



Graduate Students Association of McMaster University  
**Council Meeting**



Wednesday, August 20, 2014  
GSA Office, East Tower Refectory  
6:00 p.m.

**MINUTES**

Attendees: Talena Rambarran (President), Megan Murphy (VP Administration), Lucia Lee (VP External), Jack Huang (VP Internal), Rachel Kelly (VP Services), Adhithya Ravichandran (FRC Engineering), Carla Abarca (FRC Engineering), Sarah Kanji (FRC Health Sciences), Neha Dewan (FRC Health Sciences), Jeff Price (CRO), Zeeshan Ahmed (BoG), Charles Burke (BOD), Stephanie Butler (BOD), Hytham Afifi (BOD), Marion Jamard (International Student Rep), Ashley Ravenscroft (Director of Operations)  
Rita Sigsworth (recorder)

Regrets: Ali Vaezi (FRC Business), Anumeet Toor (FRC Social Science), Vi Dang (International Student Rep)

Absent: Alireza Taibakhsh (FRC Business), Majid Taghavi (Senate/Science), D'Andra Parker (Senate/Health Sciences), Cassel Busse (Senate/Humanities), Stephanie Marciniak (Senate/Social Sciences), Igor Oowski (FRC Humanities), Ayush Ranawade (FRC Science)

1. Call to Order

Talena Rambarran (President) called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m. Quorum was established.

2. Acceptance of the Agenda

Addition of agenda item - Appointment of interim FRC Science

**MOTION:** To accept agenda, The GSA Council Meeting, August 20, 2014.

Moved by: Megan Murphy

Seconded by: Jack Huang

Carried unanimously

Appointment of interim FRC Science

As Marlana Whinton, previous FRC Science, resigned as of the last meeting, Talena Rambarran presented a nomination for the interim FRC Science position. Mai Yamamoto was presented as the nominee and a brief statement was made on behalf of Mai. Jeff Price (CRO) then carried out a vote.

**MOTION:** To accept Mai Yamamoto as interim Science FRC

Moved by: Charles Burke

Seconded by: Megan Murphy

8 in Favour

2 in Abstention

Carried

Jeff Price left the meeting at 6:10 p.m.

Introductions were made around the table. All of the newly elected Board of Director members were present and given a special welcome.

3. Approval of the Minutes from the council meeting of July 29, 2014

**MOTION:** To accept the GSA Council Meeting minutes of July 29, 2014

Moved by: Lucia Lee

Seconded by: Adhithya Ravichandran

7 in Favour

5 in Abstention

Carried

4. Reports from Board

4.1 President's Report (President)

Talena Rambarran (President) reported that the executive had a meeting with representatives of the MSU on Monday, August 18, 2014. Discussion was initiated with MSU in regards to Graduate Club recognition. The GSA is hoping to piggy back on the system the MSU currently have in place. Also discussion was also centred around combining graduate and undergraduate awards. There are lots of differences between the award processes, but there will be ongoing discussions. Next meeting with MSU will be scheduled in the winter semester.

Talena also reported that Welcome Week is fast approaching and is encouraging engagement between the grad students and the GSA. Jack Huang (VP Internal) and Lucia Lee (VP External) will be out at activities trying to gauge what issues are important to Grad students currently.

Talena also noted, Ashley's maternity leave is fast approaching and Talena reported that Ashley's position has been posted. It will be a part-time short term contract. Interviews will commence in a couple of weeks.

Finally, Talena reiterated that Mosaic changes will affect many grad students on scholarships and who receive TA salaries. As of the first pay period in September TA's will get paid bi-weekly and scholarships will be distributed monthly. In response to those changes, the GSA, in collaboration with SGS, is presenting budgeting workshops (September 11<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>) to help those affected.

Talena reported that she received news of Professional Development modules regarding MOSAIC, which have not been rolled out yet. She has been asked to invite volunteers to view the modules and provide constructive feedback. It would take one hour to go through the module and then write comments. Anyone interested in participating, please contact Talena.

4.2 Senate Report

No report presented

4.3 Board of Governor's Report

Zeeshan Ahmed introduced himself as the Board of Governor's representative. As there has not been any meetings yet, there is currently nothing to report.

5. Committee Reports

5.1 Finance Committee (VP Administration)

Megan Murphy (VP Administration) reported that she is waiting for the Financial Statements be completed before scheduling the next finance committee.

## 5.2 Phoenix Executive Committee (VP Administration)

Megan reported that a Phoenix Executive Committee (PEC) meeting was held today. There will be a new menu and potentially some décor changes to help increase sales/revenue. The new menu will be in effect as of September 8, 2014.

The perimeters of the Phoenix Operating Committee (POC) were discussed this month and the POC hopes to meet in October to discuss the Audit and other aspects of the Phoenix's operations.

## 5.3 Events and Trips Planning Committee (VP External)

Lucia Lee reported that the Wine Tour trip scheduled for August 2, 2014 was a success. Due to the less than ideal summer weather, Beach Day on August 16, 2014 attendance was not optimal although bus seats were sold out. Upcoming events are a Niagara on the Lake trip on September 13, 2014 and Tuesday Trivia nights starting September 11, 2014.

