



Meeting Minutes

Graduate Students Association Council Meeting
Tuesday, October 29, 2013, 6:00 p.m.
GSA Office, East Tower Refectory



Present: Frances Lasowski (GSA President), Talena Rambarran (VP External), Ivana Postic (VP Internal), Aaron Maxwell (VP Services), Megan Murphy (FRC Business), Carla Abarca (FRC Engineering), Adhithya Ravichandran (FRC Engineering), Priscilla Medeiros (FRC Social Science), Zack Batist (FRC Social Science), Murray Wilson (BoG Representative), Geoff Callaghan (CRO), Vi Dang (International Student Rep)

Regrets: Stephanie Jones (FRC Science), Spencer Savoie (Senate Rep)

Absent: Stephen Hanson (VP Administration), Maryam Ghasemaghahi (FRC Business), Jennifer Nicholl (FRC Health Sciences), Sarah Kanji (FRC Health Sciences), Ashley Marshall (FRC Humanities), Jeffrey Wyngaarden (FRC Humanities), Rostyslav Zvanych (FRC Science), Majid Taghavi (Senate Rep), Ahmed El Ganzouri (Senate Rep), D'Andra Parker (Senate Rep), Cassel Busse (Senate Rep), Stephanie Marciniak (Senate Rep), Marion Jamard (International Student Rep)

Item	Motion		
1.	Call to Order	6:00 PM	
2.	Acceptance of the Agenda	Frances Lasowski amended the agenda to accept new FRCs for Business and Social Sciences. The amendment was approved on a motion by Priscilla Medeiros and seconded by Aaron Maxwell. Motion Carried.	Motion Carried
3.	Approval of the Minutes from meetings of September 27, 2013	The minutes of the September 27, 2013 meeting were approved on a motion by Priscilla Medeiros and seconded by Talena Rambarran. None opposed, none abstained. Motion Carried.	Motion Carried
4.	Reports from Board a. President's Report • Committee Scheduling	<p>Zack Batist introduced himself, and indicated that he wished to fill one of the vacant positions of FRC Social Sciences. Megan Murphy also reintroduced herself and indicated she wished to return to sit as one of the FRCs for Business. With a closed door vote, a motion was passed to accept Zack as a FRC for Social Sciences. Six were in favour, none abstained, no objections. A Motion to accept Megan Murphy as a FRC for business was passed. Six were in favour, none abstained, no objections.</p> <p>Frances Lasowski stated that there is a new draft agreement for student groups that obtain funding from the University (GSA fees etc.). The GSA falls under the same policy as the MSU. The University is currently redrafting their policies to ensure financial transparency. The GSA is currently in compliance with these new policies as we have already have an external audit conducted annually and will continue</p>	<p>Motion carried</p> <p>Motion carried</p>

		<p>to do as such. The GSA currently pays 1% on fees collected. We are trying to get it waived on the Capital Building Fee and the Health & Dental fee. We currently have a strong argument regarding the health & dental and are working in collaboration with the MSU regarding this.</p> <p>Our organization is looking to host a summit with other schools as we had last year. Last year the discussion focused on governance, this year, the discussion will be focused on student bars etc. and practices of such establishments. This will likely happen in December.</p> <p>Ms. Lasowski continued to provide information regarding the President's Mandate. There are eight methods to get the university to differentiate. They want universities to put forth a document to show our uniqueness, and our university is currently trying to get feedback from students regarding what they want from 2:30 – 4:00 in the Gilmour Hall Council Chambers. This information is being requested by the government, but the intent is unknown.</p>	
	b. Senate Report	Representative was not available to report.	
	c. Board of Governor's Report	<p>Murray Wilson spoke on the matter of the President's Report stating that it was a discussion regarding the strategic mandate agreement. This started with the prior government, but has changed with the new. How will we differentiate ourselves from other universities? A lot of questions are being raised as to how this works out. Is this based upon research intensive schools? Teaching? Currently research intensive schools cost more per student. There are criteria for a set of 5 ~ 6 axis's that they want to use. Research is currently one of them. They are looking for something that will drive future education policies.</p> <p>Mr. Wilson indicated that those interested in future academic policies should participate in this event. He continued to state that the University's audited financials are out for review and that there are number of supporting reports to provide a bigger picture of what is happening.</p> <p>Mr. Wilson continued to indicate that there are changes occurring from tri-council to develop a procedure of practice in the event that something goes wrong with staff, teachers etc. regarding violation of research etc.. Normally funding is pulled, but there will now be a method for adjudicating that. There was a presentation provided for forward integrity, and views are welcomed on perspective.</p> <p>Frances Lasowski also indicated the axis of differentiation</p>	

