



Meeting Minutes

Graduate Students Association Council Meeting  
 Wednesday, July 24, 2013, 6:00 p.m.  
 GSA Office, East Tower Refectory



Present: Frances Lasowski (GSA President), Stephen Hanson (VP Administration) Talena Rambarran (VP External), Ivana Postic (VP Internal), Niel Van Englen (FRC Engineering), Carla Abarca (FRC Engineering), Rostyslav Zvanych (FRC Science), Vi Dang (International Student Representative), Spencer Savoie (Senate Rep), Margaret Jackel (Office Assistant)

Regrets: Aaron Maxwell (VP Services), Megan Murphy (FRC Business), Jennifer Nicholl (FRC Health Science), Ashley Marshall (FRC Humanities), Priscilla Medeiros (FRC Social Sciences), Rahman Khokhar (Senate Representative)

Absent: Aaron Maxwell, Megan Murphy, Behrouz Bakhitiari, Jennifer Nicholl, Ashley Marshall, Stephanie Jones, Priscilla Medeiros, Murray Wilson, Abdul-Rahman Khokhar, Ahmed El Ganzouri, D'Andra Parker, Cassel Busse, Madeline Mant, Marion Jamard

Item	Motion		
1.	Call to Order	6:13	
2.	Acceptance of the Agenda	The Agenda was approved on a motion by Niel Van Englen and was seconded by Talena Rambarran	Motion carried
3.	Approval of the Minutes from meetings of June 19, 2013	The minutes of the June 19, 2013 meeting were approved on a motion by Talena Rambarran and seconded by Ivana Postic.  Frances Lasowski provided clarification in regards to the new budget model and MOSAIC. There are two projects that are on the go in the administration of the university. One is MOSAIC, which is a new system for tracking students, payroll, etc. which is where we will see the change in our TA pay/research pay and where the students will have to pick how they would like to receive their money. This is still a few years out, and we will be involved in the discussions. The other is the new budget model. This determines how tuition, government grants, etc. are distributed within the university. This has already been set, and we are in year 0, which means they are tracking it both from the "old" method and the "new" method. The essential change is that the money flows to the faculties first and they then pay the central services.	Motion carried
5.	Reports from Board a. President's Report	Frances Lasowski stated that it has been an exciting month for the Phoenix. Sue Blythe, the general manager, tendered her resignation on July 8th. Fortunately we were able to hire	

		<p>Dan Rodrigues as an interim general manager quickly. We have also retained a consultant to examine potential efficiencies in the Phoenix. Some of these have been reiterated through PEC, with the goal of making the Phoenix more profitable without losing its essence. Steve will elaborate more on the Phoenix, but we are also re-examining our budget for this year if the Phoenix isn't able to contribute the anticipated \$60,000. We will have a better idea about this likelihood soon after our audit, and if we need to change the budget, we will call a general meeting to do so.</p> <p>Ms. Lasowski indicated a few vacancies within the FRCs. This also includes Niel Van Englen's engineering position, which he has resigned given his absence from the university from August until December. Mr. Van Englen has noted that he would be interested in returning if the position is not filled in the bi-elections. Karen McCallum had also stepped down from her humanities position at the end of May. Ms. Lasowski encouraged members to notify anyone who may be interested in joining council, to please encourage them to run in the elections in October!</p> <p>Ms. Lasowski continued returning to speak about the new group starting up to lobby the government and act for the collective needs of graduate students in Ontario. This group is called the OGSA and Talena Rambarran has attended their meetings. This is the first year they are in existence, and fees have not been set. It was determined it would be on a donation basis, and the executive opted to donate \$3,000 to the organization this year.</p> <p>Talena Rambarran spoke in regards to OGSA, and indicated the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- The officers and the board were elected – we hold a spot on the board of directors</li><li>- 8 schools in Ontario: Waterloo, Guelph, Trent, McMaster, Laurier, UOIT, Lakehead, Athabasca</li><li>- Will follow OUSA model – Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance</li><li>- Have decided on 5 main areas to pursue for lobbying the government regarding graduate students<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>o Technology tax credit – grad students spend a lot on things like laptops and software specific for their work, and would like a government tax credit</li><li>o OSAP – different requirements for grad</li></ul></li></ul>	
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		<p>students</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Mental Health – highlighting importance</li> <li>o Post-Residency fees (tuition after your coursework, etc has been completed)</li> <li>o Time to completion</li> </ul> <p>- Fees have not been set, are looking for in kind support to hire someone for administration and policy writing</p> <p>Stephen Hanson inquired where this donated fee would be considered as under our budget. Ms. Lasowski indicated that it would come out of our prudence line.</p>	
	b. Senate Report	Nothing to report.	
	c. Board of Governor's Report	Representative was not available to report.	
	d. Fees Committee Report	Committee has not met.	
6.	<p>Committee Reports</p> <p>a. Finance Committee (VP Admin)</p>	<p>Frances Lasowski indicated that she hopes to have numbers for the next meeting in draft form. We should have the entire audit to review.</p> <p>Frances Lasowski motioned to have the signing authority for the Phoenix Bar and Grill PACE Credit Union account be updated from Sue Blythe to Daniel Rodrigues to reflect the change in management. Stephen Hanson accepted the motion and was seconded by Ivana Postic. None opposed. None abstained. Motion carried.</p> <p>Ms. Lasowski motioned to have the signing authority for the Phoenix Bar and Grill CIBC account to be similarly updated from Sue Blythe to Daniel Rodrigues and to add Ashley Ravenscroft, the GSA Executive Systems Administrator added as a signing authority. The motion was accepted by Stephen Hanson and seconded by Ivana Postic. None opposed. None abstained. Motion carried.</p>	<p>Motion Carried</p> <p>Motion Carried</p>
	b. Phoenix Executive Committee (VP Admin)	Stephen Hanson indicated that Frances Lasowski has already touched on the biggest issue regarding the changes in staff. The PEC met yesterday to introduce members to the interim manager. They did not speak in regards to numbers. Traditionally numbers would be presented but he is not currently in a position to present numbers with confidence. Primarily they are currently dealing with prior items, and hare moving forward with them. They will finally be eliminating the .50 cent charge when using debit and that should be	

