

Graduate Students Association of McMaster University
Council Meeting

Tuesday, February 23, 2016
GSA Office, East Tower Refectory
6:00 p.m.



Minutes

Attendees: Talena Rambarran (President), Farhad Sadeh (FRC Business), Hadi Eslami (FRC Business), Neha Dewan (FRC Health Science), Tarushika Vasanthan (FRC Science), Vi Dang (International Representative), Maleeha Qazi (FRC Health Sciences), Natalie D'Silva (VP Services) Lucia Lee (VP External), Ashley Ravenscroft (DoO), Shawn Hercules (FRC Science), Andrew Kloiber (FRC Humanities), Philip Tominac (Senate Engineering), Naby Nikookaran (FRC Engineering), Peter Gardhouse (Senate Humanities)

Regrets: Anna D'Angela (Board of Governors), Manraj Kaur (VP Internal), Megan Murphy (VP Administration), Theo Nazy (FRC Social Science)

Absent: AzamShamsi (CRO), Darko Ljubic (FRC Engineering), Maryam Ghasemaghahi (Senate Business), Mai Yamamoto (International Representative), Sid Nath (Senate Health Science)

- 1.0 Call to Order 6: 15 pm
- 2.0 Acceptance of the Agenda, **motion** first by Natalie second by Peter all in favor motion carries.
- 3.0 Approval of Minutes from the meeting of January 27th, 2016 **Motion** to approve the minutes from January 27th meeting first by Andrew second by Natalie all in favor motion carried unanimously.
- 4.0 Reports from the Board
 - 4.1 President's Report

Talena mentioned;

- Admin Con – Met February 1st. Talena, Natalie and Ashley attended. Talena brought up the CAFs (and the decision to postpone) and how the discussions come at a bad time because students are frustrated with the way Payroll/Mosaic has been handled the last 1.5 years. Grad students do not feel they are a priority to the University at this time. Talena recommended the University contribute soft-money to wellness for Graduate students so there is not reduction of services in the interim while a decision is being negotiated/made.
- IT review. The University has hired consultant to do a complete review of all of its IT systems. Would like the perspective of graduate students from a research and TA point of view. They will develop online surveys and develop questions to determine how different groups are using the services. They will also be doing stakeholder interviews and would like 6,7 representatives to be involved in the process (March 23/24). This will be included in an email to be sent to all graduate students, so if any student is interested should email the GSA president.

- The budget for the GSA was prepared. It needs to be approved by the BOD. There are not many changes as CPI is low and the GSA aren't increasing fees past it, so the GSA do not have a lot fund for new programming.
- The Executive met with couple of people from CUPE to discuss the whole compulsory and ancillary fees issue. They currently have their bargaining survey out and so far, it looks like mental health is a priority for their members. The CUPE will not know what they will bargain for until September, so we have no guarantee that mental health will be something they ask for or if the University will entertain the idea of allowing that into negotiations. The University have told the executives they will now.

4.1.1 Board of Directors

- Meeting next week to discuss employee performance reviews, the budget for the Phoenix and GSA and so forth.

4.2 Senate Report

Philip and Peter mentioned;

- Approved hiring a couple of professors in the linguistics program.
- Creation of new program in applied research experimental program in linguistics.
- Closing of the medical radiation program.

4.3 Board of Governor's Report

- The meeting is scheduled on March 10th, 2016.

5.0 Committee Reports

5.1 Finance Committee (VP Administration)

Megan sent a report mentioning;

- She and Ashley met with the bookkeeper who presented the current financial position. They continue to be pleased with the performance. They reviewed the GSA and Phoenix budgets which will be sent to the BOD for review and approval. Year to date profit is \$200,000 eventually this money will be back to the GSA.

5.2 Phoenix Executive Committee (VP Administration)

Megan sent a report mentioning;

- The Phoenix has a new chef which was the main part of the discussion this week. Overall the committee are happy with the Phoenix's continued performance. The committee also discussed a system for implementing a grad student discount that would be more significant than the 10% discount card. They are looking into ways to identify grad students for this purpose. There are still issues with getting participation on this committee. Both committees will meet again in March.
- The PEC are going to try for a few months to see how it worth, to have grad students in the last Wednesday of every month 25% discount, students are going to have a GSA labeled sticker to present it to the phoenix and have this discount, GSA labels can be picked up from the GSA office.

- Farhad recommended having a computer to scan student cards, this will help to differentiate between grad and non-grad students, but unfortunately this will cost a lot of money.

5.3 Events and Trips Planning Committee (VP External)

Lucia mentioned;

- A planetarium night on the 25th of February.
- Two trips to Snow valley on March the 11th and the 24th.
- She is planning a student advertisement policy as currently the GSA receives a lot of advertisements emails that are not related to GSA.
- She is currently reviewing a proposal by PACBIC, CUPE and MSU to change all single occupant washrooms on campus to all gender ones.

5.4 Students Issues Action Committee (VP External)

5.4.1 GSA Survey Update

Lucia mentioned;

- The committee generated a survey and the information is prepared but she thinks it's not professional, she contacted the person who created the survey at the University of Waterloo and he promised to send her report templates.