		has been posted online on the GSA website and indicated that it links back to the MSU website. There was also an online chat hosted earlier today so you can see some of the questions brought forwarded and the responses.	
	d. Fees Committee Report	<p>Ivana Postic indicated that the committee has met twice. At the first meeting, a discussion was held regarding whether or not we comply to the university's new fee collection requirements. There is a potential to tweak the tuition framework for domestic students. If there are complaints from other students, there will be ways to change it in the future.</p> <p>Frances Lasowski indicated that the implementation of Mosaic will be a multi-step process. The financial portion will be going live on December 30th and will affect research accounts. All financial accounts will be cut off from November 15th and they hope to implement the new one by December 1st.</p> <p>Ms. Postic continued to state that there were no meeting minutes for the second fees committee meeting.</p> <p>Vi Dang inquired regarding Ms. Lasowski's point whether or not current account numbers will change. Ms. Lasowski stated that all account numbers will be closed on November 30th and new account numbers will be provided.</p> <p>Aaron Maxwell also provided the example that if you have a lab and require something during this two week period, you will not be able to order anything until that period has ended. The new system will be electronic and should be simplify ordering materials</p>	
5.	<p>Committee Reports</p> <p>a. Finance Committee (VP Admin)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2012-2013 Audit Report 	<p>Frances Lasowski reported on Stephen Hanson's behalf. We were hoping to approve the audit, but we need to adjust the relocation balancing as it was not done previously. The GSA owns all of the leasehold improvements, meaning all upgrades to the Phoenix. The Phoenix will pay the GSA a reimbursement for these fees each year. It will cover capital expenses. Currently, students are paying the loan at the moment. As the GSA owns the cash flow, it makes sense that the asset should be reflected as ours on the books as well. This way it will be a single line item. If any members have comments during the month, Ms. Lasowski requested that comments be forwarded earlier rather than later, as she would be meeting with the auditors in the near future.</p> <p>Ms. Lasowski continued to state that the Phoenix has a loss of 91,000. Not all of that is a cash loss as some is attributed</p>	


