



## Meeting Minutes

Graduate Students Association Council Meeting  
 Wednesday, June 19, 2013, 6:00 p.m.  
 GSA Office, East Tower Refectory



Present: Talena Rambarran (VP External), Ivana Postic (VP Internal), Aaron Maxwell (VP Services), Megan Murphy (FRC Business), Behrouz Bakhtiari (FRC Business), Niel Van Englen (FRC Engineering), Carla Abarca (FRC Engineering), Jennifer Nicholl (FRC Health Science), Rostyslav Zvanych (FRC Science), Vi Dang (International Student Representative), Marion Jamard (International Student Representative), Murray Wilson (BOG Representative), Margaret Jackel (Office Assistant)

Regrets: Frances Lasowski (GSA President), Stephen Hanson (VP Administration), Rahman Khokhar (Senate Representative), D'Andra Parker (Senate Representative)

Item	Motion		
1.	Call to Order	6:04 P.M.	
2.	Acceptance of the Agenda	The Agenda was approved on a motion by Ashley Marshall and seconded by Talena Rambarran.	Motion carried
3.	Approval of the Minutes from meetings of May 29, 2013	The minutes of the May 29, 2013 meeting were approved on a motion by Ashley Marshall and seconded by Aaron Maxwell.	
5.	Reports from Board a. President's Report	Ivana Postic reported on Frances Lasowski's behalf.  The student groups were invited to an introduction to the new budget model. This was an information only session. While there are substantial changes to the way the money is allocated, I'm not sure how many changes the graduate students themselves will see, especially immediately. This will come into effect next May (2014). Importantly, all central services (such as the School of Graduate Studies) will have a fixed budget (same as this year). The faculties will have their budgets adjusted based on their enrollment, but it will not be less than the 2013-2014 year.  Also MAPS (part time students) are in the process of addressing concerns from the university regarding their governance. We have offered our assistance to them.	
	b. Senate Report	No representative was available to report.	
	c. Board of Governor's Report	Murray Wilson stated that the Wilson building is moving forward with construction and is currently working on the underground parking and the Children's centre has been moved down in the valley.  There was a meeting held by the BoG, and a decision was	

		made by the finance committee to not collect MAPS fees due to the association's failure to convey financial transparency.	
	d. Fees Committee Report	Ivana Postic indicated as stated in last month's meeting, the fees were finalized on June 6 <sup>th</sup> . The fees committee has not met.	
6.	Committee Reports	Ivana Postic indicated that the GSA is working on getting signatures for all of the necessary parties in order to open the accounts.	
	a. Finance Committee (VP Admin)		
	b. Phoenix Executive Committee (VP Admin)	Talena Rambarran stated that the PEC has not met, but will be meeting shortly.	
	c. Events and Trips Planning Committee (VP External)	<p>Talena Rambarran stated that the grad BBQ was well received and reported an attendance of approximately 600, primarily between the times of 2:45 and 5:45. The remainder will be billed back. The GSA intends to host a second BBQ event potentially on the 31<sup>st</sup> of July held outside weather permitting.</p> <p>Recommendations were made to ensure that there were enough supplies, as there was a shortage of cookies. It was also recommended to perhaps rethink the set-up of the event, as individuals were not really socializing and interacting. Pete Self had indicated to Ivana Postic to perhaps only being able to obtain food once the tables were full to encourage interaction. Jennifer Nicholl suggested offering games on the side, maybe even a trivia game.</p> <p>Ms. Rambarran continued to report on the Wonderland trip that went fairly well, and we had one bus of attendees.</p> <p>Ashley Marhsall was acting as bus monitor, and indicated that some individuals had difficulties signing the waiver. Once they had arrived at Wonderland, people approached her regarding where to store strollers or if there were any arrangements for children which she was unable to answer. The suggestion was made to perhaps provide future bus monitors with a list frequently asked questions and a list of duties while on the bus, as well as any responsibilities at the</p>	

		<p>destination.</p> <p>Ms. Rambarran continued and stated that the July event will likely be a wine tour to three wineries in Beamsville, potentially on a Saturday near the end of the month with admission costs approximately \$15/person.</p> <p>Marion Jamard stated that she had attended the wine tour last year, but indicated that there was not much social interaction between individuals. Suggestions were made to potentially have games on the bus to encourage interaction.</p> <p>Ms. Rambarran continued to state that the August event may potentially be a beach day. No details have been finalized in regards to this.</p> <p>Ms. Rambarran shared with the council that a number of students within the biochem department purchased a chalice and has donated it to the Phoenix. The intent is that those who defend can request to drink from the Chalice. Inquiries have been made for the GSA to endorse the chalice and to advertise it upon our website or on the table toppers.</p> <p>Aaron Maxwell raised the concern regarding endorsing it as it is in relation to drinking. Niel Van Englen suggested promoting it through the Phoenix, such that as we own the Phoenix, we are endorsing it, but not directly the ones to encourage the drinking. Ivana Postic indicated that the chalice was more of a symbolic item, and students didn't necessarily need to drink an alcoholic beverage from it.</p> <p>Mr. Van Englen also reiterated that currently if you defend, you can obtain a free pitcher.</p> <p>The suggestion was made to have other beverage options besides beer to have after defending. It was also inquired if the Phoenix could carry champagne as it is more celebratory. These suggestions were to be put forward to the PEC.</p>	
	d. Academic	Ivana Postic stated that the GSA still had travel awards	