	<p>carried out at the end of the month. The PEC also spoke about food suppliers, and that they are making sure that we get the most cost efficient food supplies. We are changing our fries to a fresh cut frozen brand and the PEC executives met to vote on the new brand to carry.</p> <p>Mr. Hanson continued to state that the Phoenix hosted its first wedding on Saturday that went quite well, and the married couple returned on Monday to thank the staff for their services. It was a trial experience to take the upscale step for the bar. We are examining if we can upscale the food for future weddings, as we have an ideal location.</p> <p>In general, Mr. Hanson indicated that he was impressed with Mr. Rodrigues' capabilities, and he has more than met expectations. Mr. Rodrigues possesses extensive contact base that we are utilizing to our benefit and he has been very proactive with work.</p> <p>Frances Lasowski indicated that Gabriel Devenyi, a member of the PEC, forwarded the feedback from the website to Mr. Rodrigues, and he is reviewing them. Ms. Lasowski recommended that those with suggestions and feedback to post it to the website, or notify Mr. Hanson and share any opinions, good or bad that is overheard. Ms. Lasowski also indicated that the Phoenix would be expanding on their drink menu options.</p> <p>Carla Abarca inquired if it would be possible to expand the food menu. Mr. Hanson indicated that they are currently working on a new express menu, and discount options for graduate students.</p> <p>Frances Lasowski also indicated that if you check in to the Phoenix using the Foursquare app, you will receive a free cappuccino. She also indicated that we will be eliminating the \$10 off card for stamp redemption, and are looking to apply actual discounts to grad students who present their student cards.</p> <p>A request was made to advertise grad student perks so</p>	
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		<p>that they're better known.</p> <p>Niel Van Englen indicated that he had been approached by the LGBTA association who wish for the two front bathrooms made gender neutral rather than gender specific. This was not seen to be an issue and will be reviewed.</p>	
	<p>c. Events and Trips Planning Committee (VP External)</p>	<p>Talena Rambarran provided an update regarding the July wine tour. It will be for 48 people, and sold out very quickly. The GSA is covering the cost of the bus, and the attendees are covering the costs of the wine tour.</p> <p>The second GSA \$2 BBQ will be taking place on July 31<sup>st</sup> from 3-7pm.</p> <p>The committee currently consists of Ms. Rambarran and Marlena Whitton and Ms. Rambarran indicated that the committee is open to those interested in joining.</p> <p>The committee spoke in regards to the August event. It will be held in Port Dover, possibly the Thursday the 22<sup>nd</sup> or Monday the 26<sup>th</sup>. The cost will be \$5 each to offset the bus costs.</p> <p>For the September event, they are considering either a Blue Jays game, or the Royal Ontario Museum, and are looking into pricing and feasibility. The Toronto Zoo and African Lion Safari were also suggested. Ms. Rambarran indicated she would look into those options as well.</p> <p>Ms. Rambarran indicated that she is also currently looking into obtaining promotional products for the GSA.</p>	
	<p>d. Academic Affairs Committee (VP Internal)</p>	<p>Ivana Postic indicated that she has been working with the FRCs and is looking to get graduate secretary contacts and is aiming to have them prior to welcome week.</p> <p>It was mentioned that some people dislike the number of emails they receive from the GSA. It was indicated that it was likely emails from GS Events that are too frequent. Talena Rambarran is to contact Judi to see if</p>	