5.5 Academic Affairs Committee (VP Internal)

Manraj sent a report mentioning;

- A talk on "Personal Branding, Networking and Social Media" by Bobby Umar was held on February 17, 2016. The event was co-sponsored through SPICES, GSA and School of Graduate Studies. A total of 100 graduate students registered out of which ~75% attended the event. The event was a huge success with a lot of positive feedback from the students about the significance of these events and the style of the talk (i.e. interactive vs. lecture style). Bobby Umar committed to sharing his PowerPoint with the attendees and Manraj Kaur will be circulating it when received. We also took photographs and those will be posted on the GSA webpage once received from the photographer.
- The next workshop will be in the month of March 2016 on "resolving conflict between supervisor and student expectations during the graduate program" will be held on the second and third Wednesday of March. The idea is to have the workshop at two separate times (AM vs PM) to maximize student attendance. There are two confirmed speakers, from OMBUDS office and the Office of Human Rights & Equity Services (HRES).

Side note; Talena mentioned:

- SGS is currently working on initiating a checklist to set out responsibilities of the supervisors, and set out expectations for the Graduate Students, this will be in effect to new students by next September.
- Farhad suggested that, the checklist should be in effect before the admission of students to school, in addition to having discussion with the supervisor, to give the graduate students a chance to contemplate different offers from other Universities.
- In business school grad students don't get the privilege of choosing their supervisor, Talena suggested that, Business Grad Students should speak with the Associate Dean of Business, as

most of other faculties grad students choose the supervisor and contact him/her directly and not the department.

- Talena recommended that, she will ask the VP Academic Internal to search other Universities in Canada to see if they have minimum standards for supervision, the GSA can bring this similar document to the SGS to be in effect at McMaster too.

5.6 International Student Representative Report (International Reps)

Vi mentioned:

- She is working along with the CUPE to arrange for craft night on March 10th.
- There is an international conference on April 11th, and a speaker is invited to talk about international students' problems, this will take place at McMaster.

5.7 GSA Summer Leagues Committee (VP Services)

Natalie Mentioned:

- MOU for softball has been signed for 2 more years.

5.8 Bylaws Committee (President)

Talena mentioned:

- The bylaws committee met 2 weeks ago, to discuss changes to the bylaws (namely the addition of the International Rep section). Instead of adding a completely new section, the changes will be incorporated into the FRC section to be faculty representatives and international representatives. Other minimal changes for clarity have been proposed, this will be send around after approval from AGM.

5.9 Graduate Student Services Review Committee (VP Services/President)

Natalie Mentioned:

- She, Talena, and Ashley met with Sean and Gina a couple of times to discuss the CAFs proposal. They haven't received a satisfactory proposal yet, and are hoping they will have one soon. They have yet to receive a breakdown of fees from Sean (as requested by the students).
- Sean offered a reduction of services for the same amount of money which is \$120, and the options is not individualized.
- The committee will meet again in few weeks, hoping there will be a better offer, once there are a detailed budget and firm numbers, the information will be brought to the council.

5.10 Health & Dental Committee (VP Services)

Natalie Mentioned:

- She and Ashley met with the insurance brokers (Del Pereira & Azim Wazeer, from Student Care). Our premiums (\$356/student) will stay the same for next year, however, our actual costs will increase from \$329.44 to \$339.73 due to the addition of services (current academic year) and the MBA is leaving our health plan. They also discussed their online mental health services like Mind Check and Good2Talk; something we will talk to Sean about incorporating into the wellness center as a triaging tool.

- Ashley added, there is now a councilor over the phone, it was infused of 29 million dollars by the government. An actual person will speak to the student and will provide resources on campus and of campus.
- Side note – Rachel Kelly (previous VP Services) had helped write the Arrive & Thrive (A&T) grant application (Summer 2015), however, grad students had no access to A&T services until now. We will be working with A&T and SGS to discuss what mental health and wellness initiatives grad students can utilize, including tailoring a grad-specific program.

5.11 Clubs update

Natalie Mentioned:

- She and Ashley met with Sonia Nason (from Financial Services), and will be meeting again along with Pete Self (SGS) tomorrow. Sonia said that all grad clubs will be on the University insurance plan; the GSA will therefore not be liable. She is willing to share the documents she requests clubs to fill out, including financial statement forms and constitutions; we can either use her system or model ours based on hers. We have yet to discuss who will house administrative duties – SGS or the GSA – however, Pete has promised to match the amount that GSA plans on allocating to clubs, as he would like the SGS to be equal partners on this.
- Sonia invited Executives of clubs both outgoing and incoming Executives to attend a training session, an email invitation will be sent out to all the clubs contacted the GSA, so they can get an initial training.
- Talena added, the Executives are thinking to hire a graduate student for the administrative duties, part time position, 3 – 4 hour per week for \$20/hr.

5.0 Annual General Meeting

- On Tuesday March 29th at 3:30pm

6.0 Elections 2016

Talena mentioned:

- The nomination period started for this year election, nomination form is available on the GSA website, it's open for everyone interested till February 29th at 5 pm.
- Actual voting will take place online on March, students can vote by their student ID.

7.0 UHIP/OHIP

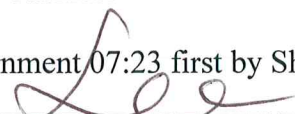
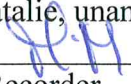
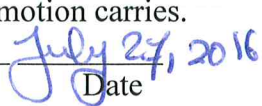
Talena mentioned:

- There is a petition for international students to join OHIP instead of UHIP, anyone who is interested can contact Mai, petition is open for everyone until February 26th.

8.0 New Business

- No new business

9.0 Adjournment 07:23 first by Shawn second by Natalie, unanimous motion carries.

Lucia Lee, VP External Date Recorder Date