	<p>Affairs Committee (VP Internal)</p>	<p>that needed to be marked. As some council members have also submitted them, there is a conflict of interest and Ms. Postic requested volunteers to assist with marking the applications. The following packages were distributed the indicated individuals. Packet A – Talena Rambarran; Packet B – Aaron Maxwell; Packet C - Jennifer Nicholl; Packet D – Marion Jamard; Packet E – Vi Dang; Packet F &amp; G – Rostyslav Zvanych.</p> <p>Ashley Marshall continued to speak in regards to the subcommittee created last council meeting. Ms. Marshall indicated that a Google document will be created for all interested parties to collaborate in the creation of this award. Initial emails have been sent out but responses have been slow or not yet received.</p> <p>Ms. Postic continued to speak in regards to the GSA Facebook page, and indicated that each faculty should have a page created as well.</p> <p>Talena Ramaaran raised the concern with linking the GSA account to a personal account. Ms. Postic indicated that all GSA executives will have administrator power and all FRCs will have posting power. Ms. Rambarran continued to state in the event that all executives should leave, then it would be best to link it to a general account. Ms. Postic stated that she would link it to the MacGSA email account.</p> <p>Ms. Postic continued to state that she has been in communication with SGS for planning welcome week. It will no longer be just a single day and will be held the week of September 4<sup>th</sup>. The last day will be the grad award ceremony. We hope to have a BBQ on the Thursday from 12-5. SGS will also be hosting a breakfast, and a resource event, where clubs can get more members. Ms. Postic stated that this is also an opportunity for FRCs to plan events.</p>	
	<p>e. International Student Representative Report (International Reps)</p>	<p>Marion Jamard indicated that Vi Dang will be in charge of the games night hosted next Wednesday at the student centre in one of the upstairs rooms. They will be playing various games.</p> <p>Carla Abarca asked if non-international students could</p>	

		<p>attend the event. Ms. Jamard stated there are limited spots (twenty spots available) and while priority would be given to international students, if non-international students were to attend, they would not be sent away. The IGSA hopes that by not making their events public to non-international students, that they have limited the attendance of Canadians. If Canadians were to come with others, it's unavoidable. Ms. Dang indicated that at the last event, Canadians attended, but it was not an issue. She did indicate however, that they have problems with people who do not RSVP online, or do so last minute, and there are others who show up without RSVP'ing</p>	
	<p>f. By-laws Committee (President)</p>	<p>No update.</p>	
	<p>g. GSA Summer Leagues(VP Services)</p>	<p>Aaron Maxwell reiterated the memorandum of understanding mentioned last meeting between the GSA and Athletics and Recreation. As it was an old document, it would have left things as is. However in the process of reviewing and signing this memorandum, it was discovered that as the GSA maintains the fields, that we are liable for any injuries sustained on them, even for instances where McMaster rents out the fields. Should the GSA be sued, we would not be able to manage the lawsuit financially. This hindsight was brought forward to the facilities manager, and to Jeff Giles, the head of Athletics and Recreation, and the document was revised. However, the revised document did not resolve this liability issue.</p> <p>The GSA rejected the memorandum and has now signed a rental agreement. With the agreement, the GSA will now pay a rental fee to McMaster. There will be no immediate changes for this season and things will continue as they were. Beginning next year, the GSA will have to sign a new rental agreement, of which we hope will be an equivalent cost to what it currently is, but there are concerns that A&amp;R might turn it into just another league.</p> <p>Ashley Marshall asked if this would cause a change in the amount for the players. Mr. Maxwell stated that he was unable to stipulate what the cost will be next year</p>	

		<p>until we find out the fees and indicated we would find out in July. The current issue with liabilities is that non-students are not covered under McMaster’s insurance policy, and the question is whether or not they should be included in our plan.</p> <p>Mr. Maxwell clarified that the fields have been maintained through the GSA or volunteers and donations made through the GSA. The University has been paying for the grass cutting and the power for the lights.</p> <p>Ms. Marshall inquired if we could split the liability of the fields between the GSA and McMaster. Mr. Maxwell indicated that this was not possible, and that while we could assume sole liability, it would be cost prohibitive. The University is not willing to take liability part of the time unless the GSA was to agree to provide them with weekly maintenance reports and the GSA doesn’t have the manpower or resources to accomplish this.</p> <p>Ms. Marshall asked if it was possible to post signs indicating “use at your own risk”. Mr. Maxwell indicated that legally anyone who is a student can use the fields, and individuals could not be asked to leave unless a group has rented it out for that timeframe. Murray Wilson followed up to state that if an individual wished to launch a lawsuit against the GSA, there is nothing to prevent them from doing such. Mr. Maxwell indicated that the GSA would have to cover the cost of the litigation without insurance.</p> <p>Mr. Maxwell moved on to provide an update on the soccer league, reporting other than a couple of injuries, there was nothing to report.</p>	
	<p>h. Graduate Student Services Review(VP Services)</p>	<p>Aaron Maxwell indicated that the committee is in the process of having a review. We are reviewing if we pay a higher fee, what will we receive? Universities are beginning to understand the differences between undergraduates and graduate students. Now that the job market is being flooded with PhD’s, how do you counsel them and help them manage stress etc. Currently at McMaster, undergrads pay \$300, and</p>	

