions can relate to discussions had in other places in your minutes, however, it is useful for the GSS to have the motions listed separately at the end of the minutes. This also alleviates the process of attaching minutes to cheque requisition forms for reimbursement.

## **9. Other Business**

If something is raised that falls outside of the agenda as circulated or amended, it can be held to the end of the meeting and discussed/minuted here, time permitting.

## **10. Next Meeting Time**

Some caucuses will set the time of their next meeting during their meetings. If you do not do this, you can minute that the meeting will be “next month, date and time to be determined via doodle,” etc. If you are unfamiliar with doodle, I highly recommend looking into it for scheduling meetings. [www.doodle.com](http://www.doodle.com)

## **11. Adjournment**

Note the time at which the chair calls the meeting “adjourned”

Note that minutes should be sent regularly through Formstack  
(<https://sfu-gss.formstack.com/forms/minutes>)

## Chapter 3

# Motions: When and How

The following is a list of sample motions to be used at your caucus meetings. They will likely not cover all instances for which your caucus might need to make and vote on motions. However, the principles can be translated to other circumstances as well.

As a general rule, caucuses need to motion and vote on anything, which involves:

1. An expenditure of money or a transfer of money from one account to another;
2. A position that the caucus as a whole wishes to take a make public (i.e., the caucus taking a position to either support or denounce a university/departmental policy, etc.);
3. An action that caucus as a whole wishes to make or wishes another organization (for example, the GSS) to make on their behalf (for example, a caucus may wish to appoint new or interim members or may wish to involve the GSS (most likely the DIR) in advocacy actions);
4. A task that the caucus wishes to set for a specific caucus member that does not fall within their usual duties;
5. Anything that the caucus considers to be particularly worthy of transparent documentation.

The general principles of motions are that they should include:

1. A clear statement about what is being presented and agreed upon by the committee (note that sometimes motions become complicated when there are several components to what is being presented. often such motions can be split into two, which can help to clarify what is being communicated);
2. The names of all caucuses, organizations and people relevant to the motion;
3. Any relevant details such as dates, locations, rationale, etc. Err to the side of including more details, rather than less, while always aiming for clear communication. Some contextual information related to the motion can also be included in the discussion in the minutes, so long as the key pieces of information are also reflected in the motion itself.
4. Note that committee members should not Move, Second or vote on motions for which they could be perceived as having a conflict of interest (such a motions where they will receive money or be elected to a position). They should abstain from these motions and have their abstentions noted in the minutes.

## **Motions related to Expenditure:**

### **1. To allocate money for a future expenditure**

"Moved that (caucus name) designate (person's FULL name, as it should appear on a cheque) to spend (amount) from (which GSS account? Core Caucus Funds, Caucus Grant, or Trust Account) for (reason for expense) incurred on (date)."

Moved by:

Seconded by:

Decision: (motion carries, motion fails, motion carries unanimously, motion carries with the following objections/abstentions)

### **2. To reimburse money after an expenditure**

"Moved that (caucus name) reimburse (person's FULL name, as it should appear on a cheque) (amount) from (indicate Core funds, Caucus Grant, or Trust Account) for (expenditure, reason for expenditure and date of expenditure). "

Moved by:

Seconded by:

Decision: (motion carries, motion fails, motion carries unanimously, motion carries with the following objections/abstentions)

### **3. Some Caucuses offer support to their membership in the form of conference/travel funding. Several people can be awarded money in a single motion, so long as they are all being awarded the same amount of money.**

"Motion to grant [all the names of people being awarded funding] [amount] for conference/travel funding during the [specific term or date range]."