		<p>to amortization. The GSA still has money, as we made a profit when combining both organizations. If the GSA has to bail out the Phoenix, this is the final number. The GSA is going for approval in November. The GSA will be going for approval of the draft audit in November at the council meeting.</p> <p>Murray Wilson raised concerns regarding the deficit inquiring as to where the GSA was cutting back costs. Ms. Lasowski indicated that these are last year's numbers, and that by the time that we were aware of them, it was too late to change or fix anything. For this year, we have changed suppliers, are re-evaluating labour costs, and working on the books. For this year, the revenue should be high enough, and we have made motions to correct things. We are hoping to have numbers for November, but year-end numbers are messy. The auditors are providing us a way to start to obtain numbers, but the information is currently incomplete.</p> <p>Mr. Wilson continued to ask if our failsafe is insufficient, if we needed to start tightening our budget. Ms. Lasowski indicated that we have reserves that will cover us for the budget for this year. Our current cash position is at 132,000, thus we can cover the Phoenix however it burns through our reserve. We have also not yet received any student fees yet. Ms. Lasowski indicated that, as we are halfway through our year, we have spent conservatively in respect to our budget and that we are currently underspent, allowing confidence for this side of the operations where there are concerns about the other side.</p>	
	b. Phoenix Executive Committee (VP Admin)	<p>Talena Rambarran reported. The Phoenix had its first ever staff meeting. The Interim General Manager Daniel Rodrigues is currently putting together a handbook regarding policies that hadn't previously been in place. The Phoenix will also be undergoing a menu revision, and a draft will be available by mid-November, and will be implemented by the end of November. The staff at the Phoenix has had a lot of input, and Mr. Rodrigues is hoping to implement staff comments. The Phoenix will now be open on Saturdays from 11:00 AM to 5:00 PM. It is also offering \$1.50 for coffee and a cookie in the mornings.</p> <p>Ms. Rambarran requested that any questions or concerns be put forth to Stephen Hanson and to let the committee know if people have complements, or complaints. This information is helpful in assisting the General Manager know how to move forward with things.</p>	

		<p>Carla Abaraca inquired regarding discounts, if they were only available for GSA events, or for any grad event. Frances Lasowski clarified that any graduate student events could receive discounts.</p> <p>Murray Wilson inquired if we have moved forward from the stamp system to implement a discount system. Ms. Lasowski indicated that we are still utilizing the stamp system as there are currently other matters to address first and there has not been an opportunity to address this yet.</p>	
	c. Events and Trips Planning Committee (VP External)	<p>Talena Rambarran stated that the GSA held an Oktoberfest event to Waterloo Oktoberfest. The GSA provided transportation there and back, and participants could book their own tickets for events there and the event went well and was well received.</p> <p>Ms. Rambarran continued to notify that November's event will be a planetarium event held on the 21st. We can currently have 35 participants, and \$5 voucher for the Phoenix will be provided. An email was sent out earlier, and the event is filling up quickly. The committee is currently looking into ideas for December events. There are currently only two members on this committee. Potential events are currently either a wine tour or a Niagara trip for the light show.</p>	
	d. Student Issues Action Committee (VP External)	<p>Talena Rambarran invited members to join the committee as she is currently the sole member. The next meeting will be held in February. Carla Abarca offered to join the committee.</p> <p>Ms. Rambarran recently attended an event for OCGS. There was one representative from all universities and collective issues in common were discussed. Some topics discussed were post residency, and how the fees keep going up, but how some feel it should go down with seniority; providing awards to international students to cover the difference in tuition costs; how there needs to be more feedback as to why things fail, or don't go through; mental health issues, more on campus for students; how to access copywriting.</p> <p>Frances Lasowski stated that all GSA committees have terms, and that information is available online currently for some, and others will be up soon. Ms. Lasowski also stated that the committees are not restricted to council and that other graduate students are welcome and asked others to encourage non-council to join committees.</p> <p>Murray Wilson requested that he be given governance</p>	