		<p>it is possible to make their email more unique so that there is no confusion regarding whom it is from.</p> <p>Ms. Postic continued to indicate that the travel grants are completed, and that there may be some changes this year, or next year in regards to the funding. The bursaries are proceeding as well, and we currently have a good set up with SGS in regards to this.</p>	
	e. International Student Representative Report (International Reps)	<p>Vi Dang indicated that they had their games night and that it was successful. The group is still encountering issues with late RSVPs, as originally they did not think they would have enough participants and were going to cancel, but last minute had almost a dozen sign ups. They do not have any more events planned for the summer and haven't organized any events for the fall.</p>	
	f. By-laws Committee (President)	<p>Frances Lasowski indicated that the committee has not met. She also indicated that they are looking to review our Board of Directors structure and we are trying to benchmark it against what other schools are doing.</p>	
	g. GSA Summer Leagues(VP Services)	<p>Frances Lasowski reported on Aaron Maxwell's behalf.</p> <p>The commissioners for the Softball League have raised concerns that players should be wearing helmets when batting. We currently do not have enough helmets to satisfy this requirement, and so the league would need to purchase 50 helmets, as well as procure storage and cleaning supplies for the helmets. This should be done in time for next season.</p>	
	h. Graduate Student Services Review(President)	<p>Frances Lasowski indicated that we have not met with Student Affairs. The new director starts in August, and we will be meeting with him after that.</p> <p>We will send out an email regarding letter for services review. This letter is to determine what services are viewed as useful, and which are not, this way we will have more input from a larger population and will be able to review and prioritize critical issues regarding what is needed and what needs to be improved upon. Unfortunately Student Affairs is currently limited in how they collect data as it doesn't differentiate between graduate students and undergraduates, but are working on collecting data. These are preliminary numbers. We hope to have the information in August to have in place at the end of January. Time sensitive.</p>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Health &amp; Dental Committee (VP Services)</li> </ul>	<p>Frances Lasowski reported on Aaron Maxwell's behalf.</p> <p>Both CUPE and SGS have asked us to look into adding May start students on to our Health &amp; Dental Plan. Currently, only September and January starts get covered. Our contact at I Have A Plan has stated that with some work on our end this could be accommodated in time for next May.</p> <p>Ms. Lasowski also indicated that we looking into working with CUPE and graduate secretaries to make the information for commonly asked questions more accessible.</p>	
7.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New Business</li> <li>• Welcome Week</li> </ul>	<p>Ivana Postic that it will no longer be Grad Day, but a Grad week. She indicated that there will be a resource fair on Tuesday, September 3<sup>rd</sup> to promote graduate clubs, and indicated that FRCs could also have booths to promote information within their faculties. Ms. Postic also indicated that there will also be a breakfast that morning catered by Pita Pit replacing the lunch that was done previously.</p> <p>Carla Abarca raised the question if we could advertise to MSU clubs, as some of the clubs have graduate members. Frances Lasowski indicated that it was a grey area as the MSU caters to undergraduates primarily. However, Ms. Postic indicated that clubs wishing to promote to graduate students were welcome to do so though.</p> <p>Ms. Postic continued to state that Grad Student day would be held on Friday, and the BBQ will be on Thursday for most of the day, with a concert held on Thursday in Faculty Hollow. She is also looking for volunteers to assist with the setting up of the various events during welcome week.</p>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CRO</li> </ul>	<p>Frances Lasowski indicated that Guiliano Guidi did not provide a formal letter of resignation, but has graduated and no longer at McMaster and are calling for a new CRO. Ms. Lasowski and Ivana Postic have flagged the amount that the GSA is paying this position. The rate has not been reviewed from when paper ballots were still done. As it is now electronic, it no longer requires the time or effort that it once did. The</p>	

		<p>rate is stated in our standing resolutions and is currently \$500 (\$300 for March, and \$200 for October). We wish to bring it more in line with the amount required currently, and we want to change it to \$200 (\$150 for March and \$50 for October).</p> <p>Ms. Lasowski motioned to change the CRO rate of pay to \$200 from \$500. The motion was accepted by Ivana Postic and seconded by Niel Van Englen. None opposed. None abstained. Motion Carried.</p>	Motion Carried
8.	Adjournment	Motion to adjourn the meeting was accepted by Niel Van Englen and seconded by Talena Rambarran at 7:40pm.	

Person	Action Item	Due Date
	Update the signing authorities for PACE Credit Union from Sue Blythe to Daniel Rodrigues	
	Change the signing authorities for CIBC from Sue Blythe to Daniel Rodrigues and Ashley Ravenscroft	
Daniel Rodrigues	Investigate the feasibility of making the accessibility washrooms at the front of the Phoenix into unisex washrooms	
Talena Rambarran	Examine the cost associated for the ROM or a Jays game or other venues for the September GSA event	
Talena Rambarran	Investigate promotional products for the GSA	
Margaret Jackel	Provide information for alternate vendors for the promotional products	
FRCs	Forward graduate secretary contact information to Ivana	Before Welcome Week
Talena Rambarran	Contact Judy to see if it is possible to make the GSEvent email more unique so there is no confusion whether or not it is from us	



**Talena Rambarran**  
VP External

Oct 29, 2013

Date



**Margaret Jackel**  
Office Assistant

Oct, 29, 2013

Date