Moved by:

Seconded by:

Decision: (motion carries, motion fails, motion carries unanimously, motion carries with the following objections/abstentions)

Notes related specifically to expenditure motions:

- The motion must include the name of the caucus, the full, "official" name of the person to whom the cheque will be written, the amount for the cheque (*double check your receipts - clerical errors can slow down the process!*), the reason for and date of the expenditure.
- Caucuses with multiple GSS accounts must specify the account from which the money is to be taken (Caucus Funding, Caucus Grant or Trust Account).
- The minutes should indicate the names of the people putting forth and seconding the motion and whether or not it is approved. Caucus members who are seeking reimbursement **CANNOT** put forward a motion for their own reimbursement. They should also abstain from voting on the motion. Such abstentions should be noted in the minutes.

- Only the person specified in the motion may collect a cheque from the GSS.

**4. Sometimes your Caucus may need to make motions that are not related to financial decisions. Such motions are often made in order to task a specific person on the committee with an action. For example:**

“Motion to task [name of person] with researching the cost of promotional materials, to be reported on at the next meeting”

Moved by:

Seconded by:

Decision: (motion carries, motion fails, motion carries unanimously, motion carries with the following objections/abstentions)

Voting on these kinds of motions ensures that Caucus members use their time in ways that are supported by the Caucus and therefore do not put a lot of effort into initiatives that will not ultimately be supported by the Caucus.

**5. Caucuses may also craft motions when they are interested in presenting a unified decision from the Caucus on an issue at the departmental or university level. For instance:**

“Motion to support the departmental decision to create new entrance scholarships for graduate students”

“Motion to denounce the University’s decision to cut funding to graduate student scholarships”

(Note that these are examples and do not necessarily reflect actual decisions currently being made at SFU)

Moved by:

Seconded by:

Decision: (motion carries, motion fails, motion carries unanimously, motion carries with the following objections/abstentions)

**6. Caucuses should also be voting on elections and by-elections. Depending on the rules of your Caucus, students may nominate themselves or be nominated by others.**

See the Elections section of the handbook for more details.

If you encounter issues in making these motions please do not hesitate to contact the Director of Internal Relations of the GSS at [internal@sfugradsociety.ca](mailto:internal@sfugradsociety.ca)

## Chapter 4

# Chairing a Meeting: Presenting Motions

**General Chairing Info:** The chair of the meeting is responsible for ensuring that meetings are run smoothly, items on the agenda are discussed, procedures are followed and people are heard at the meeting. To this end the chair can encourage that debate about an issue be tabled until a future meeting (or conducted outside the meeting) so that all items on the agenda are discussed.

The chair may also consider keeping a speaker's list (particularly in large caucuses or for particularly contentious issues) to make sure that everyone is heard.

More information about chairing a meeting can be found in Robert's Rules of Order (copies available at the GSS) or by contacting the DIR ([internal@sfugradsociety.ca](mailto:internal@sfugradsociety.ca))

### Presenting a Motion:

- The presenter of the motion speaks the motion as they wish it to be minuted (in less formal meetings the motion is often crafted by those in attendance to ensure that it contains all the proper information and reflects the spirit of the motion. Please see the GSS motion template for more information on this).
- The chair calls for a seconder for the motion.
- Once a motion receives a seconder, it is opened up to discussion by the chair.
- Once discussion is complete (or when a committee member "calls the question," i.e., requests that the discussion be ended in order to hold the vote), a vote is held.
- The chair will ask "All those in favour [of approving the motion as worded/amended/presented]" and count the votes. Then "Anyone opposed [to approving the motion as worded/amended/presented]" and "Any abstentions".
- The last two questions do not need to be posed if it is clear that everyone in the meeting has voted in favour of the motion. At this point the motion can be noted as carrying unanimously.
- Committee members can choose to abstain on motions which they do not feel that they are prepared to vote on or for motions on which they do not have an opinion. An abstention is **not** an objection and should not be noted or counted as such.
- Committee members should abstain from motions for which they may be considered to have a conflict of interest (such a motions where they are being given money, or reimbursed, or motions that elect them to a position, etc.) These abstentions should be noted in the minutes for the sake of transparency.
- The chair can ask committee members who object or abstain whether they would like their objection/abstention to be noted in the minutes. If they say yes then the minutes will reflect that that particular committee member voted against or abstained from voting on the motion.