Lucia also reported that other upcoming events are the Welcome Week activities i.e. Grad BBQ on Friday, September 5, 2014. Lucia is also liaising with SGS regarding the awards ceremony and the Budgeting workshops.

Lucia would also like to call a Student Action Committee meeting to develop surveys to send out in early September. Lucia asked for volunteers to sit on that committee. Sarah Kanji (FRC Health Sciences) offered her support as well as Rachel Kelly (VP Services).

Charles Burke (BOD) inquired about costs for the Grad BBQ. Ashley Ravenscroft (Director of Operations) stated that costs split evenly between SGS and the GSA. Amount billed to the GSA will be approximately \$2,500 - \$2,800 and costs have been lowered due to better food pricing/sourcing.

## 5.4 Academic Affairs Committee (VP Internal)

Jack Huang reported the Academic Affairs Committee has not met since last month and arrangements are being finalized for the awards ceremony for Friday, September 5, 2014. Rachel Kelly and the GSA Executive will present the awards. SGS will send out RSVP's to nominee's next week.

Jack reported that he is looking into training for TA's (pedagogical and how to manage and interact with people). He is looking to arrange this with CUPE next year. Charles Butler asked whether this would be mandatory training for the TA's and where the money is coming from. Ashley stated that this is a MSU initiative and discussions with the Provost are commencing. Adhithya Ravichandran (FRC Engineering) began a discussion regarding already taxing TA work schedules and balancing studies. He stated that supervisor's expect students to keep their same research pace during welcome week, so this might not be feasible. Also it would be difficult to fit in this training with 2000 student's schedules. Charles suggested that the teaching and learning could be web-based and since the undergraduate students would be benefitting, then the funds should come out of the Undergrad budget.

Stephanie Butler (BOD) gave an example from her department/faculty regarding AODA accessibility, Human Rights, discriminatory attitudes and sensitivity training. She could see additional training such as these being beneficial. Talena responded that different departments may have different initiatives but in order for this to have a broader impact on education, all departments need to buy in. She said that the

GSA can be the voice of the Graduate Student population regarding this idea and for FRC;s to gather input.

#### 5.4 International Student Representative Report (International Reps)

Marion Jamard (International Student Rep) reported on her International Student Fair preparations for Welcome Week. She said that there might be some conflict with other activities happening on September 4, 2014. She is hoping to recruit some volunteers for the event. Carla Abarca will be representing the GSA at the fair. Plans will be finalized tomorrow.

Marion also stated that she has engaged a speaker to come in and do a talk regarding the recent immigration changes/issues. Talena and Lucia caution Marion that the speaker must be government approved to ensure that information disseminated is accurate and up to date. Neha Dewan suggested posting information regarding on line resources to increase awareness.

#### 5.6 By-laws Committee (President)

Talena Rambarran reported that there has been no new meetings. Carla Abarca asked a question regarding her Grad Engineering Association that she and Adhi are trying to organize and how the FRC representation can be elected. They were advised if the association was approved by the GSA that the Association appoints 2 FRC's moving forward.

Rachel Kelly stated that the MSU is presenting a Good Governance workshop on October 10, 2014. Attendance is open to Undergrads first but if there is room Grad student are eligible to attend. Graduate students would have to pay for their spot. Charles Burke (BOD) inquired about the relationship between MSU/GSA/MAPS. Ashley stated that all groups have different constituencies and therefore different agendas. It is a high level/complex relationship. Discussion then entered into the realm of Graduate clubs regarding insurance, infrastructure, reporting complexity and fees. Talena stated that the GSA is not set up to solely take the responsibility of Graduate Clubs, hence the reason for trying to collaborate with MSU. Charles Burke volunteered to obtain more information from other universities and this item will be placed on New Business on next agenda.

#### 5.7 GSA Summer Leagues Committee (VP Services)

Rachel Kelly reported that the summer leagues are coming to a close and that the Phoenix Cup will be running this weekend.

#### 5.8 Graduate Student Services Review Committee (VP Services/ President)

Rachel Kelly requested volunteers for the Campus Tours during welcome week. She will be circulating an email requesting availability.

Rachel also stated that the GSA will have two tables at the resource fair.

#### 5.9 Health & Dental Committee (VP Services)

Rachel Kelly stated that there is not much to report. There will be more information coming soon regarding the prescription plan.

6. New Business

**MOTION:** To strike a Graduate Club committee. Charles Burke will act as chair of that committee.

Moved by: Charles Burke

Seconded by: Stephanie Butler

Carried unanimously

Next meeting

7. The next meeting was set for Monday, September 29, 2014 at 6 p.m.

8. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:15 p.m.

**MOTION:** To adjourn the meeting.

Moved by: Rachel Kelly

Seconded by: Lucia Lee

Carried unanimously

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Lucia Lee, VP External

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Date

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Debbie Ritskes, Recorder (Office Assistant)

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Date