

Graduate Students Association of McMaster University
Council Meeting, Thursday, November 27, 2014
GSA Office, East Tower Refectory
6:00pm
Minutes

Present: Talena Rambarran (GSA President), Megan Murphy (GSA VP Admin), Rachel Kelly (GSA VP Services), Lucia Lee (GSA VP External), Debbie Ritskes (Administrator), Adhi Ravichandran (Engineering), Ayush Ranawade (Science), Carla Abarca (Engineering), Vi Dang (International), Jeff Price (CRO), Igor Osowski (Humanities)

Regrets: Neha Dewan (Health Sciences), Marion Jamard (International)

Absent: Alireza Taibakhsh (Business), Ali Vaezi (Business), Sarah Kanji (Health Sciences), Anumeet Toor (Social Science), Ahmed Zeeshan (BoG), Majid Tahavi (Senate/Science), Cassel Busse (Senate/Humanities), Stephanie Marciniak (Senate/Social Sciences), Charles Burke (BOD), Stephanie Butler (BOD), Hytham Afifi (BOD), Asim Soomro (Senate/Health Science),
Call to order 6:08

Acceptance of the agenda: 1st- Megan, 2nd- Lucia, carried

Approval of minutes from October 20, 2014 1st – Megan, 2nd - Ayush, carried

Reports from the board

President's Report

- Attended CAGS on behalf of the GSA – the theme was rethinking the PhD.
 - Focus on Knowledge mobilization skills
 - More internships
 - More partnership research
 - More writing and speaking exercises for diverse audiences and formats
 - Push towards interdisciplinary research – challenges of talking to non-specialists.
 - Intersecting the 3 tri-councils
 - Encouraging graduate supervisors to see the changing landscape

Tricouncil (NSERC): Training: 75% of graduates will not end up in academia

New strategy (common elements of the directions)

- Professional skills
- Student mobility
- Globally competitive funding levels
- Science promotion and mentorship

Other News

- Lorraine stepped down from her position with the GSA, Debbie is now working both positions (Ashley's replacement for Mat Leave and Office Assistant) and is in the office full time.
- The special meeting regarding the continuation of Jack Huang in the VP Internal position was held. Jack had not been performing his duties nor responding to emails for 1.5 months prior and

the votes of council was unanimous to remove him from office. Travel awards need to be adjudicated.

- Mai has stepped down as the FRC for Science, she is taking more responsibility with CUPE
- A Survey will be coming out shortly from IHaveAPlan regarding the health and dental plan, satisfaction among the students, and what student would like moving forward. Our plan will be up for tender this year and they will be seeking the best insurance company for us in the coming year. Encourage people to fill out the survey.
- Fran, Megan and I had a Meeting with the President this past month and we informed him of the different issues facing graduate students, namely the dissatisfaction with the way Mosaic rolled out. He agreed to follow up with Provost and look into what will be happening moving forward.
- Meeting with Sean VanKoughnett today – discussed the student services fee restructuring. They are currently running a budget of a deficit because the fees have not kept up with the cost. Grad students currently pay less than undergrads. The proposed fee structure will be logical as to where fees are allocated. Grad students will likely vote on it in this March's AGM. If Grads don't accept possible fee increase we will be put on waiting list for services. We are not paying for many services at this point most are dedicated to undergrads. Next meeting with Sean in approximately 2 weeks.
- Holiday Dinner will be happening on December 18th following the meeting at 6pm. Partners are welcome to join the dinner portion at 7 pm at the Phoenix. We are have an ugly holiday sweater theme. There will be a prize for the ugliest holiday sweater.
- Board of Directors: Approved Grenning's to file our NPO and deal with the CRA on our behalf. Cost will be \$675.00 plus HST.
- If you have any ideas send them to council. We are not running an official election should have been done in October, Jeff was off ill and we will have to run election in February anyways.
- Email going out for vacancies and voting at next council meeting to appoint GSA Internal on the interim.

Carla and Adi have been talking with the Dean he was wondering why there were so many complaints around MOSAIC i.e. Engineering seems to be more effected, 45% of engineering students are international students. Engineering students get most of their money from their TA, and domestic fees are much less than the international student's fees. Discussing with administration regarding what will be done moving forward.