## Chapter 5

# Holding (and Minuting) Elections

Your Caucus constitution will dictate when during the year you should hold elections. The GSS recommends that elections be held in the early fall semester (September or early October) each year as this allows for incoming students to become involved after they encounter your Caucus at orientation. Generally, notice of elections must be circulated in the agenda of the meeting with due notice provided to membership. Once again, your Caucus' particular rules about this will be found in your constitution document (archived at the GSS!). Depending on the rules of your Caucus, students may nominate themselves for positions or be nominated by others (from the floor or "by proxy" - meaning that students may be nominated, if they have expressed an interest to be nominated previously, even if they are not present).

Nominated students can be elected using the following motions:

"Motion to elect [student's name] to the position of [position title] on the [name of your Caucus] for the [years] academic term."

Moved by:

Seconded by:

Decision: (motion *carries/passes*, motion *fails*, motion *carries/passes* unanimously, motion *carries/passes* with the following objections/abstentions)

\*Note that even if students *nominate* themselves for a position, they should not move or second the motion for their election. They should abstain from the vote and have their abstention noted in the minutes.

If there is only one student nominated for a position, this student can be considered to have "won" the election by acclamation. This motion should read:

"Motion to approve [student's name] as the acclaimed [position title] for the [name of your Caucus] for the [years] academic term"

Moved by:

Seconded by:

Decision: (motion *carries/passes*, motion *fails*, motion *carries/passes* unanimously, motion *carries/passes* with the following objections/abstentions)

\*Note that even if students are *acclaimed*, they should not move or second the motion for their election. They should abstain from the vote and have their abstention noted in the minutes.

The above process also holds in cases where positions are filled on a by-election (in the case where a previous executive member resigned, graduated, etc. etc.) Note that your constitution may have rules stipulating how long a notice of election needs to be posted

before an election can occur. Please consult your constitution before holding an election or by-election. If you have questions or concerns, please contact the GSS.

## Chapter 6

# Caucus Contact Sheet

After you hold an election, please update the GSS asap about your new Caucus Executive (and provide their contact information) so that we can ensure that we are communicating with the proper people! Note that the GSS does not require phone numbers but that this information may be useful for your executive internally.

CAUCUS NAME (not just acronym): \_\_\_\_\_

Full Name	Position on Caucus	E-mail Address	Phone Number
e.g. Rocky Masterson	Chair	<a href="mailto:rockym@sfu.ca">rockym@sfu.ca</a>	X21111 or 604-555-1234

### Positions to include:

Chair/President

Co-Chair/Vice-Chair/Vice President

Secretary/Minute-taker

Treasurer

GSS Councillor

Social Organizer

To inform the GSS use Formstack ([https://sfu-gss.formstack.com/forms/caucus\\_update](https://sfu-gss.formstack.com/forms/caucus_update)) after any Caucus election. GSS Councilors that have been elected should also fill out this Formstack ([https://sfu-gss.formstack.com/forms/council\\_stipend](https://sfu-gss.formstack.com/forms/council_stipend)) to ensure they get their stipends.