		<p>graduate students pay \$110. The university wishes to increase the fee to graduates and make the payment t par, but there will be no improvements, and the majority of these services are currently directed at undergraduates.</p> <p>Murray Wilson states that the services are being provided without discrimination of level of study. Mr. Maxwell indicated that the undergraduates hold a referendum every three years to determine what they want their fees to be going towards. There is currently no advocate for graduate students. He continued to state that the University of Waterloo has created a new president advisory council that advises the directly to the university president on behalf of graduate students.</p> <p>Mr. Maxwell indicated that the committee wishes to have FRCs approach each department and obtain one or two individuals to indicate what services they use, how useful they are, and what they wish to have changed. He also noted to council members that referencing methods that worked for other universities, may not work for ours as our needs may differ.</p> <p>Ivana Postic inquired if the GSA was going to request that the faculties to fund these enquiries. Mr. Maxwell stated that the Physics department hosts a gripe session at no cost to the department that allows them to retain a good relationship with the students.</p> <p>The desire was expressed to utilize data extraction and to poll students. However it is difficult to guarantee participation or have students to fill out a survey.</p> <p>Mr. Maxwell indicated that the GSA has been in communication with SGS and student affairs, and those met with have been understanding to our situation. As it stands, the University has not imposed upon us to pay more. However, there are concerns that they will limit out services by creating parallel ones that graduate students will not have access to.</p> <p>Murray Wilson indicated that we are at an impasse, as we currently have services, but we are not paying the</p>	
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		<p>equivalent amount that the undergrads are. Mr. Wilson continued to suggest the GSA have the University prove why we need to pay more for these services? In any event, a more cohesive plan should be implemented to obtain details.</p> <p>It was also suggested that the GSA Office Assistant and Student Affairs keep track of inquiries and information that passes through them that may assist with data extraction. Also brought to the table that all information should be provided for council members, and if possible, obtain information quarterly rather than annually.</p>	
	i. Health & Dental Committee (VP Services)	<p>Aaron Maxwell indicated that there was nothing to report. The GSA will be meeting with Del Pereia next Wednesday regarding our health and dental fees. Mr. Maxwell indicated that we would be reviewing the possible cap to the drug plan due to biologics.</p> <p>Concerns were raised in regards to this such as what drugs can we exclude and what the cap would look like and the ethics involved in regards to making these decisions. Jennifer Nicholl indicated that the Hamilton Health Science offered an ethics program should we require it to review these sorts of situations should we require it. Mr. Maxwell also indicated that the fees for the upcoming year have been set up and the Health and Dental committee will be struck soon after meeting with Del.</p>	
7.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New Business</li> </ul>	<p>Carla Abarca recently attended the CUPE general meeting. Why do we not have greater coordination between CUPE and GSA. International student dinner. Had 75 attendees. Why not have joint events? Stated he would be glad to coordinate with them. We're not a political body. Assist MSU re awards.. Liz Jackson training to TAs. Those who aren't affiliated with CUPE will you get excluded?</p>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li></li> </ul>		
8.	Adjournment	Motion to adjourn was accepted by Jennifer Nichol, and seconded by Ashley Marshall at 7:48 P.M.	

Person	Action Item	Due Date
Frances Lasowski	Visit bank to sign and finalize opening of account	

Stephen Hanson	Visit bank to sign and finalize opening of account	
Talena Rambarran	Bring forward the matter of the chalice and options for celebrating one's defense to the PEC	
Ashley Marshall	Create Google Document to utilize for the creation of the new award.	
Talena Rambarran	Review and mark Travel Grant bundle A	
Aaron Maxwell	Review and mark Travel Grant bundle B	
Jennifer Nicholl	Review and mark Travel Grant bundle C	
Marion Jamard	Review and mark Travel Grant bundle D	
Vi Dang	Review and mark Travel Grant bundle E	
Rostyslav Zvanych	Review and mark Travel Grant bundle F & G	
Ivana Postic	Link the Facebook page to the MacGSA email account	
Talena Rambarran	Organize the details for the September Grad Welcome Week BBQ	
Margaret Jackel	Email council to compile list of questions for Del	
Aaron Maxwell	Initiate the Health & Dental committee after meeting with Del	
Margaret Jackel	Obtain information and data to further a cohesive plan regarding fees	
Gina Robertson	Obtain information and data to further a cohesive plan regarding fees	
Margaret Jackel	Email CUPE to see if the GSA could potentially collaborate with them for events in the future.	



Talena Rambaraan  
VP External

July 24, 13

Date



Margaret Jackel  
Office Assistant

July 24, 2013

Date