Senate report - passed motion too for the new student representatives to be apart of Senate

Board of Governors report - absent

Committee reports

Finance Committee met with Fabian today from Grennings. Working on budget vs actuals, we are still doing a lot of cleaning up for the Phoenix. The Phoenix is approximately 95% cleaned up. We would like Paolo to come in for a full week to completely clean up the GSA, which will reduce our audit fee. Final billing \$21,000 should be \$15,000 there was a lot of corrections. Unifying the bookkeeping will benefit in the long run. Paolo doing filings for the last fiscal year. He has the last piece of information so should be filed next week.

Phoenix Executive Committee - Paolo is looking after HST, Kevin has been setting aside money every week in a separate account. Kevin has been paying weekly amounts for the short term debt. We need to pay off the last remaining vendor (Choice Meats), discussing options. Grad and Trivia nights are going well. Small decor changes have occurred. Trivia may change to another day. As discussed before music is a little loud, possible solution would be to turn off speakers in the alcove. Wing night has been discontinued, it isn't cost effective. Everyone likes the new menu. Prices had to be increased on the menu they had never been costed. Now all the items have a margin. Phoenix will be closing on December 19th for the holidays and reopening January 5th, 2015.

Events and Trips Planning Committee – Hanes Maze was a success. No one got lost and it was a lot of fun. Bowling night on December 4th at University Lanes – attendance is small right now, there is a 48 hr cancellation policy so we will see what attendance is like. Only 5 people have signed up right now if there are 10 or less it will be cancelled.

Student Advocacy Committee and Student Issues Action Committee have been combined and being called the Student Advocacy Committee, we have received surveys from some other universities so we can copy what we have and also do our survey.

Academic Affairs Committee - no one to lead committee

International Student Representative Report – planning to have 2nd Fair January 12, 2015. SGS will pay for food and drinks, it will be the same Fair as September 2014.

We are working with SGS and Airways Transit to get a better deal on rates. We are joining forces with Columbia College and Mohawk College. It's very difficult getting to the airport by bus with large luggage items and transportation is very expensive. Working with global Hamilton to make a bigger impact. Meeting in December.

By Laws Committee meeting quarterly.

GSA Summer Leagues Committee not in session right now, Talena and Rachel approached the league committee to develop an intramural curling league.

Graduate Student Services Review Committee

- Health and Dental Committee are shopping for new plan and met late in October, represented pretty well in the ihaveaplan survey. Possible changes to increase paramedical coverage, add mental health practitioner's, and vision coverage, laser surgery hasn't been flagged as a priority. Goal is to start a poster campaign to advertise network service. Use social media to keep students updated.
- Myth buster session – invited a professional in October. We had a nutritionist, and created a Myth buster pamphlet. November we had an exercise expert and we are doing a myth a day for the next couple of weeks. Released a new app download for athletics and recs and there is a new mindful and wellness program.
- Mental health strategy has been ongoing since January. Two staff members, increased training, increase capacity of wellness centre, universal changes. Hiring full time staff to deal with gender violence.

Carla brought up – contraceptive patch not covered. Something we can discuss with ihaveaplan.

New business – Appointment of VP and upcoming elections – we are not going forward with elections we will do the regular elections at the end of February. We will have a vote at next council meeting to elect interim VP Internal. Appointment of VP Internal duties over the next month.

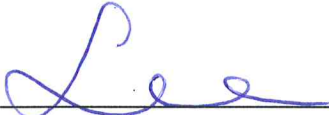
Jeff will notify Adi and Carla what to do regarding splitting department etc. and voting procedures for security purposes. We will need to meet to set it up.

Volunteers needed to do travel awards – Vi has volunteered – email Vi the committee information and the SOP. Committee to meet in the GSA board room, food allowed to be ordered. Should take a couple of hours.

Talena and Lucia to meet with Chris McAllister – regarding login to website. He has fixed Adi and Carla's, best to go to the office and Lucia and Talena's can be fixed right away.

Next meeting (Holiday Dinner) December 18 @ 6:00 pm meeting and dinner at 7:00

Adjournment – at 7:20 carried



Lucia Lee, VP External

Feb 5, 15

Date



Debbie Ritskes, Recorder (Office Assistant)

Jan 4/15

Date