# Chapter 7

## Caucus Funds Tracking Template

CAUCUS FUNDS TRACKING TEMPLATE					
YOUR CAUCUS NAME					
		CURRENT CORE FUNDS	\$1,072.33		
		CURRENT TRUST FUNDS	\$3,047.24		
CORE FUNDS					
		Opening Balance September 1, 2011		\$2,000.00	
Approved Expenses					
Date Approved		Details			
29-Sep		Student X for food for the BBQ on Sept. 21/11		\$102.67	
29-Sep		Student Z Up to \$50 for refreshments for next meeting, October 24*		\$50.00	
24-Oct		Student Y travel grant for conference October 23/11		\$75.00	*Note: for approved expenses where the total amount is NOT known, you must remember to make these corrections when the expenses are made!
Total Approved Expenses				\$227.67	
	Balance	Opening Balance - Approved Expenses		\$1,772.33	
Proposed Expenses					
		Mini-Conference in February, up to \$400		\$300.00	Planned expenses that are not yet assigned in detail. When the actual expense is decided on, it should be approved and included in the "Approved Expenses" and deleted from "Proposed Expenses".
		Bowling event (maybe this can happen in November?)		\$400.00	
Total Proposed Expenses				\$700.00	
TOTAL CORE FUNDS		Opening Balance - (Approved + Proposed Expenses)		\$1,072.33	The amount of core funds available to be spent if ALL proposed activities happen.
TRUST ACCOUNT FUNDS					
		Opening Balance September 1, 2011		\$2,450.10	If you do not know this amount, you can obtain it from the GSS.
Trust Account Activity		Date			
		Details			
31-Aug		Transfer of remaining funds from last year		\$300.26	
03-Oct		Orientation T-shirt sales		\$276.88	
24-Oct		Student K reimbursement for Serving It Right (Expense Approved at meeting October 24)		(\$35.00)	
05-Nov		Halloween Party Raffle Ticket Sales		\$55.00	
TOTAL TRUST ACCOUNT FUNDS				\$3,047.24	

## Chapter 8

# Transferring Money to a GSS Trust Account

Transferring Caucus Funds to your Trust Account means that you will continue to be able to access your funding into the following academic year. If you do not transfer money to your Trust Account, the funding will be re-absorbed into the wider GSS coffers, where it will be put towards good use for all graduate students at SFU. Do note that 50% of your total annual funding is automatically put into your Trust Account however.

If you would like to transfer Caucus Funds to a Trust Account, the following are the steps that you will need to complete:

**Step 1:** Check the balance of your Core Caucus Fund account here:

<https://spreadsheets.google.com/a/sfugradsociety.ca/pub?key=tEuxPVZ8r1bsviPkAp4E2PA&output=html>

Note: The amount you see on this spreadsheet may not be the amount transferred to your Trust Account. If you have outstanding cheque requisition forms, etc. then these deductions will be made from your Core Caucus Funds before being transferred to your Trust Account. If you know that there are going to be funds removed from your Core Caucus Funds between the time when you submit your motion and Trust Fund deposit form and the time when the transfer occurs, then you can craft your motion to reflect this by replacing “valued at approximately amount” with “balance of the Caucus account as of [date]”.

**Step 2:** Hold a Caucus meeting which includes the following motion:

"MOVED to request that the remaining balance of the [year] Caucus Funding for the [name of your Caucus], valued at approximately [amount], be transferred into a Trust Account on behalf of the Caucus."

Moved by:

Seconded by:

Decision: (motion carries, motion fails, motion carries unanimously, motion carries with the following objections/abstentions)

**Step 3:** Fill out a Trust Account deposit form and submit it to the GSS with the proper signatures and a copy of the minutes with the above motion.

<http://sfugradsociety.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Trust-Account-Policy-Appendix-A-Deposit-Form.pdf>

(this form is also available in hardcopy at the GSS office)

**Step 4:** Accessing funds in your Caucus' trust account is just like accessing your Core Caucus Funds. When filling out a cheque requisition form, you need only check "Trust Account Access" as opposed to "Caucus Funding". Money in the Trust Account can be earmarked through the GSS for a specified purpose (for example, if your caucus wanted to ensure that funds carried over were used for fall orientation) but they do not need to be designated in order to be transferred.

## Chapter 9

# Cheque Requisition

All cheque requisitions must be submitted online through the formstack submission system that can be found at

[https://sfu-gss.formstack.com/forms/cheque\\_req](https://sfu-gss.formstack.com/forms/cheque_req)

In order to be approved for reimbursements from your caucus funding several procedures must be followed.