		feedback from OGSA to provide to the Board of Governors to assist with connecting the two together.	
	e. Academic Affairs Committee (VP Internal)	<p>Ivana Postic stated that the GSA bursaries have had a lot of applications, but have little funding for these. Ms. Postic spoke with Brooke from SGS, who holds our trust and holds knowledge as to how much we can make/take from trust. Brooke stated that we do not have any further funds for bursaries for this year. We are currently looking to change this for future years.</p> <p>Ms. Postic moved on to speak of the travel awards. Winners will be notified next week.</p> <p>Ms. Postic indicated that we will be starting two new initiatives. First to improve communication, and second to increase student engagement. An email was sent out to every graduate secretary to set up a graduate council for each faculty. This way, someone can speak regarding issues in each department. Members will be expected to attend and speak on it only. This will be beginning next Monday for Engineers. All other FRCs will be meeting on Thursday.</p> <p>The new award subcommittee development and details have been pushed forward to next term.</p>	
	f. International Student Representative Report (International Reps)	<p>Vi Dang indicated that they held an event in the ABB lounge. The event went well, and they received a lot of feedback. They still had funds left over from the budget provided, but it will be utilized for the next event. IGSA had stopped advertising towards the end for fear of exceeding capacity. There were approximately 70 participants.</p>	
	g. By-laws Committee (President)	<p>Frances Lasowski indicated that we are planning on revamping our Board of Directors. Ours currently does not function as structured, as senate representatives mostly do not participate, which is not beneficial to the health of our organization. The GSA is looking to bring alumni community members, who are experts on financial matters, law etc. Currently we do not possess the knowledge to examine documents properly as we are new to some of these items, and are dependent on professionals to relay this to us at a cost. Some matters could have progressed more smoothly had we had the knowledge to provide clarification earlier on. She indicated that the board will consist of eight students and three community members.</p> <p>Ms. Lasowski continued to state that as a number of executive will be stepping down next year, and as the GSA is getting more involved, the roles of the executives are becoming more expansive. This may be a good time to re-</p>	

		<p>evaluate the expectations of our executives and the compensations tied to the roles as well as the responsibilities, how to moderate and discipline them. We are also examining the possibility of having it as a role in place of a TAsip as some other universities have done. Currently if one turns down a TAsip, they will take a financial hit, but they are looking at a compensation package.</p>	
	h. GSA Summer Leagues(VP Services)	<p>Frances Lasowski spoke on Aaron Maxwell's behalf. She stated that we are currently working on sorting out the softball leagues.</p>	
	i. Graduate Student Services Review(VP Services)	<p>Frances Lasowski reported on Aaron Maxwell's behalf. Ms. Lasowski requests that members find out what services are important to students. Graduate students currently pay \$114 for student services, which are solely allocated into athletics and campus health currently. This needs to be re-evaluated as it is dated. We are currently trying to figure out priorities, but must send a solution in February for the AGM. We were unable to do so last year as we missed the deadline.</p>	
	j. Health & Dental Committee (VP Services)	<p>Frances Lasowski reported on Aaron Maxwell's behalf. We are currently re-evaluating our service provider as our contract is nearing its end to see if we will remain with our current provider or a new one.</p>	
6.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New Business Election Update 	<p>Geoff Callaghan spoke regarding this. UTS has been running this for the GSA, but will be ceasing their services. The GSA has received a proposal from Simply Voting, which is the service that the MSU currently uses, and that the proposal can be forwarded to those interested. This change in provider will have to be voted on, and we will have to align our bylaws with their validations etc.</p> <p>Frances Lasowski indicated she had looked at the MSU bylaws, stating that they are fairly aligned with ours.</p> <p>Mr. Callaghan continued to indicate that Simply Voting will likely be more cost effective as they do not have a set rate as UTS had. Their service is safe, private and well backed up. Simply Voting can co-ordinate with IT, though we suspect that UTS will charge for that.</p>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council Meeting Dates for November and December 	<p>Frances Lasowski indicated that the next council meeting will be held on Wednesday, November 27th at 6:00 PM. A Doodle will be sent out shortly regarding the December meeting. After the meeting in December, we will be having a dinner at the Phoenix afterwards. Members are welcome to bring significant others or other family to this, as it will be more of a social event. Members are asked to RSVP if you are able to</p>	

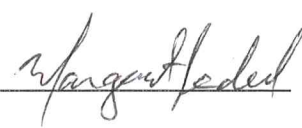
		attend that and indicate how many will be in attendance as well as any dietary restrictions.	
7.	Adjournment	Motion to adjourn the meeting was accepted by Talena Rambarran, and seconded by Ivana Postic at 7:30 PM.	



Talena Rambaraan
VP External

Nov 27, 13

Date



Margaret Jackel
Office Assistant

Nov 27, 2013.

Date