

Graduate Students Association of McMaster University  
Council Meeting, Monday October 20, 2014  
GSA Office, East Tower Refectory  
6:00pm  
Minutes

Attendees: Talena Rambarran (GSA President), Debbie Ritskes (Admin Assistant), Lorraine Maida (Admin Assistant), Lucia Lee (GSA VP External), Marion Jamard (International), Vi Dang (International), Ayush Ranawade (Science), Mai Yamamoto (Science), Adhithya Ravichandran (Engineering), Neha Dewan (Health & Sciences), Jeff Price (CRO), Alireza Taibakhsh (Business)

Regrets: Megan Murphy (VP Admin), Ali Vaezi (Business), Carla Abarca (Engineering), Igor Osowski (Humanities), Ahmed Zeeshan (BoG), Anumeet Toor (Social Sciences)

Absent: Jack Huang (GSA VP Internal), Rachel Kelly (GSA VP Services), Sarah Kanji (Health Sciences), Majid Taghavi (Senate/Science), Cassel Busse (Senate/Humanities), Stephanie Marciniak (Senate/Social Sciences) Charles Burke (BOD), Stephanie Butler (BOD), Hytham Afifi (BOD), Frances Lasowski (Past President), Asim Soomro (Senate/Health Sciences)

1. Call to order at 6:05pm

Moved by: Lucia Lee

Second by: Ayush Ranawade

Carried

2. Acceptance of the Agenda October 20, 2014

Motion: To accept agenda, The GSA Council Meeting October 20, 2014

Moved by: Lucia Lee

Second by: Adhithya Ravichandra

Carried

3. Approval of the minutes from September 29, 2014

Moved by: Adhithya Ravichandran

Second by: Ayush Ranawade

Carried

4. Reports from the Board

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President's Report –

Ashley had a baby boy on Sunday at 8:00 pm. Lorraine is now responsible for Ashley's position.

Talena met with the Provost to discuss issues facing graduate students. The issues surrounding graduate students pay was discussed and what will happen going forward. Dr. Wilkinson believes that this will not be an issue next year and it will be up to the departments to adjust the numbers for those most affected (ie. – TA second semester). If you are a TA first semester you will have to budget for second semester.

Talena also inquired if there would be anything directed toward graduate students in regards to MIETL. Graduate students can also use the learning portfolio; however there does not seem to be anything Graduate Student specific right now. Adi says the complaint is that it is more work.

Health & Dental providers meeting – Talena spoke on Rachel’s behalf; We are shopping the plan out this year for next year, some changes may occur i.e. optical coverage or enhanced paramedical services, may cost extra \$2.00 and then if a huge amount of the population uses optical there would probably be \$5.00 increase in fees the following year. CUPE has some coverage but it is small and not all of the graduate students are a part of CUPE.

Talena commented that Science and all FRC events on campus should be hosted at the Phoenix so money spent goes back to the GSA. We are working on implementing a discount for GSA events and subsidizing costs for students. There were issues in the past with amount of food vs. the cost but this has been resolved, and if there are any issues please bring it to Council’s attention right away so it can be resolved. Moving forward it will be a policy if it is a campus graduate event it will be hosted at the Phoenix.

Report from the GSA Board of Directors – Talena; met a couple of weeks ago and the Pregnancy policy passed at the Board of Directors level – entitles full-time permanent employees to a top up to EI to 70% for 17 weeks (cost to the GSA ~ \$6000).

Laura Whinton was put forward to the Board of Directors as our HR Representative; she can adapt HR idea to us and help develop new projects. Laura writes:

I'm currently working in the HR field with a wide variety of clients within both the private and public sectors. I can adapt common HR ideas to a variety of industries while utilizing limited resources in an effective manner. I would bring professionalism and experience to help improve the GSA's current practices as well as help to develop new projects.

We still need 1 representative for Finance, and 1 representative for Law that would give us their expertise on the Board.

Motion to accept Laura Whinton as Community Board of Director for HR

Moved by: Lucia Lee

Second by: Mai Yamamoto

Carried

Senate Report - Ayush; A meeting was held. The University is starting a policy making program in Health Science. McMaster signed a MOU so the government will be giving money to promote research.

Board of Governor’s Report – absent

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## 5. Committee Reports

Finance Committee (VP Administration) – Talena on Megan’s behalf; reviewed audited statements and the committee is meeting again in November. Information is with Paolo so he can give us the numbers for the GSA budget vs. expenditure.

Phoenix Executive Committee (VP Administration) - Talena on Megan’s behalf; the committee discussed the menu reprint. Wednesday nights are going well (grad students get 15% off). September was a good month. Waiting for lease to be finalized and signed. Marion/Jeff; Wednesdays are really great, a poster

for the 15% off would be great way to advertise. Specify that the discount applies to Graduate Students only. The music is a little loud though; it is difficult to have a conversation.

Talena; Discussed the Dean Ray negative email re: picture of employee drinking during work but the person was finished her shift. Megan responded to him and only him cc; to Talena. He has disappeared since. There are no issues.

Events and Trips Planning Committee (VP External) Lucia – Corn Maze, bus trip - 46 people are going, November – bowling night? Looking for a close location to go to.

Lucia; Attended an orientation meeting for PACBIC on October 9 students from MSU were also there. Their office isn't on campus so that people feel comfortable with bringing forward Human rights issues. We discussed topics that cover racism/gender issues on campus

Lucia; Attended OCGS in Toronto, Universities GSA's in Ontario and one or two people from SGS attended. Common issues for all students were discussed, such as supporting students in crisis (mental health, funding issues). Laurier implemented at fall break Grad students would also have a break from TA commitments and can take the week off if wanted. Maybe we should have a similar policy? Our fall break is only 2 days; maybe we should include spring break. Noted TA's also get 2 week holiday, the questions was does anyone take the time off.

Lucia; relationship between supervisor and students – Ryerson started a check list they sit down and go through together at the beginning of the year. Everyone is on the same page this way and it keeps you on track also. Will discuss with Jack and SGS and maybe implement the same for September, it should be signed by both parties and handed in to SGS.

Academic Affairs Committee (VP Internal) Jack – absent

International Student Representative Report (International Reps) Marion; gathered all volunteers and thanked them and made a plan for January 12, 2015 to welcome the new international students. We will use the same frame work from September and expand on what's already there.

Vi; First immigration fair had really good feed back, immigration law is changing in January and we will have another fair in February. Problems with Visa to Canada – international student services have a lawyer that comes every Friday to help with issues if anyone needs assistance. YMCA Hamilton has a adviser you can contact - Shaharia for information.

By-laws Committee (President) Talena; October 14 meeting – we now have a few people on the Committee. We will review first 8 sections before next AGM.

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Graduate Student Services Review Committee (VP Services/President) Rachel – absent

Health & Dental Committee (VP Services) – absent

6. New Business – Election Jeff; 3 positions open - FRC Science, FRC Social Science, FRC Humanities – bi-election in early November. We have a service for on line voting, it is about a 3 week process. Nomination process....1 week, after a week there will be a pre-election debates if wanted. If no nominations then council has to nominate someone to fill the position.

7. Next meeting – via doodle pole

8. Adjournment 6:54

Motion to adjourn

Moved by Lucia

Second by Ayush

Carried



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Lucia Lee, VP External

Nov 27, 14

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Date



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Debbie Ritskes, Recorder (Office Assistant)

Nov 27/14

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Date