1. A caucus meeting must be held and the meeting minutes recorded. In the meeting a financial motion must be put forth that is moved and seconded by members that are not included in the motion. If the person the motion is regarding is present, they must abstain from voting. Please note the voted on amount is the maximum amount that can be distributed so it is best to vote on a higher amount to account for taxes and unforeseen additional expenses. Sample meeting except:

Financial Motions:

Motion 1: Motion to reimburse Taylor \$75.00 for pizza for our caucus end-of-the-year party.

Moved: Jimmy

Seconded: Sally

Passes unanimously (Taylor abstains)

2. Then the treasurer or member of the caucus (not included in the financial motion) must fill out the cheque requisition found on the website above and include the minutes as well as all the related receipts.
3. Once the form is filled out and submitted, the Director of Finance will review the form and all the supporting documents. It will then go to the Administrator for final checking and cheque issuance. The administrative assistant will then notify when the cheque is ready for pick-up or will mail it. Please allow 2-3 weeks for processing times.

\*A \$25 fee will be charged for cheque reissuance (lost, stolen, or not received via mail)

# Chapter 10

## Common GSS Terms & Acronyms

**Administrative Assistant** - A staff person at the GSS who is responsible for reception, front-line service, and other office duties

**Administrator** - A staff person at the GSS who is responsible for administering financial requests on behalf of both the GSS and Caucuses and acts as a resource for Caucuses and GSS Committees

**Advocate** - A staff person at the GSS who is responsible for assisting students in need with problems that are academic or student-life in nature, and, who is also a key resource person for campaigns at the GSS

**AGM** - Annual General Meeting, a meeting typically held near the beginning of the calendar year where the highest functions of the Society are carried out and the annual audit is approved

**Alternate** - An elected student representative from a Caucus who acts as the Councillor when the Councillor is not able to attend a Council meeting

**By-Laws** - Rules and terms for an organization that dictate how the organization shall be run

**Caucus** - A group of graduate students who are all within the same department (e.g. Biology Caucus)

**Chair** - Refers to the person who orchestrates a meeting, as well as the action of doing so

**Constitution** - Similar to By-Laws but higher-level (e.g. less details on procedural matters, will typically include a vision or mission statement)

**Council** - Refers both to the body of student representatives who direct the GSS and the meetings of this body

**Councillor** (or “GSS Representative” or “Council Representative” or “Council Rep(s)”) - An elected student representative from a Caucus (or, in select other situations, other graduate student constituency groups) that attends Council meetings and votes on behalf of his or her Caucus

**DER** - Director of External Relations, the elected student leader primarily responsible for external advocacy campaigns as well as fostering relationships with groups outside the university

**DF** - Director of Finance, the elected student leader who oversees the creation of the Society’s budget, the annual audit, everyday financial transactions, as well as long-term and strategic financial planning

DGS - Director of Graduate Services, the elected student leader who oversees major services used by graduate students, such as the Benefit Plan and the U-Pass

DIR - Director of Internal Relations, the elected student leader who oversees internal governing structures of the Society and ensures these structures foster a strong graduate community that is empowered and informed

DSL - Director of Student Life, the elected student leader who is responsible for supporting and enhancing your graduate experience through events, workshops, and outreach as well as overseeing public communications of the Society

DUR - Director of University Relations, the elected student leader who acts as a central liaison to the SFU community, including University administration, the SFSS, dedicated fee groups, and allied groups or committees.

Executive Committee (or “EC” or “Exec”) - Refers to both the body of student leaders who have been elected to run the operations of the GSS and to meetings of this body

General Member - Every graduate student who pays the membership fee (which is automatic) is a general member of the GSS

GSS - The Graduate Student Society at Simon Fraser University, your student government

MBC - Maggie Benston Centre, the building where the GSS offices are located

SFSS - Simon Fraser Student Society, the undergraduate student government

SGM - Special General Meeting, a meeting of significant importance where special business will be discussed and voted upon. Typically called when an AGM is inquorate and important business needs to be finalized

TA - Teaching Assistant

TM - Tutor Marker

TSSU - Teaching Support Staff Union (TA/TM labour union)